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The “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” before the Court. The Bern Trial (1933-1935) and the “Anti-Semitic International”. (Die „Protokolle der Weisen von Zion“ vor Gericht. Der Berner Prozess 1933–1937 und die „antisemitische Internationale“, Zürich: Chronos Verlag 2017).

Between 1933 and 1935 a trial against Swiss fascists who had distributed the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, took place in Bern. The actual target of the Jewish organizations who had initiated the proceedings, however, was the pamphlet itself, its origin, its dissemination and its usage in Europe’s fascist movements.

As part of the proceedings both sides procured ample support in the form of material assistance and propaganda. The defendants and their backers in Nazi-Germany were able to rely on a far-reaching network which had been established in the early 1920s in order to combat “Judaean-Bolshevism”. This conspiratorial “Anti-Semitic International” united German *völkisch* circles, Italian fascists, Russian monarchists and French conspiracy theorists. Their connections stretched from Berlin and Budapest to Los Angeles and to Manchurian Harbin. Secret meetings were arranged, manifestos and programs were written and organizational structures were put in place. Throughout the trial, representatives of this “International” were keen to avoid the spotlight, but were all the more active for it behind the scenes.

On the other side, the plaintiffs, who tried to expose the “Protocols” as a forgery, were also using their extensive connections to Jewish and antifascist organizations: In Amsterdam, Alfred Wiener, founder of the “Jewish Central Information Office”, was procuring pertinent materials and publishing a daily information bulletin in several languages throughout the course of the trial; in Moscow, the lawyer Aleksandr Tager extracted files of Tsarist times from the state archive; in Paris, the historians Ilia Cherikover and Boris Nikolaevsky coordinated the research efforts.

Using the Bern Trial as a case study, the book aims to shed light both on the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” and on the concerted antifascist efforts against the “Anti-Semitic International” in the 1930s which up to now have received little attention among historians.