UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

"Germany on Their Minds"?
German Jewish Refugees in the United States and Relationships to Germany, 1938-1988

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Anne Clara Schenderlein

Committee in charge:

Professor Frank Biess, Co-Chair
Professor Deborah Hertz, Co-Chair
Professor Luis Alvarez
Professor Hasia Diner
Professor Amelia Glaser
Professor Patrick H. Patterson

2014

Copyright

Anne Clara Schenderlein, 2014

All rights reserved.

The Dissertation of Anne Clara Schenderlein is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
Co-Chair

_____
Co-Chair

University of California, San Diego

2014

Dedication

To my Mother and the Memory of my Father

Table of Contents

Signature Page ..... **iii**
Dedication ..... **iv**
Table of Contents ..... **v**
Acknowledgements ..... **vii**
Vita ..... **x**
Abstract of the Dissertation ..... **xi**
Introduction **1**
Literature and Approaches 13
Sources 27
Chapter Overview 31
Chapter 1 ..... **35**
Prologue
Leaving Germany 35
United States of America—New York City 44
Chapter 2 ..... **54**
The German Jewish Refugees and the Americanization Process, 1935-1941
Introduction 54
Los Angeles 57
Americanization in Practice 72
Language and Employment 75
Culture 89
Refugee Organizations within the American Jewish Organizational Landscape 98
War 108
The Situation of Jews in Europe 114
Chapter 3 ..... **124**
The Enemy Alien Classification
Distress over the Refugees' War Time Status in the United States 132
The Tolan Committee 147
Practical Consequences of the Enemy Alien Classification 155
The Enemy Alien Classification's Effects on German Jewish Community Organizations—Conflict Around Leadership within the Jewish Club of 1933 164
Fighting the Legislation—Alleviating its Effects, Disputing its Application 172
War Effort 177
Ongoing Inhibition of Americanization 187
Chapter 4 ..... **193**
German Jewish Refugees in the U.S. Army
Motivations for Joining the Army 200
The Refugee Soldiers' Position within the U.S. Army 206
Experiences in Battle and Encounters with German Soldiers 216
Off the Battlefield: Full Reversal of Power 220
The German Jewish Refugees as Occupiers: Encountering German Civilians 229

Holocaust 239
Conclusion 246
Chapter 5....248
German Jewish Refugees and the Discourse on Postwar Germany, 1942-1945
Introduction....248
On the American Home Front....250
Concern about Europe's Jews 252
Punishment and Restitution 259
Tensions Between the Connection to Germany and Americanization....273
What Should Be Done With Germany After the War?....280
Conclusion 292
Chapter 6....294
Entangled Relations: German Jewish Refugees in the United States and the West German Foreign Office
West German Foreign Policy Considerations and German Jewish Refugees in the U.S. 298
Restitution and Other Troubles 313
Rabbi Max Nussbaum, West Germany, and American Jewry 330
Interpersonal Relationships....351
Conclusion 356
Chapter 7....360
Entangled Relations II: German Jewish Refugee Travel to Germany and West German Municipal Visitor Programs
Individual Travel to Germany in the 1950s and early 1960s: Attitudes 366
Germany as a Tourist Destination? Individual Trips in the 1960s....372
The Emergence and Development of German Municipal Visitor Programs 383
Hamburg....385
Berlin....388
Refugees' Influence on Visitation and Commemoration 396
German Supporters of Visitor Programs....399
Invitations and Pre-visit Perspectives 409
Berlin Program Structures....416
Reactions to the Visits....418
Positive Experiences 421
Negative Experiences....423
Impacts—The Meaning and Value of the Visits 427
Bearing Witness to German Youth....439
Final Considerations 443
Conclusion 451
Germany on their Minds?....451
Bibliography 460

Acknowledgements

Over the course of this project I have received generous support and encouragement. At the University of California, San Diego, I am grateful to the Department of History and the Judaic Studies Program for funding my research and writing, and to the Institute for International Comparative and Area Studies and the Fritz Thyssen Foundation for a pre-dissertation Fellowship. The Institute for European Studies at UC Berkeley, the Leo Baeck Institute, New York, the UCCSC and University of California Humanities Research Institute each supported travel for interviews and archival research. A Leo Baeck Fellowship, funded by the Leo Baeck Institute London and the Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes, provided me with a year of generous research funds as well as rewarding intellectual exchange.

I am indebted to those who have supported me intellectually and contributed to the evolution of this work: Michael Meyer first introduced me to the Jewish Club of 1933, and Stanley Chodorow, and Margrit Frölich were generous and thoughtful readers. I received great help from the archivists Michaela Ullmann at the Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Kevin Proffitt at the American Jewish Archives, and Knud Piening at the Politische Archiv. Rüdiger Nemitz and Heike Kröger at the Senatskanzlei Berlin gave me access to the files of the Berlin Emigrantenprogramm and the *Aktuell* archive.

Many thanks are due to my committee members Luis Alvarez, Amelia Glaser, and Patrick Patterson. I particularly thank Hasia Diner for her generous expertise, and for suggesting and allowing me to use the title of this work. My deepest thanks go to the

co-chairs of my committee, Frank Biess and Deborah Hertz, for their intellectual help, commitment to my work, and unfailing patience and support throughout this undertaking.

My gratitude also goes to my friends and colleagues: to Katalin Rac for her always insightful advice, to Lina Nikou for generously sharing her resources, Jeff Kaiser for his help formatting, Emily Montgomery and Megan Strom for their support and help in crisis, and to my closest colleague and dear friend Andrea Davis whose consultation and companionship have been invaluable.

This project, of course, would not exist without its protagonists. My deepest gratitude goes to all those who have shared their stories and hospitality with me, especially Al and Marianne Barbanell and Annelise Bunzel. Kurt Shuler has served multiple duties, as interlocutor, generous and critical reader, and lunch companion.

The most difficult thing is to thank those who are the most important in supporting my work, because any expression of gratitude is insufficient. I appreciate more than I can say the continual love and support I have gotten from my parents and my sisters during this project. That is true also for Ben Power, who I thank for editing, his patience, and all around support.

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 are, in part, reprints of material as it appears in Anne Clara Schenderlein, “German Jewish Refugees in Los Angeles: A Jewish Club and the Americanization Process from 1938-1943,” California State University, Northridge, 2005. Part of the research used in Chapters 1,2, and 3 also appears in “Zwischen-Orte: Dimensionen von Identität deutsch-jüdischer Migranten,” *Makom Orte und Räume im*

Judentum. Real. Abstrakt. Imaginär. Essays, Michal Kümper, Barbara Rösch, Ulrike Schneider, and Helen Thein (eds.), Haskala, vol. 35. Hildesheim: Olms, 2007, 311-320.

Vita

2002	Bachelor of Arts, Cultural and Social Studies, Europa Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder)
2005	Master of Arts, History, California State University, Northridge
2014	Doctor of Philosophy, History, University of California, San Diego

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

"Germany on Their Minds?"
German Jewish Refugees in the United States and Relationships to Germany, 1938-1988

by

Anne Clara Schenderlein

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, San Diego 2014

Professor Frank Biess Co-Chair
Professor Deborah Hertz, Co-Chair

In the 1930s and early 1940s, approximately 90,000 Jews from Germany came to the United States as refugees fleeing the Nazis. Though these refugees were hurt by and driven from their homeland, many of them, in spite of this experience, lived with their lives and identities inextricably connected to Germany. This was not always because they wanted to engage, but often because the broader political circumstances of their lives in the United States during the Second World War and the Cold War demanded some sort of engagement with their German background, or because the Germans themselves initiated contact with the refugees, or both. This dissertation investigates these relationships between Germany and the German Jewish refugees who settled in the United States between 1938 and 1988. Using publications and records of refugee organizations in the

United States and West German federal and municipal governments, in combination with oral histories, letters, and memoirs, this dissertation analyzes refugee discourses concerning Germany and interactions between refugees and Germans. It shows how Germany—as a nation state, with its political systems, institutions, and people, and as an imaginary—affected the ways in which ordinary German Jewish refugees in the United States constructed their personal and communal lives and identities. It further shows, how, in turn, German Jewish refugees in the U.S. influenced West German identity formation. This dissertation thus argues that neither the history of the refugees nor that of postwar Germany can be fully understood without consideration of the interrelations and interactions between the two. German Jewish refugees in the United States played a role in channeling Germany's democratic ambitions and German outreach activities, such as through the Foreign Office and municipal visitor programs. Such programs contributed, conversely, to a strengthening of German Jewish refugee identity many years after the end of the war.

Introduction

In September 2009, I accompanied a group of former German Jewish refugees and their families on a visit to Berlin. For most of them it was the first time that they had returned to the city—their birth place or long-time residence—since they had fled Germany from Nazi persecution more than 70 years before. They came from various places in Israel, South America, Great Britain, and the United States at the invitation of the Lord Mayor of Berlin and the Senate Chancellery. Since 1969, the city had run a program, launched in the spirit of *Wiedergutmachung*—"making good again"—that sponsored trips for former residents who had fled because of Nazi persecution. During their week in Berlin, the visitors met city and government officials at special receptions, went on sightseeing tours, attended the opera, and had time to pursue quests into their personal pasts. This could mean visiting the Jewish cemetery in Weissensee or going to see their former home, but also finding out about the fate of family members. In this way, Ralph Reuss from Portland, Oregon, for example, learned when his paternal grandparents and uncles were deported from Berlin and that they had been sent to Auschwitz. In an email Reuss sent to me after his return to the United States, he wrote how he felt visiting the station from which the deportation trains had departed Berlin: "On the rainy gray and gloomy day when our group was standing on the railway platform I couldn't help but think of the fear and hopelessness my grandparents and uncles were feeling on a cold

December 14, 1942."[1] Yet, even as he reflected on such somber considerations, he also wrote, a few lines later, that: "All in all Berlin seems like a very livable city about which I have very positive feelings—after all I am German!" Certainly, the Berlin of 2009 with its numerous memorials dedicated to the German persecution and murder of Jews and other groups changed the image many refugees had of Germany to a more positive one. However, why would Reuss identify as German? While it may not be so very surprising that Jews who grew up in Germany and left several years before the Holocaust might do so, to hear those who have no personal memories of Germany—such as Reuss—expressing such attachment is rather unexpected. Did Reuss just discover his Germanness on this trip or did it play a role in his life before? What would motivate someone, who left Germany as a three-year old child in 1939, who spent the majority of his life in the United States, and who lost almost his entire family to the atrocities of the Holocaust, to yet call himself German?

This dissertation illuminates the ostensible paradox, that some of those grievously hurt by and driven from Germany have, in spite of this experience, frequently lived with their lives and identities inextricably connected to it. It investigates the relationships between German Jewish refugees from the Nazis in the United States, and Germany from 1938 to 1988. Here, I take Germany to mean not only the nation-state and its political systems, institutions, and people, each of which themselves changed across the period that I investigate, but also, and at least as importantly, the memories and the German

---

[1] Email from Ralph Reuss (name is an alias) to the author, September 18, 2009.

imaginary constructed by the refugees both individually and as a community. This dissertation investigates this German-Jewish relationship on multiple levels:

Firstly, it discusses how Germany affected the ways in which ordinary German Jewish refugees in the United States constructed their personal and communal lives and identities. How did they position and identify themselves in relation to Germany? How did they publicly speak about it? How did its various changes affect them in their American communities?

Secondly, I examine these processes of identity formation not only within larger contexts of American and Jewish history, but also as part of twentieth century German history. This is because the relationships of German Jewish refugees to Germany, or 'things German,' and their responses to various German efforts at connecting with the German Jewish community in the United States, underscore the importance of approaching German Jewish history as a transnational construction. This is made clear when one examines the motivations for German institutional initiatives, which in many cases are closely linked to German foreign policy and national (re)building. As a transnational history of migration and relationships then, the dissertation asks how, in turn, the German Jewish refugee community in the U.S. affected West Germany.[2] After the Second World War, the newly founded Federal Republic of Germany had to account,

---

[2] While East Germany appeared in refugee discussions about Germany—particularly in the context of visits to West- and East-Berlin and in communications with Berliners—this dissertation focuses on the relationship to West Germany. This happens because, overall, the GDR played a relatively small roll in the discourse on Germany and also, because the GDR did not seek official relations with German Jewish refugees. It would be most interesting, however to look closer into the discourse on East Germany as it was carried out among refugees in the U.S. Particularly insightful could be an analysis of refugee reactions to articles on the GDR/East Berlin as they appeared in the magazine *Aktuell* that the city of West Berlin sent to former Berliners (mostly German Jewish refugees and also survivors) all over the world. See the last chapter for more on the magazine.

at least to some degree, for the persecution and genocide of its predecessor state, if it was to become part of the democratic West. West Germans had to demonstrate that they had abandoned antisemitism not only as a state ideology but also as a value system and social practice. Thus, besides restitution legislation to pay indemnification to Jewish victims of the Nazis that the FRG passed in the 1950s, good relations with Jews became an imperative aim in the creation of the image of a "new Germany." I argue that through the interactions that emerged between German Jewish refugees and West Germany, the refugees played an important role in shaping West German identity. Together these interactions display an entanglement of relations between German Jewish refugees and Germany which existed throughout 50 years, during which it has undergone many changes, and which may be understood, at least during some of that time and to some extent, as mutually constitutive.

About 90,000 German Jews entered the United States in the 1930s and early 40s fleeing the Third Reich.[3] These refugees, while having experienced discrimination and persecution in Germany, left Europe early enough to be spared the deportations, and concentration and extermination camps of the East. They settled all over the United States, with particularly great centers of concentration in New York City and Los Angeles. In many American cities, German Jewish refugees founded local institutions for

---

[3] German speaking Jews came to the United States not only from Germany, but also from Austria (which had been annexed by Germany in 1935), Czechoslovakia, and in smaller numbers from other Eastern European countries. German speaking Jews often came together in one organization, though Austrian groups within the larger organizations were not uncommon. Sometimes Austrian Jews also formed their own groups. The umbrella organization in the United States for all refugee groups from German speaking Europe was the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe. Leadership positions in this organization were generally held by Jews from Germany. This dissertation concerns itself solely with refugees coming from Germany and they are referred to here as German Jews.

the purpose of assisting each other in starting life in the new country, and these institutions in turn frequently joined together in regional and national organizations representative of German Jewish refugees. In New York City, the German Jewish Club started the newspaper *Aufbau* which would soon become the major publication and mouthpiece for this group of immigrants nationwide. While the predominant purpose of these various organizational ventures remained to assist the refugees in rebuilding their lives in the United States, throughout the many years of their existence they were nevertheless constantly occupied with questions related to Germany and the group's relationship to that country. Throughout the present narrative of these relations to Germany, and the discourse surrounding them, runs the debate over how, as a German Jewish refugee, one ought to view and position oneself to the German state, to non-Jewish Germans, to German culture—conceptualizations which themselves change across this time. I show that discussions about Germany, and any kind of engagement with it, could in many ways not be separated from the understanding of oneself: for many refugees these considerations centered on who they were and where they stood in the world.

Before explaining the reasons why German Jewish refugees engaged with Germany, it must be noted that Germany did not play an ever-present, let alone dominant, role in the lives and identities of all German Jewish refugees in the United States. The refugees who came from Germany were heterogenous to the extent that Herbert Strauss, the eminent historian of this German Jewish immigration to the U.S., stated that they

were "by any standard of social analysis ... not a 'group.'"[4] They differed in age and in terms of socio-economic, political, religious, and cultural factors. All these and many more individual aspects, particularly one's personal experiences in Germany before and after the Nazis came to power, played a role as to whether, and in what way, an individual associated with Germany. There were certainly refugees who, upon arrival in the U.S., shed all such association and identification with their background and did not let Germany affect them for the rest of their lives. Younger refugees often did not have many points of relation to Germany and so frequently did not partake in the same discussions their parents engaged in.[5] It is essential to bear in mind then that refugees who decided that they did not want anything to do with Germany are a significant element of the story of German Jewish refugees in the United States. Unfortunately, however, in declining to engage with Germany in any respect, their voices are, inevitably, relatively scarce on this subject and though their position is acknowledged and presupposed in this work, the dissertation focuses almost entirely on those refugees who, to differing degrees, continued to engage with their background and Germany for various reasons and at different times. In particular, it examines the discourse about Germany within the community at large and its broad effects, and in doing so, it frequently, though not exclusively, gives voice to individuals who were leading or active members of German Jewish community organizations. Refugees who settled in places where there was no

---

[4] Herbert A. Strauss, *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA* vol.6 (München: Saur, 1987), 319

[5] About young refugees, see, for example, Walter Laqueur, *Generation Exodus: The Fate of Young Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany*, Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2001, and Gerhard Sonnert and Gerald Holten, *What Happened To the Young Children Who Fled Nazi Persecution* (New York: Palgrave, 2006)

considerable number of others with the same background with whom to discuss such issues and who did not read the community's main newspaper, *Aufbau*, are less represented here.[6] Even with this disclaimer, however, it is clear that I cannot do justice to the variety of opinions that existed even among those who engaged with Germany. While I use the general wording of "the refugees," I am frequently speaking of a particular constituent, or group, that I have been able to identify in my sources as holding a predominant or representative, and generally vocal, stance. Many times when I write "the refugees" it should really read "the majority of refugees that chose to publicly display their opinions."

When and why then did some refugees engage with Germany? The first such engagement took place in the context of their immigration experience. German Jewish refugees had spent the majority of their lives in Germany as German citizens, deeply entrenched in German society and culture. While antisemitism and discrimination against Jews existed prior to the Nazis coming to power, Jews in Germany generally did not perceive it as a threat great enough to prompt them to consider leaving their homes until its rise and adoption as policy in the 1930s. Thus, when the refugees were finally forced to flee, they arrived in the United States as Germans, sometimes with only a recent consciousness of being Jewish, having just suffered the experience of their fellow Germans becoming Nazis and their persecution in, and exclusion from, German society. The deep entrenchment of their Germanness on the one hand and the deep injury that

---

[6] Kurt Shuler, who first came to Atlanta as a fifteen year old refugee, frequently reminded me about his different perspective. Shuler is one of those who never associated with a refugee community, nor read *Aufbau.* His perspective is relayed in several chapters of this dissertation.

non-Jewish Germans had done to them on the other were opposing psychological forces that many refugees tried to reconcile or comprehend after their arrival. The issue of how much German associations one could keep without compromising ones Jewish identity was a major discussion within the community and something over which opinions differed greatly.

In addition to these considerations, the refugees had also to negotiate, just as other immigrants do, how much of their heritage they wanted, could, or ought to keep in their new country. In this regard, their German heritage posed a particular problem as the United States increasingly recognized Germany as the belligerent power it was to become and, paradoxically and frustratingly for them, considered the Jewish refugees from the Nazis to be German aliens and potential threats. Because of this broader political situation, the refugees were forced to engage with their German identity at a time when many of them might have wanted to leave it behind. Throughout the war years, refugee focus on Germany was frequently in the context of pointing out to American authorities that Germany was their enemy too, and that their specific German Jewish background could, in fact, be advantageous to the war effort.

With the end of the war and the realization that the German regime was responsible for the murder of six million Jews, the general sentiment in the community was that German Jewish refugees should not maintain any continued interest or stake in Germany. However, two factors complicated this stance and, in the end, made it very difficult. The first was that some community leaders felt strongly about demanding restitution and indemnification from Germany, a concern they had put much thinking into

during the last years of the war and one which was also being pursued by other American Jewish organizations. Thus, in the postwar period, though it was contested, a consensus developed that German Jews could continue to have an interest in Germany if it was for the good of their own community.

The second factor to which refugees paid attention was the fact that West Germany was reconstructed as a democratic country and an ally of their adopted home, the U. S., in the emerging Cold War. This reconstruction extended the interest that began with restitution and played an important role for both German Jewish refugees and West Germany in the taking up of direct relations. The organized German Jewish community, for their part, who had fostered relationships with certain sympathetic Germans while advocating for restitution, increasingly adopted a position that conceived of engagement with Germany not only as beneficial for them, but also for Germany itself. In this, some believed that they ought to play a role in the country's democratization process, and that, holding the moral high ground of the oppressed, they could also offer moral instruction as the new state either confronted its past or failed to.

While the question of how refugees ought to deal with Germany nevertheless remained vexed and was constantly being negotiated within the community, the question of how they affected Germany and how Germany dealt with them in return is somewhat clearer. Besides early interactions between Germans and German Jewish refugees who went to Europe as soldiers of the U.S. Army and German Jewish contributions to the Allied war effort in general, refugees did not assert any direct influences on Germany until after the war. Even then, initially, direct interactions between German Jewish

refugees and Germans happened only occasionally and between small numbers of people. However, the mere existence of a German Jewish refugee community in the United States, the country which was such an important ally for the West German government, affected German policy decisions, particularly those concerning restitution and the staffing of diplomatic corps. This, I argue, played a role in channeling Germany's democratic ambitions. In West German efforts at constructing a new state, outreach toward the German Jewish refugee community, both on a federal and municipal level, became important in the decades following the end of the war. One form this outreach took was invitations by German towns to their former inhabitants to visit, such as the one the aforementioned Ralph Reuss accepted to Berlin. In this way, engagements of refugees with West Germans—officials and ordinary people—contributed to German ambitions to create a "new Germany" or identify themselves as "good Germans."

This summary of engagements between German Jewish refugees and Germany shows that throughout the time period of investigation from the 1930s to the late 1980s, Germany consistently figured directly or indirectly in refugees' lives. It also shows that the refugees, in turn, figured in the life of postwar Germany, something that has thus far not received much scholarly attention. While these are easy points to summarize, however, the answers to the questions that this dissertation poses are complex and not clear cut, and a single thesis cannot do justice to them without being uncomfortably general. Germany—directly and indirectly—certainly affected refugees' lives and identities in different ways and degrees, depending on the time one chooses to look at, as they, Germany itself, and larger local, national, and international political circumstances

changed. Thus, conclusions concerning this relationship must be drawn, as they are here in individual chapters, separately for different times and circumstances. However, one can make some general claims about it. Firstly, while the relationship overall, at least on the surface, became more amenable as time passed after the war, it remained complicated and was never one either 'side' trusted to be stable. Even today, while individual relationships between German Jewish refugees and non-Jewish Germans may be relatively uncomplicated, and while there exists an established dialogue between German Jewish refugees and Germany, the latter must still be approached with caution. Secondly, this was a relationship that did not develop casually but was instrumentalized to serve particular purposes and always had limits. For the refugees, for example, while engagement with Germany over restitution was acceptable, friendship with Germans was frequently much more difficult to imagine. Similarly, from the German side, concessions to Jewish refugees were often only made when Germany perceived its image to be in jeopardy. Over time these limits stretched, particularly on the German side, which brings me to another observation on the relationship.

Examining German Jewish relations over the extended period from 1938 to 1988 exposes a change in the power dynamics in this relationship, in which German Jewish refugees advanced from being victims of German actions to occupying a certain moral high ground as critics of German actions. Interestingly, this change in the power dynamics was to some extent based on the continuity of a paranoid and antisemitic German perception of Jewish power promulgated by the Nazis, mixed with a relatively

reasonable assessment of public relations.[7] In the postwar period, German anxiety over how the country was perceived by Jewish refugees in the U.S. and the belief that they exerted great influence on public opinion led to various actions that sought to create good relations with that community in order to prevent negative publicity for Germany abroad. One example is the invitations extended to German Jewish community leaders—such as Rabbi Max Nussbaum in Los Angeles, whose story is relayed in the fifth chapter—by the German Foreign Office. Refugees, formerly expropriated and expatriated by Nazi Germany, were invited to visit Germany to be hosted by West German officials. These prospective visitors, however, held it in their power not only to decline such invitations but to respond in a way that was counterproductive to Germany's image—or at least was perceived to be counterproductive by both German officials and German Jewish refugees, who embraced this new authority. While I do not mean to suggest that German Jewish refugees held direct political power over Germany, or that German Jewish refugee opinions affected major German decisions at all times, they were nevertheless an important factor. They could not be ignored, and their critical presence and voice regularly drew German policy makers' attention, as the Federal Republic wanted to avoid being constantly reminded, and having the wider world constantly reminded, of its past. The moral superiority of the oppressed over the oppressor that German Jews held over Germans, which was acknowledged by both and, significantly, by the Federal Republic's western allies, determined the power dynamics in the relationship. As time passed, it

---

[7] Of course, Nazi ideology on Jews was contradictory as Jews were depicted as the enemy not only because of their assumed power over all sorts of realms but at the same time as weak and subhuman.

became more pressing for Germans to maintain this relationship and to be liked by Jews, than it was for German Jewish refugees to have a good relationship with Germans and Germany. Thus, in attempting to placate German Jewish opinion, major attempts to reestablish the relationship on an amicable footing were driven primarily from the German side.

Literature and Approaches

With these findings, my work stands at the intersection of several bodies of scholarship. The dissertation builds upon these literatures, expands on them, and, most importantly, brings them together. It offers a new synthesis of the history of German Jewish refugees and Germany while contributing original perspectives on the transnational aspects of this history.

The first of these existing bodies of scholarship examines the intellectual and cultural meanings of the German Jewish legacy in the United States, one that has most often been identified with the concept of *Bildung*, a certain German-Jewish intellectual tradition. The flight and emigration of Jews from Germany has received much scholarly attention, not least because among the refugees were famous artists, scientists, and intellectuals, such as Albert Einstein, Lion Feuchtwanger, Ludwig Marcuse, and Arnold

Schönberg. Various publications have explored the lives of these eminent refugees, often stressing their contributions to the United States in their respective fields.[8]

Most Jews who came from Germany, however, were not famous, and studies on ordinary refugees, though they have been relatively few, have paid tribute to that fact. The largest and most comprehensive research project on the general social history of the refugee population to date has been that by the Research Foundation for Jewish Immigration, which under Herbert A. Strauss published a multivolume series on the Jewish immigrants of the Nazi period in the United States.[9] Strauss was himself a refugee, and the scholarly attention that historians from this background have paid to the

---

[8] Many of the following works address the history of both Jews and non-Jews who had fled to the U.S.: Mark M. Anderson, Hitler's Exiles: Personal Stories of the Flight from Nazi Germany to America (New York: The New Press 1998), Anthony Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America from the 1930s to the Present* (New York: Viking Press, 1983), John Russel Taylor, *Strangers in Paradise: The Hollywood Emigrés 1933-1950* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983). "Driven into Paradise: L.A.'s European Jewish Emigrés of the 1930s and 1940s" was the title of a 2005 exhibition at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles. Holger Gumprecht, *'New Weimar' unter Palmen. Deutsche Schriftsteller im Exil in Los Angeles* (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998) and Erhard Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). See further Steven E. Aschheim, *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), Hermann Levin Goldschmidt, *The legacy of German Jewry*, Trans. David Suchoff (New York : Fordham University Press, 2007) and a publication on the symposium "The German-Jewish Legacy in America, 1938-1988," *American Jewish Archives* XL: 2 (November 1988), Lewis A. Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and Their Experiences* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984)

[9] Herbert A. Strauss, Steven W. Siegel, Henry Friedlander, Joan C. Lessing, Daniel R. Schwartz, Norbert Kampe, and Dennis Rohrbaugh (eds.), *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA* vol.1 (München: Saur, 1979). This first volume covers archival resources. The four other ones the following: v. 2: Classified and annotated bibliography, v. 3 pt. 1: Guide to the oral history collection of the research foundation for Jewish immigration, New York, v. 3 pt. 2: Classified list of articles concerning emigration in Germany, v. 4: Jewish emigration from Germany, 1933-1942, v. 5: The individual and collective experience of German-Jewish immigrants 1933-1984, v. 6: Essays on the history, persecution, and emigration of German Jews. There are also contemporary studies on the refugees, such as Maurice R. Davie, *Refugees in America: Report of the Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1947). The Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe, under the direction of Maurice R. Davie and with the assistance of over 200 organizations and agencies, conducted a very comprehensive, nation-wide study including field surveys, questionnaires and interviews on that specific wave of immigrants. The Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. in Los Angeles also received one of the questionnaires distributed to organizations of recent immigrants. Also, Gerhart Saenger, *Today's Refugees, Tomorrow's Citizens: A Story of Americanization* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1941)

topic of German Jewish history is noteworthy in its scope. Another major contribution comes from the Leo Baeck Institute, dedicated to the study of the history of German speaking Jewry and founded in 1955 by such eminent refugee intellectuals as Hannah Arendt, Martin Buber, Max Grunewald, and Robert Weltsch—who were, it is important to stress, public intellectuals in the community. It has published a great number of studies, including over fifty volumes of its *Yearbook,* covering a wide array of scholarship on political, economic, social, religious, and cultural aspects of the lives of German speaking Jews in Central Europe.

Though relatively few, there are also socio-historical monographs on ordinary refugees, among them Steven Lowenstein's pioneering work on New York's German Jewish community in Washington Heights and another account of New York's German Jews by Claudia Appelius. The companion to the exhibition *Lives Lost, Lives Found: Baltimore's German Jewish Refugees, 1933–1945,* and particularly Deborah Weiner's excellent contributions, enrich the picture of refugee life beyond New York, which has otherwise largely received short shrift, academically speaking.[10] Important, not least because it demystifies the stereotype of the German Jew as an upper middle class,

---

[10] Davie, *Refugees in America,* Steven M. Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson: The German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933-1983, Its Structure and Culture* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), Claudia Appelius, *"Die schönste Stadt der Welt:" Deutsch-jüdische Flüchtlinge in NewYork* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2003), Anita Kassof and Avi Y. Decter, Deborah R. Wiener, (eds.), *Lives Lost, Lives Found: Baltimore's German Jewish Refugees, 1933–1945 (*Baltimore, Md: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2004). See also, Sibylle Quack. *Between Sorrow and Strength: Women Refugees of the Nazi Period* (Washington, D.C: German Historical Institute, 1995) which includes also non-Jewish women.

professional urbanite, is a study on Jewish refugees from rural Germany who made their living as cattle farmers in south-central New York state.[11]

Related to these scholarly studies on communities—that is, dealing with the same subject but in an entirely different medium—is a third branch of literature on German Jews in the United States: the recorded personal stories and experiences of individual refugees. These include, among others; the collections of interviews conducted by the Research Foundation for Jewish Immigration, Gloria and Manfred Kirchheimers' book (and film) *We Were So Beloved*, featuring interviews with Washington Heights residents, Peck and Herscher's *Oral History of Cincinnati's Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany*, and Ruth Wolman's collection of interviews with refugees in Southern California.[12]

For this work, I draw on the aforementioned social histories of refugee communities, and heavily on the interviews and oral histories of ordinary refugees, to formulate a greater synthesis which connects individual voices with broader community discussions. I also expand on the existing histories in several ways by asking questions that push beyond the geographical and temporal constraints of these literatures. First, my work brings a wider geographical focus to a history that has hitherto almost entirely been

---

[11] Rhonda F. Levine, *Class, Networks, and Identity: Replanting Jewish Lives from Nazi Germany to Rural New York* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001)

[12] Herbert A. Strauss and Dennis Rohrbaugh, *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA*, vol, 5 *The individual and collective experience of German-Jewish immigrants 1933-1984. An oral history record*) New York: Saur, 1986), Gloria D. V. Kirchheimer and Manfred Kirchheimer, *We Were so Beloved: Autobiography of a German Jewish Community* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), Abraham J. Peck and Uri Herscher (eds.), *Queen City Refuge: An Oral History of Cincinnati's Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany* (West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1989), Ruth E. Wolman, *Crossing Over: An Oral History of Refugees from Hitler's Reich*, Twayne's Oral History Series, no. 21 (New York: Twayne, 1996). See also Thomas Hartwig and Achim Roscher, *Die Verheissene Stadt: Deutsch-jüdische Emigranten in New York : Gespräche, Eindrücke und Bilder* (Berlin: Arsenal, 1986). There is also a collection of refugees' everyday life experiences in different parts of the world, including the U.S., by Wolfgang Benz, Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Das Exil der kleinen Leute: Alltagserfahrungen deutscher Juden in der Emigration*, (München: C.H. Beck, 1991)

told from an East Coast perspective. After New York City, Los Angeles was the largest center of German Jewish immigration in the 1930s and 40s and was home to the second largest German Jewish refugee organization in the country, the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. While this alone makes a look at the West Coast worthwhile, a deeper exploration shows that, at certain times, the immigrant experience there differed in significant ways from that on the East Coast. One example is the great contrast in the physical environment to that on the East Coast, particularly New York, which had to be negotiated in entirely different ways and which thus structured immigrant lives differently. Another is that wartime legislations had unique consequences for refugees on the West Coast. For these and other reasons, the first two chapters, which cover the refugees' early years in the United States and the beginning of the war, take a particularly close look at the situation in Los Angeles.[13] In adopting this focus on the West Coast, I challenge conclusions drawn by scholars concerning the immigration and wartime experience of German Jewish refugees in the U.S., which are based on research exclusively conducted on the East Coast.[14] Contextualized with examples from other places in the United States (outside of New York), the Los Angeles refugee community also serves as a main focus in other chapters of the dissertation.

---

[13] Historians have recently paid more attention to Jewish history in the American west. See, for example Ellen Eisenberg, Ava F. Kahn, and William Toll, *Jews of the Pacific Coast: Reinventing Community on America's Edge* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), which contends that a distinctly Western form of Jewish community life developed on the West Coast. See also Deborah Dash Moore, *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.A.* (New York: Free Press, 1994), Karen Wilson (ed.), *Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), and ongoing projects at UCLA's Center for Jewish Studies on Jewish Los Angeles.

[14] See chapter 3.

My work also expands on the existing refugee literature by broadening the time frame of investigation and by asking different questions and using a different conceptual framework. The majority of studies on German Jewish refugees in the United States focus predominantly on the experience of persecution, flight and immigration, and on the ways in which the newcomers adjusted to life in the United States. As such, their prime concerns are frequently questions of acculturation and integration and they often end with the Second World War. The relationship to Germany is framed as an immigrant story of letting go in order to integrate, and that integration is mostly depicted as happening in a linear way—the longer the refugees are in the country and the more they are involved in American life, the smaller their connection to Germany becomes, and their lives and identities are less and less affected by it. Studies often conclude with the end of the Second World War, and the fact that most of the refugees had become socio-economically integrated into American life and received American citizenship by that time, is taken as a sort of completion of the refugee experience.[15] While these investigations are valuable in their own right, my work introduces several complementary notions and nuances existing ones.

Firstly, by broadening the time frame, one can see that the refugee experience and identity as a German Jewish refugee resonated long after the war, not only in the American context of acculturation, but specifically in relationship to Germany. Moreover, identification with their German Jewish refugee identity was in large part *conditioned* by their relationship to Germany—not only by their own constant awareness of what this

---

[15] Lowenstein goes beyond the war in his observations.

relationship had been in the past, but also significantly by the fact that postwar West Germany now had an interest in them precisely because they were German Jews who had escaped the Nazis. Restitution is perhaps the most important, though by no means only, example of this. Toward the end of the war, German Jewish community leaders, who by that time had become American citizens, joined the chorus of those who pressed for restitution from a defeated Germany. As it became a reality in the 1950s, it served as an important public validation of the specific experience of German Jewish refugees, by the German government. From this acknowledgement, and from the specific restitution dealings, developed other interactions with Germany, as I show in chapters six and seven, in which the specific German Jewish refugee experience and identity were of foremost concern to all those involved. This shows that while notions of acculturation are valid, there were nevertheless situations in later life when the refugees' German or German Jewish identity mattered as much or more than their American identity. In this way, I propose that one might move away from a linear conception of identity formation, and recognize it not as an unconscious process that is entirely driven by its own free-flowing dynamics, but one that is also consciously negotiated, fashioned, and performed.[16] I thus conceive of identity as multi-faceted and of identity formation as made up of changing, contingent and contradictory narratives and processes. At different times and contingent on circumstances, the refugees—individually and as a community—actively negotiated

---

[16] See, for example, Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Jana Evans Braziel, and Anita Mannur (eds.), *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003). Memory is of course a very important factor and deserves much more attention than is being given here.

their identity, responding to varying situations, and focusing on specific factors.[17] The discussions within the community over the refugees' identity that I draw on in this dissertation demonstrate that the refugees consciously thought about who they were, who they ought to be, who they wanted to be, how they were seen, and, importantly, how they ought to act. In this way, their actions were not simply about becoming less German or more American, or more or less Jewish, but about consciously negotiating the different values and meanings that might be connected to these categories and how these were interchangeably beneficial at different times and in certain situations.[18] At one time or another it might be more beneficial to see or present oneself as German, German Jewish, Jewish or American. In this way, German Jewish refugee organizations actively politicized and at certain times sought to police identity presentations of the community. As an example, one might look at the Second World War, when the majority of young male refugees were eager to join the U.S. Army, perceiving it as a strong demonstration of their loyalty to the U.S. At the same time as showing this American patriotism, individual refugees and the community stressed the German background of these Jewish refugee soldiers and how it was this in particular that could make a specific and significant contribution to Allied victory.

---

[17] In draw here on Till van Rahden's use of the concept of "situational ethnicity" and substitute ethnicity with identity as a more general concept of belonging. See his book *Jews and Other Germans: Civil Society, Religious Diversity, and Urban Politics in Breslau, 1860-1925* (Madison, Wisc: U of Wisconsin P, 2000), 8f, see also fn.18 on pg. 285

[18] "German," "Jewish," and "American" are not essential, immutable categories. Rather, what it means to be German, Jewish, American, and what characteristics different people associate with these categories is exactly what the discussions among the refugees are about. Further, this dissertation points particularly to the changing nature and strategic constructedness of identities.

Moreover, expanding the time frame of the study is also what widens the geographical perspective of investigation beyond the United States. The postwar period saw numerous direct interactions and indirect points of associations between German Jewish refugees and West Germany. I contend that it is precisely through studying these kinds of transnational relations and the "role [everyday German Jews] played in interactions and exchanges across the Atlantic," that we can reach a better understanding of both the history of German Jewish refugees and also that of postwar Germany.[19] While other scholars have previously addressed the movements of refugees to Germany and also the contributions of individual refugees to postwar German reconstruction, I argue that the German Jewish community in the United States, *outside* the geographical territory of Germany, has been a vital element of German history in the making.[20]

I conceive of this refugee history then, while it yet happens in the United States, as an intrinsic part of German history, without which the development of the country

---

[19] Cornelia Wilhelm has pointed to the lack of studies that entertain these interactions. "Introduction and Acknowledgments," German Jews in the United States: A Guide to Archival Collections, Reference Guide no. 24 (German Historical Institute, Washington D.C., 2008), 2.

[20] Works on remigration largely focus on the ways the former refugees dealt with living in the "land of the murderers," others have acknowledged also the role of some refugees, who, while keeping American citizenship and primary residence in the U.S., contributed to German reconstruction in different sectors. See, for example, Marita Krauss, *Heimkehr in ein fremdes Land: Geschichte der Remigration nach 1945* (C.H.Beck: München, 2001), Ronald Webster, "Jüdische Rückkehrer in der BRD nach 1945: Ihre Motive, ihre Erfahrungen," *Aschkenas* 5:1 (1995): 47-77; Cordula Lissner, "'In der Justiz lebe ich wie im Exil': Zur Rückkehr jüdischer Juristen und Juristinnen," in Anne Klein and Jürgen Wilhelm, *NS-Unrecht vor Kölner Gerichten nach 1945,* (Köln: Greven, 2003), 75-88; Atina Grossmann, "German Jews as Provincial Cosmopolitans: Reflections from the Upper West Side" *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 53 (2008): 162

cannot be fully understood.[21] The dissertation demonstrates that it was not only the activities of the refugees in Germany on visits, but also their actions in the United States —such as publishing articles on Germany or holding protest meetings against German policies—and their interactions with Germans across the Atlantic about various issues—such as letter exchanges between German students and refugees—that affected Germany. With this approach, I contravene notions that imagine history, even histories of nation-states, as taking place in their defined spatial boundaries. I follow historians of globalization, (post-)colonialism, diaspora and migration who have acknowledged the existence of exchanges, interrelationships, and movements beyond borders and their multidirectional effects in the realms of politics, economics, and culture.[22].

In one way, diplomatic history has, of course, required a similar approach for a long time, and my investigations of the activities of the German Foreign Office in the United States, and their interactions with refugees, speak to recent works on West

---

[21] This suggestion will not, I hope, be understood as any sort of claim of ownership, an offensive notion. Rather, I understand the actions of refugees to continue to affect the development of Germany, and thus its history, as they do to that of the United States. This idea of what this history is, is for a much greater argument over historiography than I am able to engage in in this dissertation.(One may start engaging in this by looking at Geoff Eley, "How and Where is German History Centered?," Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman, *German History from the Margins* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2006), 268-286; and other essays in that work.) However, I want to point out that for the refugee themselves the categories of nations and belonging to nations were important and structuring elements in their discursive constructions of identity.

[22] A recent account that demonstrates this for Germany is Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006). There is a great and evolving scholarship in various disciplines that take on these issues. In Jewish History, see the important work by Rebecca Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010). More general recent works are Gunilla Budde, Sebastian Conrad, and Oliver Janz (eds.),*Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), Michael G. Müller and Cornelius Torp, "Conceptualising Transnational Spaces in History," *European Review of History* 16: 5 (2009): 609-617. See also Lok Siu, *Memories of A Future Home: Diasporic Citizenship of Chinese in Panama* (Stanford: Stanford U P, 2005), Yen Le Espiritu, *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2003)

German foreign policy after the Second World War.[23] Expanding on this literature, which has largely focused on examining interactions between political elites, I pay attention to relationships between state and non-state actors, the latter mainly in this case German Jewish refugees. These relationships play a significant role in influencing foreign policy activities and larger political processes.

This dissertation also touches in important ways on the scholarship that examines how West Germany has dealt with its Nazi past and the Holocaust, and closely related discussions of memory politics.[24] Germans have confronted the legacies of the Second World War and the Holocaust to differing degrees and in various ways since 1945. Historians have shown, for example, that in the immediate aftermath of war and in the 1950s, West German engagement with that time period was selective and predominantly focused on German suffering. While the Holocaust was not part of general public discourse in the FGR at that time, discussion over restitution legislations, regulating the restitution of property and indemnification payments to victims of Nazi persecution, was one area in which German crimes against Jews were at least partially (often reluctantly) acknowledged on a governmental level. There exists a rich literature on restitution, including recent studies which emphasized the effects of restitution procedures upon the

---

[23] See, for example, Johannes Paulmann (ed.), *Auswärtige Repräsentationen: Deutsche Kulturdiplomatie nach 1945* (Köln: Böhlau, 2005)

[24] See, for example, Norbert Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (München: Beck, 1996), Robert Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), Dirk Moses, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Philipp Gassert and Alan E. Steinweis (eds.), *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), and very recently a work that takes a European approach, Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller (eds.) *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012)

applicants.[25] While these works testify to interactions between former refugees and the postwar West-German state, they stand mostly disconnected from the discussions on restitution that were being held within the broader refugee community. They also largely depict restitution as a one-way process, in which the applicants were dependent on and frequently powerless in the face of a faulty and often frustrating German bureaucracy. While this was undoubtedly the reality for many refugees and survivors, taking a look at greater community discussions reveals that restitution dealings also opened new paths for refugees to engage with their former home, which gave them a sense of importance and superiority in relation to Germany.

Similarly, I show that German Jewish refugees were critical observers of what historian Norbert Frei has termed *Vergangenheitspolitik*, the West German politics of the past that re-integrated former Nazis into the civil service. At least in part because of the attention refugees gave to such decisions, particularly in its publication *Aufbau*, the Foreign Ministry was careful in staffing diplomatic missions to the United States with people who had not been Nazis.

Questions of continuity of national socialist and antisemitic sentiments in postwar West German society, and when Germans began to face their own role as perpetrators,

---

[25] See, for example, Constantin Goschler, *Schuld und Schulden: Die Politik der Wiedergutmachung für NS-Verfolgte seit 1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005), Norbert Frei, José Brunner, and Constantin Goschler, *Die Praxis der Wiedergutmachung: Geschichte, Erfahrung und Wirkung in Deutschland und Israel* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009), Alfons Kenkmann, Christoph Spieker, and Bernd Walter, *Wiedergutmachung als Auftrag: Begleitband zur gleichnamigen Daueraussstellung: Geschichtsort Villa Ten Hompel* (Essen: Klartext, 2007), Tobias Winstel, *Verhandelte Gerechtigkeit: Rückerstattung und Entschädigung für Jüdische NS-Opfer in Bayern und Westdeutschland* (München: Oldenbourg, 2006), Hans G. Hockerts, Claudia Moisel, and Tobias Winstel, *Grenzen der Wiedergutmachung: Die Entschädigung für NS-Verfolgte in West und Osteuropa 1945-2000* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006)

have been debated by historians at length.[26] This dissertation adds to this debate by focusing on some of the less frequently considered actors in this transformation process. In the analyzing the interactions between German Jewish refugees and West Germans, I identify the importance of the grassroots role of individuals from outside of the established political circles in driving projects—often against prolonged resistance—concerned with Jewish history and German-Jewish reconciliation. Local historians, archivists, and teachers were particularly important here, as were those who had their own personal history of opposition to the Nazis.[27]

On a broader level, this dissertation also contributes to the large body of works on German Jewish relations, a topic that historians, philosophers, writers and intellectuals have contemplated since the 19th century.[28] Among the most well known pieces is Gershom Scholem's 1964 essay on the German Jewish dialogue and symbiosis, a symbiosis which, he declared writing in Israel in the wake of the Holocaust, to have never existed.[29] Historian Dan Diner, adopted this notion of symbiosis and applied it to the postwar period, suggesting that by then the Holocaust had become the central element

---

[26] While 1968 was held to be the turning point in this consciousness, historians have recently dated this back to the late 1950s and early 1960s. Gasser and Steinweis (2006), see also Ulrich Herbert, *Wandlungsprozesse in Westdeutschland: Belastung, Integration, Liberalisierung 1945-1980* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002). See also Accounts like Frank Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge*: *Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany* (Oxford: Published for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem by Pergamon Press, 1992)

[27] See, for example, Neil Gregor, *Haunted City: Nuremberg and the Nazi Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), and Nils H. Roemer, *German City, Jewish Memory: The Story of Worms* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2010)

[28] The conference proceedings, edited by Leslie Morris and Jack Zipes, *Unlikely History: The Changing German-Jewish Symbiosis, 1945-2000* (New York: Palgrave, 2002) draws together some of the work that has been done on this relationship recently.

[29] Gershom Scholem, "Wider den Mythos vom deutsch-jüdischen Gespräch," Manfred Schlösser, *Auf gespaltenem Pfad Festschrift für Margarete Susman (*Darmstadt: Erato, 1964)

binding Germans and Jews together in a negative symbiosis.[30] Other scholars have recently departed from this analogy and instead characterized German Jewish history as one of entanglement, evading an essentializing binary conceptualization of the relationship and allowing for more complexity.[31] I too embrace this notion as referring to the relationship across time, since, while it has not always remained way or another, it has remained entangled. Within that general conceptualization however, the relationship can, at certain times, be characterized in more specific ways. In the postwar period, for example, I characterize interactions as frequently of a mutually constitutive kind, as German Jewish and non-Jewish German identities were mutually transformed and constructed through their encounters.[32]

Finally, I see my work in close conversation with emerging studies by a number of younger historians who have recently begun to pay specific attention to interpersonal relations between non-Jewish Germans and Jewish returnees to Germany. Among these are Froukje Demant's examinations of encounters between Jewish and non-Jewish former neighbors in rural regions in West German and Anna Koch's comparative study on the ways in which returning Jews constructed senses of home in Italy, West, and East

---

[30] Dan Diner, "Negative Symbiose," *Babylon* 1 (1986):9-20

[31] See Todd S. Presner, *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). Atina Grossmann also picks this up in her book *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007)

[32] I subsequently discovered that Steven Aschheim has used the "term co-constitutive" for German Jewish relations. Steven E. Aschheim, "German History and German Jewry: Boundaries, Junctions and Interdependence," *In times of crisis: Essays on European culture, Germans, and Jews* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 315-322

Germany.[33] My work is part of a growing scholarship that explores the diverse ways in which German Jews related to their former home and which, besides broadening our understanding of Jewish history after the Holocaust, also enhances our knowledge of German society after 1945.

Sources

In addition to drawing from a wide field of secondary sources, some of which I have touched upon above, I utilize a broad array of primary sources, including publications and internal documents of refugee organizations, West German governmental and municipal records, and personal narratives in the form of memoirs and oral histories. While individual chapters may rely heavily on a certain source base, depending on whether they cover community discourse or more personal experiences, the dissertation overall is a combination of individual and communal voices.

One key source I consistently rely upon throughout the entire account is *Aufbau* (Reconstruction).[34] The newspaper was founded by the German Jewish Club in New York in 1934. After starting with about 1,000 papers in the first year it quickly became the main publication for the German Jewish refugee community in the United States, putting out 50,000 copies in 1950. In addition, *Aufbau*'s readership was estimated to be much

---

[33] Both are currently completing their dissertations on these topics. See also Lina Nikou's studies on visitor programs of German cities.

[34] For accounts on *Aufbau*, see, for example, Will Schaber, Aufbau = Reconstruction: Dokumente Einer Kultur Im Exil (New York: The Overlook Press, 1972), Elke-Vera Kotowski (ed.), *Aufbau: Sprachrohr, Heimat, Mythos: Geschichte(n) einer deutsch-jüdischen Zeitung aus New York 1934 bis heute* (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2011), Benjamin Lapp, "The Newspaper Aufbau, its Evolving Politics, and the Problem of German-Jewish Identity, 1939–1955," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 58 (2013): 161-174.

greater than the number of publications, as the paper was frequently passed around.[35] The editorial staff was made up of many journalists who had been active in the Weimar Republic, largely of a politically liberal persuasion, and among its prominent contributors were commentators such as Thomas Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, and Hannah Arendt. While non-Jewish émigrés also wrote for the paper and read it, it was primarily a Jewish publication and the primary forum for public debate on anything that concerned the German Jewish refugee community at large. However, with its broad circulation conveying a representative character, and eminent contributors from both within and without, it developed a reach beyond the German Jewish community and thus also became an organ for the projection of refugee opinion. In this capacity it was used as a "mouthpiece" for the community to send sometimes quite direct messages, announcing the patriotism of the community to the American public and officials, for example, or hectoring German officials over restitution.

Since the editorial staff of the paper was closely related not only to the German Jewish Club but also the American Federation of Jews from Central Germany, the umbrella organization of German speaking Jewish refugees in the United States, its general editorial stance was reflective of that of community leaders in New York. However, it included regular pages reporting from different localities—sometimes even regional supplements—and letters to the editor columns, and thus displayed a variety of different voices and opinions from this group. As such, it is the single most important

---

[35] It was also read by German speaking refugees and emigrants outside of the United States. Kotowski, *Aufbau* (2011), 64f. See an overview of yearly publication numbers of page 66.

resource for capturing general community sentiment and identifying topics of discontent. Inevitably, however, it also functioned as an opinion former within the community, and may to some extent camouflage diversity of opinion. I have attempted to remain aware of this latter characteristic and bring attention to it when I observe it occurring.

Besides *Aufbau*, I make use of the publication of the refugee organization in Los Angeles. The small paper of the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. first appeared as *Neue Welt/ New World* in the 1930s, though only the 1939 special edition seems to have survived. The paper then continues after the war as *Mitteilungsblatt* and later under the English translation *Newsletter.* In addition to reports on community events, in the 1970s and 80s it increasingly featured articles from other publications on topics concerned with Germany, refugee history, and the Holocaust, reflecting the great interest of the community in their own history.

Beyond this publication, my research on Los Angeles is largely based on sources held in collections at the Feuchtwanger Memorial Library at the University of California, among them primarily the Felix Guggenheim Papers which provide rich material on the political work of the Club during the war years. I also consulted the "Collection of the Benefactors of the Jewish Club of 1933," a compendium compiled by the late Dr. Alvin Barbanell, the historian of the Jewish Club. This collection contains a broad array of sources related to the history of the organization. Dr. Barbanell also supplied many issues of the Club's newsletter. Also with respect to the situation in Los Angeles, I consulted the Max Nussbaum Papers at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati.

The source base on West German foreign policy are several collections from the Political Archive of the German Foreign Office. The Ministry did not have a specific department that dealt with questions of former German citizens of Jewish descent abroad nor did there appear to have existed a streamlined, written, policy on how to interact with that group of people.[36] Thus, I used larger collections related to the United States and my findings came from internal communications between different departments of the Foreign Ministry, often between the central office and diplomatic representations in the United States.

My research on the Berlin visitor program was conducted at the department responsible for the program at the Senate Chancellery in Berlin. While documents on the program's beginnings and internal workings no longer exist, I was able to consult files of individual visitors from all over the world, who participated in the program from its beginning in the 1970s to the 2000s. The files contained correspondences between the visitors and the city, including information on the personal background and motivations for applying for a visit. In addition to these, I also utilized separate collections of thank-you-letters to the city as well as the archive of the publication *Aktuell*, which is a regular magazine sent out by Berlin's Press and Information Office to former Berliner refugees.

Personal testimonies of German refugees make up a significant part of this dissertation. Memoirs provided one source for these individual perspectives, but the greater resource was oral history interviews, conducted in the 1970s, 80s and 90s by

---

[36] Based on my conversation with representatives of the Foreign Office, including the former special representative for relations to Jewish organizations and matters of antisemitism, as well as different archivists at the Political Archive.

various researchers. In addition, I conducted a number of interviews with German Jewish refugees myself. Because these were conducted only very recently, they mostly feature refugees who were teenagers or younger when they left Germany, with the notable exception of Annelise Bunzel, who was born in 1912. While not all of their voices are found verbatim in this work, their memories and insights informed my writings in the most significant ways.

Chapter Overview

The work commences with a first chapter providing background on the German Jewish refugees, their flight and immigration experience. The following Chapter Two covers the years 1935-1941. It focuses on the refugees' efforts to construct themselves as "valuable Americans" while balancing this with their German Jewish culture and identity. The chapter pays particular attention to the refugees' discussions and negotiations about how much attachment to Germany they ought to keep and what their Americanization should entail as Jews from Germany and new Americans.

The third chapter focuses on the time between 1941 and 1943 and the refugees' efforts to fight against being classified as enemy aliens by the U.S. government, which officially and inescapably linked and reduced them to their German origin, ignoring their Jewish identity and their specific history with Germany. On the West Coast of the U.S. this classification inhibited both their Americanization and their contribution to the war effort, which had become central concerns after their arrival in the US. In their argumentation against the classification, they strategically focused on emphasizing their

German Jewish refugee identity, as it was the only way to construct themselves as enemies of Nazi Germany and acceptable future Americans.

Chapter Four examines the experiences of German Jewish refugees as soldiers of the U.S. Armed Forces. It particularly analyzes how German Jewish refugee soldiers experienced their encounters with Germany, German soldiers in various contexts—on and off the battlefield, during and after battles—and German civilians. While the refugees' relationship with Germans can be characterized by the reversal of power between the two groups, the refugees did not exhaust this power. I argue that in interactions with Germans, it was most important for the refugees to act as decent human beings, a conduct which I contend is itself indelibly linked to their intertwined American German Jewish identity.

The fifth chapter shows how, between 1943 and the end of the war, Germany figured significantly in the refugees's intra-communal discussions. Most of the refugees had by this time been naturalized as American citizens and the security this afforded them sparked a new way of engaging with Germany. The chapter analyzes community discussions about the future of Germany, German Jewish involvement with a future German state as well as questions of retribution and reparations.

The last two chapters of the dissertation present case studies of German Jewish interactions in the postwar period. They do not aim to address all discourses in the community over Germany that happened between 1945 and 1988, but rather focus on important moments of community wide engagement with Germany and direct

interactions of refugees and Germans from different backgrounds and positions in West German society.

Chapter Six focuses on the 1950s and 1960s. In 1951, the passing of restitution legislation by the West German government became a first major point of acceptable contact with the country for many refugees after the war. This time period also saw the beginnings of German outreach activities to its former Jewish population around the world. Through an analysis of different points of interaction (such as restitution proceedings, social events, federal visitor programs) between the West German government, particularly its Foreign Office and diplomatic missions abroad, I elucidate the relationship between West Germany and the refugees and show why, and to what extent, this was important to both.

The seventh and final chapter further pursues direct interactions between German Jewish refugees and West Germans, as they occurred during trips refugees undertook to their former towns from the late 1960s to the late 1980s. I argue that German Jewish refugees were instrumental in the development of West German municipal invitation programs for their former Jewish citizens, which emerged beginning in the 1960s. I further illustrate how, in the context of a growing culture of Holocaust remembrance in the Federal Republic, the refugees and their visits were perceived as significant contributors to the construction of a new local and national German identity. The organized refugee community in the U.S. in turn welcomed this perception which gave rise to a revived focus on a specific German Jewish identity and heritage, which by the

1980s was fading away as refugees were dying and the disconnection of younger generations from Germany became apparent.

Chapter 1

Prologue

Leaving Germany

The following pages offer a brief background on the flight of Jewish refugees from Germany and their arrival in the United States.[1] They will provide a short introduction to community structures in New York in order to build a background for later discussions of their equivalents in Los Angeles that follow in the second chapter.

The majority of the people who are the focus of this dissertation, spent the crucial years of their self-formation—their high school and university education, their early professional life and their cultural socialization—in Germany. While antisemitism existed to varying degrees and forms in Imperial and Weimar Germany, it was not constantly the focus of Jewish consciousness and existence, and "most of Germany's Jews felt comfortable and safe enough to consider Germany their *Heimat,* or Home."[2] The approximately 530,000 Jews living in Germany during the Weimar Republic were diverse in economic, social, political, religious, and cultural aspects, and identified with their

---

[1] This chapter is included predominantly for narrative purposes as it falls largely outside the scope of my research. As such, it is not intended to be a comprehensive treatment of the subject.

[2] Marion Kaplan, "Changing Roles in Jewish Families," Francis Nicosia and David Scrase, *Jewish Life in Nazi Germany: Dilemmas and Responses* (New York: Berghahn Book, 2012), 15. See also Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), van Rahden, *Jews and Other Germans*

Jewishness and Germanness in different ways.[3] The great majority of Jews in Germany viewed themselves as integral to the German nation and culture. While there was a smaller group of secular Zionists and religious Orthodox Jews, for example, who identified very strongly as Jews—whether religiously or culturally—they still saw themselves as Germans by nationality.[4] Thus, Jews in Germany viewed themselves primarily as German citizens with commitments and ties of differing degrees and intensities to the Jewish faith, cultural tradition, and a Jewish heritage.[5]

The early years of the Weimar Republic in particular were a time and place in which many Jews felt that they could live as Germans *and* Jews. A look at the realm of culture and education, which takes an important place after emigration, may make this clear. *Bildung* (education, intellectual tradition) played a significant role in the emancipation process of German Jewry and education at the *Gymnasium*, the humanistic higher German public school, was common for the majority of the middle-class Jews. They identified greatly with the German culture of the classical poets, such as Goethe and Schiller, humanist thinkers and writers, like Kant and Lessing, and the canonically great classical composers. Jews also had a significant presence and impact as producers and

---

[3] On the scholarship on this topic, see for example Donald L. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany (*New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001), Marion Kaplan, *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), Till van Rahden, *Jews and Other Germans: Civil Society, Religious Diversity, and Urban Politics in Breslau, 1860-1925* (Madison, Wisc: University of Wisconsin Press 2000), Wolfgang Benz, Arnold Paucker, Peter G. Pulzer (eds.), *Jüdisches Leben in der Weimarer Republic* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), Michael A. Meyer et. al. (ed.) *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 1-4 (New York: Columbia UP, 1996-1998), and the *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*

[4] Steven M. Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson. The German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933-1983, Its Structure and Culture* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1989), 35; see also Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany*

[5] Francis Nicosia, "Introduction," in Francis Nicosia and David Scrase (eds.), *Jewish Life in Nazi Germany: Dilemmas and Responses* (New York: Berghahn Book, 2012), 8.

consumers in almost every realm of Weimar cultural life and were particularly influential in the modern arts.[6]

At the same time as their admiration for and immersion in German culture was sweeping, some Jewish Germans also pursued a heightened interest in a distinct Jewish culture and tradition and the creation of a "particular Jewish sphere" within the majority non-Jewish German society.[7] Jewish artists and musicians, for instance, composed works intended to carry and purvey a distinct Jewish identity. Also, new projects of Jewish community building emerged, which took such forms as the establishment of Jewish schools, the founding of Jewish youth groups, and local Jewish newspapers. While these developments must be understood at least partly as reactions to exclusion from non-Jewish German institutions, particularly as they became more frequent toward the end of the 1920s, they were also demonstrations of a German Jewish confidence.[8]

The takeover of the Nazis destroyed this atmosphere, in which German Jews could mostly be, if they pleased, Germans *and* Jews. Beginning in April of 1933, government approved discriminatory actions and new legislations step by step limited

---

[6] Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany*, 33. See Some historians state that refugee scholars—Laqueur was one of them—were motivated to write about significant achievements in order to illustrate the integration of Jews in German life, see Jost Hermand, "Juden in der Kultur der Weimarer Republik," in Walter Grab and Julius H. Schoeps, *Juden in der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart, 1986, 9). Also see Steven M. Lowenstein,"Jewish Participation in German Culture," in Michael A. Meyer (ed.) *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 305-336, and Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Between Germanism and Judaism, Christians and Jews" and "Jews within German Culture," in Michael A. Meyer (ed.) *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 4 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 157-194. Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper & Row), 1968.

[7] Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1996), 2

[8] See Brenner, *The Renaissance*, and Michael Brenner and Derek J. Penslar, *In Search of Jewish Community: Jewish Identities in Germany and Austria, 1918-1933* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998)

Jewish participation in virtually all areas of public life.[9] By 1935, almost all Jews were either prohibited from working in their professions or they were extremely restricted in pursuing them. Jewish businesses were subject to boycotts and "Aryanizations," but some still managed to function more or less well until the passing of a law geared at "eliminating" Jews from economic life in November 1938.[10] As regards education, some Jewish students left public high schools and universities even before laws excluded them officially, because the anti-Jewish atmosphere, and this seems to have been particularly true in big cities, made attendance unbearable.[11] The Nuremberg Race Laws of September 1935 intruded further into private life, prohibiting marriages and sexual relations between "Aryans" and Jews. The "Reich Citizenship Law" deprived Jews of full citizenship status with full political rights, which where from then on only granted to "Aryan Germans."[12] Increasingly, Jews had to rely on their own Jewish organizations for

---

[9] In what follows, I merely outline certain steps in this process. For a detailed history, see, for example, Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Persecution: Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 1933-1939 (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), See also Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

[10] Nicosia, "Introduction," 6

[11] Marion Kaplan, "Changing Roles in Jewish Families," in Francis Nicosia and David Scrase (eds.), *Jewish Life in Nazi Germany: Dilemmas and Responses* (New York: Berghahn Book, 2012), 21. Interestingly, German Jewish refugees often recall the legal measures of discrimination, like the boycott or the Nuremberg Laws, but when asked about personal experiences with direct antisemitism, they frequently say that they did not experience it that much. Kurt Herrmann, for example, told me about the boycott and the Nuremberg Laws, and said: "They restricted us in so many ways, too many to mention right now." When I asked him how he most felt the anti-Jewish discrimination, he answered: "I personally didn't feel it very much because I was still at school at the time and I was, eeh, on the soccer team, and I was a goalie, we were the heros, and we won our games, so I personally had no great antisemitism in my class and I was the only Jewish fellow in my class so, and the others had the same experience, there was not great antisemitism among us kids, because we were, as I say, too few to to, to make any difference, let's put it this way." Interview with the author, Los Angeles: November 16, 2005. Mark Roseman and Marion Berghahn had similar experiences in their interviews with German Jewish refugees and survivors.

[12] There is an extensive literature on this process of discrimination and exclusion. For a short list of measures see Francis Nicosia, "Introduction," 4ff.

providing social, cultural and recreational services, as they were excluded from state programs.[13]

Despite all this discrimination—and the Nazis' measures were geared toward driving Jews to leave Germany 'on their own accord'—Jewish emigration initially happened rather hesitantly. Between 1933 and 1938, 140,000 Jews left Germany, many of them heading to neighboring countries.[14] The decision to leave Germany was very difficult and even once it was made, numerous factors made actual emigration ever more complicated. Often, if people could find reasons to justify staying, they did so. Also, as one Jewish woman pointed out: every Jew "knew a decent German" and many refugees held on to the belief that not all Germans were Nazis.[15] In this vein, many also believed then that "the radical Nazi laws would never be carried out because they did not match the moderate character of the German people."[16] Also, within families, men and women often had different notions about emigration, which resulted from the different roles they occupied in everyday life.[17] Men, who seem to have been the main decision makers, were generally more reluctant to leave Germany.[18] Especially in the years when Jewish men

---

[13] Nicosia "Introduction," 5f., Herbert A. Strauss, *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA*, vol. 6, *Essays on the History, Persecution, and Emigration of German Jews* (New York: K.G. Saur, 1987), 190

[14] Nicosia, "Introduction," 7

[15] Theja Sommer, who would eventually emigrate to Angeles, said in an interview, for example: "We absolutely did not have hatred of Germans. During the time that we were still in Germany, we had some very good experiences with some Germans who were very nice. I even worried that they might say things that would put them in danger with the Nazis! The problem was Hitler and the group that supported his ideas, not among the regular people. Among the people that we knew in Germany, I don't know anybody toward who we would have any personal resentment." In Ruth E. Wolman, *Crossing Over: An Oral History of Refugees from Hitler's Reich* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), 158.

[16] Charlotte Hamburger writes this in her memoirs, cited in Kaplan in Nicosia (2012), 29

[17] See Kaplan, "Changing Roles"

[18] Kaplan, "Changing Roles," 29f

were still able to somehow make a living, it seemed for many unwise to leave this relative security and "beloved homeland," as one refugee put it, for a foreign place with no prospects of work awaiting.[19] For men, losing their job in Germany also meant losing their status, a primary marker of their identity, and a painful experience for many. The majority of women did not work and even when they did, it appears that their attachment to the job was less important and that they thought more immediately about the ways in which the new situation affected their family's safety.[20] Through their children and their daily interactions in a majority non-Jewish environment, they experienced the changing conditions more intimately. Men increasingly worked in all-Jewish environments, as German businesses would not employ, and thus did not have as much everyday interaction with the potentially hostile and antisemitic world. Marion Kaplan points out that men also often disregarded women's alerts as exaggerated and that many women must have heard the German saying "nothing is ever eaten as hot as it's cooked," meaning that what looked very threatening in prospect would not ultimately be nearly so bad.[21]

The November Pogrom of 1938 changed this outlook and more than half of the total Jewish emigration from Germany happened thereafter.[22] During the night of November 9, violent mobs, orchestrated by National Socialist leaders, destroyed and

---

[19] Kaplan, "Changing Roles," 25f

[20] Ibid, 27

[21] Ibid, 29

[22] Hagit Lavsky, "The Impact of 1938 on German-Jewish Emigration and Adaptation in Palestine, Britain and the USA," in Susanne Heim, Beate Meyer, Francis R. Nicosia, *"Wer bleibt, opfert seine Jahre, vielleicht sein Leben." Deutsche Juden 1938-1941* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010), 209

burned hundreds of synagogues, more than 8000 Jewish businesses, and murdered about 91 Jews all over Germany. About 30,000 Jewish men were imprisoned in concentration camps.[23] Their release was made contingent upon proof of prospective emigration and as a result, women were often the ones who had to try to find ways to leave Germany. Emigration became ever more difficult from that point on, however. The Evian Conference of July 1938, supposed to find a solution to the growing number of people wanting to leave Germany, failed, as the 32 participating countries showed themselves unable to reach agreements that would help the refugees.[24] While the U.S. and Britain relaxed the rules toward Jewish visa applicants in 1938 for a little while in response to the failure of Evian, the annexation of Austria, and the events of the Pogrom, this was not enough to help the growing number of people who now saw leaving as their only option.[25] Worse still, by 1938-39, the Nazi Regime had built up a whole bureaucracy of rules and restrictions "to harass and humiliate" even Jews who wanted to leave.[26] They were required to file various documents, appear at various offices, receive clearances, and pay increasingly higher taxes before they could emigrate.[27]

Even when people were able to overcome these obstacles and were lucky enough to obtain visas, they sometimes turned out to be invalid last minute, or sudden changes to

---

[23] Susanne Heim, Beate Meyer, Francis R. Nicosia, *"Wer bleibt, opfert seine Jahre, vielleicht sein Leben." Deutsche Juden 1938-1941* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010), 11; Tim Kirk, *Nazi Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 184

[24] Heim et. al. *"Wer bleibt, opfert seine Jahre,"*10

[25] See Lavsky, "The Impact of 1938," 211

[26] Those are the words of one refugee, Ann Ikenberg, in: Ruth E. Wolman, *Crossing Over: An Oral History of Refugees from Hitler's Reich* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), xxiv

[27] Wolman, *Crossing Over*, xxiv

immigration laws or to admission requirements made entry to the destination country impossible.[28] Kurt Herrmann from Nordhausen, for example, wanted to emigrate to the United States and was able to secure an affidavit from a relative in New York. Since his quota number was not up yet, he tried to get out of Germany via Cuba, for which he was able to obtain papers. When he found out that he needed 5000 US dollars to enter Cuba—a sum he did not have—he had to cancel the trip and return the ticket he had already purchased to the travel agency. The receipt of his trip to Cuba still in his pocket, he was arrested during the November Pogrom and taken to Buchenwald concentration camp. Upon the announcement that people who had papers to emigrate should report to head of the camp, he presented the receipt and was released.[29] Fortunate to have gotten out, Herrmann wanted to leave Germany immediately but was faced with the problem that it was almost impossible to get visas to any country at this point. Shanghai was the only place that took German Jews without visas, but Herrmann had set his mind on going to the Unites States. Like many others, he made his way illegally into Belgium and eventually managed to get to New York in 1939.

With the outbreak of the war in Europe on September 1, 1939, many countries closed their borders completely, while the situation for Jews remaining in Germany worsened again considerably. For those who had emigrated to neighboring countries the situation was soon to be little better. When German troops invaded the western European

---

[28] For details on immigration restrictions for German Jewish refugees, see, for example, David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968), David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), Richard Breitmann and Alan M. Kraut, *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987)

[29] Interview with Kurt Herrmann, conducted by the author, Los Angeles: November 16, 2005

countries in 1940, the German Jews who had initially found a refuge there were once again again in harms way. Finding a place overseas that would take them in was immensely difficult and most of these German Jews were ultimately deported to concentration camps.[30] Marianne Barbanell, then Rothstein, and her family was able to escape essentially because they possessed sufficient financial assets. The Rothstein's had left Germany in 1938 for the Netherlands, where they spent three and a half years in Amsterdam. When the German army occupied the Netherlands, her mother, certain that they would not survive if they were not to leave, pressed for action. Through the help of the Brazilian consul who lived in the same apartment building, the family obtained visas for Brazil. By the time the Rothstein's were able to get out of the Netherlands, however, these visas had expired. Because Marianne's father—who had been a banker in Berlin—had the financial means to pay the required sum for the family to enter Cuba, they were saved. The Rothstein's eventually arrived in Los Angeles in December of 1941.[31]

By that time, Jewish emigration from Germany had virtually ceased. The first deportation train had left Berlin on October 18, 1941, transporting over one thousand Jews to the Łódź ghetto, and on October 23, 1941, the Nazis officially prohibited Jewish emigration from the Reich.[32] Of the around 530,000 Jews who had lived in Germany in 1933, 300,000 ultimately managed to make their way out, most of them young people

---

[30] For more detail on the situation in occupied countries, see Frank Caestecker, "Jewish refugee Aid Organizations in Belgium and the Netherlands and the Flight from Nazi Germany, 1938-1940," in Heim et al. *"Wer bleibt, opfert seine Jahre,"* 166-191

[31] Interview with Marianne Barbanell, conducted by the author, Beverly Hills: December 6, 2005

[32] On the first deportations, see Andrea Löw, "Die frühen Deportation aus dem Reichsgebiet von Herbst 1939 bis Frühjahr 1941," in Heim et al. *"Wer bleibt, opfert seine Jahre,"* 59-76

between sixteen and thirty-nine.[33] While German Jews ended up in many different locations around the world, the major centers of refuge between 1933 and 1940 where the United States, with roughly 90,0000 refugees (about 132,000 at the end of the war), Central and South America with circa 84,000, Palestine with 66,000 and Shanghai with 15,000-18,000 refugees.[34] Emigration, or flight—perhaps a more adequate term, especially with regard to the later years—was traumatic, difficult and a process that often extended to years of hardships. Examining the experiences of refugees in the United States shows, however, that the majority of these refugees, and the young ones definitely held an advantage, were able to build new lives and thrive.

United States of America—New York City

The United States was a preferred country of refuge for many German Jews—not least because some had relatives there who could supply them with the financial affidavits necessary for the visa application. Nevertheless, most of the refugees did not know what to expect and their imagining of the United States was frequently quite distorted and exaggerated. The majority of refugees had gathered their knowledge of the States from books, American tourists visiting Europe, and, of course, the American movies which swept through Europe in the 1920s.[35] One German Jewish student remarked: "In school I had been taught quite properly about American geography, etc.,

---

[33] Herbert A. Strauss, "Jewish Emigration from Germany-Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses I," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 25 (1980), 318

[34] Strauss, *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA*, vol. 6,186-244

[35] Davie, *Refugees in America*, 48.

but in my head there was a curious mixture of skyscrapers, kidnappers, horses, Indians, guns, Broadway and Hollywood."[36] Another German Jewish immigrant wrote, in a partly biographical account of immigration to America, that his idea of the United States was fabricated by the movies, which made him believe in the "crudeness and violence and the immense cities, on the one hand, and the glitter and superficiality, on the other."[37] A study investigating the notions of the newcomers—generally viewing themselves as culturally very sophisticated—reveals that one of the most widespread notions was the idea that, in contrast to Germany, the United States was a society with no culture and without much respect or interest for the fine arts and music.[38] Instead, they imagined a society driven by business and money, a country dominated by large cities with skyscrapers and no nature, and criminals and swindlers controlling those cities. The only seemingly positive attribute, as taken from the study, was the idea that everything was up to the highest technical standards.[39]

This somewhat elitist thinking was to some degree part of the culture that the refugees came from. In most cases, this cultural baggage did not prevent them from opening up to the realities of the United States though. Atina Grossman even argues that

---

[36] Ibid, 49

[37] Leo Grebler, *German-Jewish Immigrants to the United States During the Hitler Period: Personal Reminiscences and General Observations*, ([Los Angeles?]: Grebler, 1976), 28.

[38] Historians have long pointed to the wave of Americanization that caught Europe and especially Germany in the 1920s, in such forms as Fordism, Taylorism, and American popular culture. The popularity of American popular culture during the Weimar Republic was subject to great debate and the attitude of cultural superiority over American culture as some refugees displayed it can be traced to such debates within Germany. See, for example, Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992) and Eric D. Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2007)

[39] Davie, *Refugees in America*, 49.

it may have prepared them well for what they embarked on; "that precisely because much of Weimar culture they had grown up with was international and cosmopolitan, a certain kind of cultural transfer was possible, and not only in a backward-looking nostalgic way."[40] Grossmann ascribes to the German Jewish refugees a certain adaptability, which allowed them to live "with remarkable enterprise, good humor, and success in a dizzying variety of locations."[41] Of course, factors like time of emigration, age, and individual circumstances all contributed to how easily and quickly this happened, or did not, for people, and the beginning was very difficult for the great majority. However, starting a new life in the multi-ethnic United States was in many ways easier than in South America or Palestine.

New York was the city where the majority of refugees entered the United States and subsequently settled. At the end of the 1930s, approximately 600,000 people of German descent lived in New York, among them an estimated number of 50,000 refugees.[42] Those who had come from Germany decades ago had built up a "German infrastructure," including a German language press, German and German Jewish Clubs, and German Jewish synagogues.[43] The German language newspapers, like *Neue Volkszeitung, Staatszeitung,* and most important, the German Jewish publication *Aufbau*

---

[40] Atina Grossmann, "German Jews as Provincial Cosmopolitans: Reflections from the Upper West Side," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 53 (2008), 159f.

[41] This information seems to be based on her own observations growing up in a family and community of German Jewish refugees. Ibid., 157

[42] Claudia Appelius*, "Die schönste Stadt der Welt:" Deutsch-jüdische Flüchtlinge in New York* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2003), 159

[43] Ibid.

helped the newcomers to orient themselves, directing them to German shops, restaurants, doctors and such.[44]

German Jewish refugees did not move into the traditional German neighborhoods, such as Yorkville on Manhattan's Upper East Side, as previous Jewish immigrants from Germany had done. While the German atmosphere in Yorkville may have been soothing to the refugees in one way, because it had bakeries and restaurants providing familiar goods, it may also have reminded them too much of the Germany they had just fled. In the 1930s, these neighborhoods became increasingly Nazi friendly and many of the inhabitants were members of the Nazi German-American Bund.[45] Thus, the refugees tended to mingle amongst their own group by moving in great numbers to the Upper West Side and to Washington Heights, and to a lesser degree to Forrest Hills, Kew Gardens, and Jackson Heights in Queens.[46]

In the heavily German Jewish neighborhoods of Manhattan, refugees opened their own bakeries, kosher butcher shops, service companies and little businesses. Washington Heights eventually became the most German Jewish neighborhood in the United States, a fact that some acknowledged by calling it the "Fourth Reich."[47] It was particularly attractive for many refugees because of its large apartments (which allowed them to

---

[44] The German language New York *Staats-Zeitung* increasingly published articles that showed that certain streams of Nazi ideology had found agreement among several of their journalists. The *Aufbau* kept a close eye on these developments and featured discussions about it in their newspaper. See, for example *Aufbau* 2 (December 1935); (May 1936); (June 1937); (July 1937):1f

[45] Appelius, *Die schönste Stadt,* 170, Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson*, 45. See *Aufbau* 1 (June 1, 1935): 2f.

[46] Appelius, *Die schönste Stadt*, 178

[47] Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson*, 71

sublet rooms to other refugees), the nearby parks, affordable rents, and increasingly the fact that other refugees had moved there.[48] Washington Heights differed from the German and Eastern European Jewish neighborhoods in New York City insofar as it provided a "traditional Jewish and small-town German atmosphere."[49] In this regard, it also differed from other areas where German Jews lived in greater density, such as Manhattan's Upper West Side, where the "more 'sophisticated'" refugees created a neighborhood, which "became in some ways an inadequate ersatz extension of Weimar Berlin and in other ways a new and better urbane metropolis."[50] Thus, the different groups of German Jewish refugees built their own neighborhoods and while they in some ways tried to create structures that reminded them of their old home, they also joined and created organizations that helped them in America.

The largest and most important organization for German Jewish refugees in New York was the German Jewish Club, from 1940 on functioning under the name New World Club, comprising a membership of about 2000 in 1942.[51] The Club was one of several organizations that were founded by prior Jewish immigrants from Germany, which became very important in providing the refugees of the 1930s and 40s with initial assistance. Jewish World War I veterans—who had fought for Germany in WWI prior to

---

[48] Ibid, 45

[49] Ibid, 71, see Lowenstein's study for a detailed account on the community. Interestingly, Lowenstein states that: "Compared with the average member of the refugee wave the Washington Heights settler was less intellectual, less wealthy, more 'Jewish,' and less 'assimilated.' Jewish religion and Jewish ethnic identification were much stronger in Washington Heights than was average for the refugees." See more on pg. 25.

[50] Grossmann, "German Jews as Provincial Cosmopolitans," 158, 165

[51] Eike Middell (ed.), *Exil in den USA mit einem Bericht "Schanghai—Eine Emigration am Rande*" (Frankfurt am Main: Röderberg-Verlag, 1980), 119

immigrating to the United States—founded the German Jewish Club in 1924.[52] They primarily considered themselves German and created their organization as a "confession of faith in German culture."[53] With the increasing influx of German Jewish refugees in the 1930s and 1940s, the German Jewish Club of New York prioritized its goal of helping German Jews become socially and culturally integrated into American life.[54] For this purpose, the organization began publishing a monthly bulletin called *Aufbau* in 1934, which soon became the most important refugee newspaper in the United States and beyond.[55] The change of the German Jewish Club's focus to Americanization shows that, for the refugees, an organization that solely worked to preserve and celebrate German culture in New York did not effectively serve them.[56] For them, building an life in America was of urgent necessity because a return to Germany was out of the question, in a way it had never been for previous Jewish immigrants.

Still, at the same time as they made efforts to integrate into American life, the refugees—like other immigrant groups before them—sought to recreate a social and cultural environment that was close to what they had been used to in their former home country. The German Jewish Club offered a cultural program of theatre performances,

---

[52] Robert E. Cazden, *German Exile Literature in America 1933-1950: A History of the German Press and Book Trade (*Chicago: American Library Association, 1970), 62.

[53] Joachim Radkau, *Die deutsche Emigration in den USA: Ihr Einfluß auf die amerikanische Europapolitik 1933-1945* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1971), 127.

[54] Will Schaber, *Aufbau Reconstruction; Dokumente einer Kultur im Exil* (New York: Overlook Press, 1972), 416. Schaber cites from *Aufbau*, April 1, 1939 where its says: „Der German-Jewish Club bezweckt den Zusammenschlus deutschsprachiger Juden, um ihnen die gesellschaftliche und kulturelle Einordnung in das amerikanische Leben zu ermöglichen."

[55] Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson*, 47.

[56] See also Fritz Schlesinger, "Immigration-Organisation" *Aufbau*, vol. 3 (March 1937): 5

literature readings, and music recitals that catered to the intellectual needs of its members.[57] The Prospect Unity Club, which had also been founded by previous German Jewish immigrants, featured a less intellectual program and provided more entertainment and sports. After the Club moved from Yorkville to Washington Heights in 1938—because of the increasing number of refugees dwelling there who had become members—its club house also became a prominent gathering place for other organizations founded by the refugees.[58] Such other organizations were of various nature and ranged from synagogues to political groups, knitting circles, *Landsmannschaften*, and sports clubs.[59]

These networks and the company of fellow refugees made New York City an attractive place to settle for a great number of refugees. They described the city, which reminded some of Berlin, as exciting, full of opportunities and even, as "the most beautiful city in the world."[60] While the majority of the refugees were able to establish new lives in New York, however, there were others who were not able to secure adequate employment, found the large city isolating, too expensive or just plainly disliked it. Rabbi Joachim Prinz, formerly rabbi in Berlin who settled in Newark, also criticized that many refugees rarely got to see the "real America," as they spent most of their life in a Jewish

---

[57] The results of a 1980 survey referred to by Steven Lowenstein shows that only 18.6% of the members of the New World Club were blue-collar workers, while the Prospect Unity Club had more than 35% blue-collar workers among their members. See Lowenstein (1989), 288, n. 11. Both Clubs at times attempted to work together. *Aufbau* 3 (Feb. 1937): 4, features a small article reporting about a meeting of the boards of both clubs: "Bei dieser Gelegenheit wurde nicht nur die alte Freundschaft zwischen den beiden Organisationen bekräftigt, sondern auch besonders betont, dass sich beide Vorstände bemühen wollen, die Mitglieder zu einem harmonischen Zusammenarbeiten der deutschen Juden New Yorks zu erziehen."

[58] Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson*, 104, 46

[59] See Ibid. for more information about social clubs and religious organizations in Washington Heights.

[60] Davie, *Refugees in America*, 49

enclave.[61] Agencies like the the National Refugee Service, an aid organization set up to aid European refugees, the American Committee for Christian Refugees, the Committee for Catholic Refugees from Germany, and the American Friends Service Committee undertook efforts to decrease the concentration of refugees in New York City, in order to provide better opportunities for American acculturation and employment.[62] As during previous waves of immigration, resettlement programs were set up and representatives of these organizations promoted the opportunities and advantages life outside of New York could offer, in lectures they gave at social clubs and synagogues.[63] Refugees were offered different choices and could express preferences for a region. In many cases this was a decision that was made based on the prospective employment situation. In this way, one refugee who was an engineer went to Cincinnati because it had several industries that could hire him. Another woman found it advantageous to have left New York City for other reasons: "We are very glad we moved to Kansas City. In New York, people stick too much together and speak too much German. For the first year in the United States I did not speak English. When I came here I made mistakes, but talked anyway." Ultimately, approximately 15,000 refugees were resettled through this program in communities of various size throughout the United States.[64]

---

[61] Benz, *Das Exil der kleinen Leute*, 12

[62] Gerhart Saenger, *Today's Refugees, Tomorrow's Citizens: A Story of Americanization*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941, 231.

[63] Ibid, 232.

[64] Questionnaire from the Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe, in Davie, *Refugees in America*, 82

Refugees also left New York of their own accord, mostly when they had relatives or friends who reported about good opportunities in the places they had moved to. Annelise and Franz Bunzel, for example, who had come to New York from Hamburg in January 1939, left the city at the suggestion of Franz's brother. While Annelise had been able to find a job as a domestic quite soon after their arrival in New York—something that was true for most female refugees—her husband, formerly a judge in Hamburg, was not as fortunate. Franz's brother had moved to Los Angeles a few years earlier upon the advice of another friend and told the couple that it was easier to find employment there.[65] Thus, after spending a few weeks in Washington Heights, the couple moved to Los Angeles.

Another refugee from Berlin, William Stagen, had very good job offers in New York, but decided to leave for more quotidian reasons, as he simply disliked life in the city, the unpleasant summers and the crowded, noisy subways. He did not want his children to grow up there and decided to head to the American west coast in 1936.[66] While refugees moved to various places in the United States, the American west coast became a preferred destination, particularly Los Angeles, which grew into the second largest German Jewish refugee community after New York. While New York and the

---

[65] Interview with Annelise Bunzel, conducted by author, Los Angeles: February 4, 2005. Annelise Bunzel was born as Annlise Münden on October 18, 1912 in Hamburg. When her fiance Franz Bunzel (born 1896) was forced to "retire" from his position as judge and lost his subsequent position at a private bank, the couple decided to leave Germany in 1938. They were married upon their arrival in the United States. See also http://www.jmberlin.de/1933/en/2013/07/24/letter-informing-the-judge-franz-bunzel-of-his-forced-retirement/

[66] Original words of William Stagen. Interview with William Stagen, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: Jan. 1, 1972. LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1337416. William Stagen was born as Wilhelm Stadthagen on January 22, 1892 in Berlin. He left Germany in 1934 for England and came to the US in 1936. Stagen would in the 1960s become president of the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. in Los Angeles.

American east coast were places where the refugees, despite all that was foreign to them, could find scenery, things, or people that were reminiscent of Germany, Los Angeles was a place that was much different than what they were used to.

Parts of this chapter are a reprint of my M.A. Thesis "German Jewish Refugees in Los Angeles: A Jewish Club and the Americanization Process from 1938-1943," submitted at California State University, Northridge in 2005. I have also used parts of this research in my essay "Zwischen-Orte: Dimensionen von Identität deutsch-jüdischer Migranten" published in *Makom Orte und Räume im Judentum. Real. Abstrakt. Imaginär. Essays*. Michal Kümper, Barbara Rösch, Ulrike Schneider, and Helen Thein (eds.), Haskala, vol. 35. Hildesheim: Olms, 2007, 311-320.

Chapter 2

The German Jewish Refugees and the Americanization Process, 1935-1941

Introduction

In her memoir, Ilse Davidsohn, a German Jew from Berlin, likened the attachment to Germany of many of her German Jewish friends to that of the mythical image of the German oak. She writes that they felt themselves to be "rooted endlessly deep in German soil, language, art and German thought."[1] Nevertheless, faced with increasing discrimination and persecution in National Socialist Germany from 1933 on, for many German Jews it became increasingly difficult to avoid considering emigration. How absurd this notion of leaving Germany was for them, Davidsohn continued by writing: "And one cannot just say to a German oak: From today on, you are not a German oak any longer. Pull out your roots from this soil and go away!"[2]

The scholarship on and memoirs written by German Jewish refugees testify to the attachment of German Jews to Germany and the traumatic experience that leaving that country was for them. It describes the struggles and difficulties they faced trying to build a new existence, and a new home, in the countries they emigrated to. Most frequently,

---

[1] Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Das Exil der kleinen Leute: Alltagserfahrungen deutscher Juden in der Emigration* (München: C.H. Beck, 1991), 10

[2] Ibid. Also, I took parts of Benz's English translation of the original German from "Exile Studies: Development and Trends," Gisela Holfter (ed.), *German-speaking Exiles in Ireland 1933-1945* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006)

treatments of this topic stress the persistence of German traditions and habits among the refugees and present a story in which the "Beinunskis"—those who earned their name because of their frequent lamentations that "bei uns (meaning, at home in Germany) everything was better"—appear to have been the stereotypical representatives of that group.[3] I attempt to deconstruct this stereotype and diversify the picture.[4] We will see that the strong feelings for their former home and their clinging to certain traditions did not result in the refugees' constantly looking backwards and a complete orientation of their lives toward Germany. The early years of the emigration experience were indeed very much shaped by the refugees' habitus and memories of their lives prior to the Nazi onslaught, but they also carried the memories of persecution and the trauma of leaving Germany and loved ones behind. To this was added an acute awareness of the actions of the German Nazi State after the refugees had arrived in the United States in the late 1930s and early 1940s. For the vast majority of the refugees, then, these latter experiences resulted in a very strong notion that a return to Germany could not be in their future and as such, building new lives in the United States became their most important concern. This chapter focuses on the refugees' efforts to construct themselves as "valuable Americans," while balancing this with their German Jewish identity. The refugees were a

---

[3] Mark M. Anderson, "Introduction," in Mark M. Anderson (ed.), *Hitler's Exiles: Personal Stories of the Flight from Nazi Germany to America* (New York: The New Press, 1998), 5; Peter Gay, "Moritz Fröhlich—Morris Gay: A German Refugee in the United States," Monna and Otto Weinmann Lecture, Washington, DC.: United States Holocaust Museum, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, 1999, 8.

[4] I concur with Atina Grossmann's characterizations of the refugees in her article "German Jews as Provincial Cosmopolitans: Reflections from the Upper West Side," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*. 53.1 (2008) and Deborah R. Weiner's contributions in Anita Kassof, Avi Y. Decter, and Deborah R. Weiner, *Lives Lost, Lives Found: Baltimore's German Jewish Refugees, 1933-1945* (Baltimore, Md: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2004)

heterogenous group of people who held various different imaginations of Germanness, and these they integrated with their perceptions of America as they constructed their new lives in the United States.

Because of this attachment to Germanness and the various forms it took, this chapter pays particular attention to the refugees' discussions and negotiations about what their Americanization should entail, especially how much attachment to Germany they should keep, both as Jews from Germany and as new Americans. These discussions about Americanization were always as much about what it meant to become American as it was what it meant to have been a German of Jewish descent. The discussions reveal that this process was one of constant negotiation and emotional upheaval for the refugees and that it was greatly affected by the greater political situation in the United States and Europe. For most German Jewish refugees, Americanization involved not only a pragmatic effort to function in American society, but also a desire to symbolically detach themselves from Germany. Because of the fraught historical circumstances the refugees found themselves in, though, almost all pragmatic decisions taken to Americanize were entangled in symbolic meanings and they were under scrutiny by the refugees themselves, particularly through the organized refugee community, as well as by the American public. In some sense, the refugee community hoped that Americanization could be both: lift the burden of the difficult German Jewish past and be a panacea to the problems of being a German Jewish refugee.

While the majority of scholarship on ordinary refugees in America focuses on individual experiences, I pay particular attention to the organized Jewish refugee

community and how it negotiated questions of Americanization. My main focus is on the second largest refugee organization in the U.S., the German Jewish Club in Los Angeles, later called the Jewish Club of 1933, which had about 1600 members in 1939. In addition, I analyze the discourse on Americanization in *Aufbau.*

Los Angeles

Exiled in Paradise, *Strangers in Paradise*, and *Driven into Paradise* are but a few of the titles of books that have been written about the stories of the famous European intellectuals and artists who came to Los Angeles in the 1930s and 40s.[5] Those who arrived in Los Angeles before the Second World War encountered "an idyllic garden city," that stretched across 451 square miles from the mountains to the Pacific.[6] Downtown, no building was higher than the twenty-six-story city hall, and the rest of the city was "an agglomerate of suburbs, loosely strung together," in which apartment complexes and bungalows where surrounded with an abundance of green.[7] Some of the famous émigrés were not too enthusiastic about the prospect of living in this sort of city. The writer Alfred Döblin disliked having to spend so much time "in the greenness,"

---

[5] Anthony Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America from the 1930s to the Present* (New York: Viking Press, 1983), John Russel Taylor, *Strangers in Paradise: The Hollywood Emigrés 1933-1950* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983), *Driven into Paradise: L.A.'s European Jewish Emigrés of the 1930s and 1940s* was the title of a 2005 exhibition at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles. Holger Gumprecht, '*New Weimar' unter Palmen. Deutsche Schriftsteller im Exil in Los Angeles* (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998), and Erhard Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007)

[6] Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific*, 10. The WPA Guide to Los Angeles in the 1930s describes the impression Los Angeles had on newcomers as an encounter with "a modern Promised Land. It amazes and delights him, and thaws him out physically and spiritually. There is a heady fragrance in the air, and a spaciousness of sky and land and sea that give him a new sense of freedom and tempt him to taste new pleasures, new habits or living, new religions." Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration, *Los Angeles in the 1930s: The WPA Guide to the City of Angels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 4, 6

[7] Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific*, 10, *Los Angeles in the 1930s*, 6

exclaiming that he "was not a cow" and writer and poet Berthold Brecht composed a poem about the "hellish" nature of Los Angeles:

> In Hell too
> There are, I've no doubt, these luxurious gardens
> With flowers as big as trees, which of course whither
> Unhesitantly if not nourished with very expensive water. And fruit markets
> With great heaps of fruit, albeit having
> Neither smell nor taste. And endless processions of cars
> Lighter than their own shadows, faster than
> Mad thoughts, gleaming vehicles in which
> Jolly-looking people come from nowhere and are nowhere bound.
> And houses, built for happy people, therefore standing empty
> Even when lived in.[8]

The Germanist Erhard Bahr has argued that, for these intellectuals, the beauty of the landscape, juxtaposed with the realities of persecution, exile, and war, "functioned like a Hollywood set that produced alienation because of its apparent perfection."[9] Not all of the famous émigrés felt as Brecht did, that Los Angeles was such a dreadful place to live. Writers Thomas Mann and Lion Feuchtwanger, despite their pain in being in exile, came to enjoy their lives in their beautiful houses in the hills of Pacific Palisades, north of Los Angeles, and their regular walks by the ocean. While one historian believes that the descriptions of their relatively luxurious and idyllic lifestyles are a distortion of the image of the émigré and exile experience, the following recollections show that ordinary refugees appreciated the pleasant features of California.[10]

---

[8] Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific,* 79, excerpt from Brecht's poem.

[9] Ibid, 11

[10] Benz, *Das Exil der kleinen Leute*, 8

Remembering her arrival in Los Angeles in 1939, Annelise Bunzel, for example, remarked: "it was just ideal … it was like a resort. The sun was shining, you had the smell of the orange blossoms when you were driving ... it was really beautiful."[11] Ann Ikenberg who came with her husband the same year, also recounted: "Ach, we thought it was all so unbelievably beautiful! On Figueroa Street—real palm trees!"[12] The young refugee student Heinz Berggruen, writing in Berkeley in 1937, even found that the pleasant environment ameliorated the difficult refugee experience:

> ... the beauty of the landscape, which with its harmonic diversity of forests, lakes, the ocean and the mountains often reminds one of the most beautiful parts of northern Italy or Switzerland, and the ideal climate—for nine months it does not rain at all, and at the same time it is never too hot or too dry—make the beginning also easier.[13]

> In contrast to New York City, which appealed to many refugees because it offered features reminiscent of home, California represented something less conventional, as it evoked memories and imaginations of exotic places associated with holidays and recreation. This sensation of starting a

---

[11] Interview with Annelise Bunzel, conducted by author, Los Angeles: February 4, 2005.

[12] Interview with Ann Ikenberg, in: Ruth E. Wolman, *Crossing Over: An Oral History of Refugees from Hitler's Reich* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), 101. This idyllic character of Los Angeles is also reflected in a number of publications on the refugee and emigré experience in Southern California. See, for example: Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise,* Taylor, *Strangers in Paradise,* and Erhard Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific*

[13] Heinz Berggruen, "Als Student in Kalifornien, Berkeley, Mitte Mai 1937." Translation mine; the original German is: "...die Schönheit der Landschaft, die in ihrer harmonischen Vielfalt von Wäldern, Seen, Meer und Gebirge oft an die schönsten Teile Oberitaliens oder der Schweiz erinnert, und das ideale Klima—neun Monate hindurch regnet es überhaupt nicht, zugleich ist es nie zu heiß oder zu trocken—machen den Anfang außerdem leichter." In *Heimat und Exil: Emigration der deutschen Juden nach 1933*, Stiftung Jüdisches Musuem Berlin und Stiftnung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (eds.), (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2006),185

> new life in a beautiful place, where others go for vacation, may have indeed helped some of the refugees in coping with the loss of their home.[14]

The image of California as a place where one can start a new home was actively evoked by some refugees. In the 1939 special edition of *Neue Welt* (New World), the press organ of the German Jewish Club in Los Angeles, the refugees portrayed their determination to do so, by presenting themselves as immigrants to the United States, who, like so many others before them, found a haven in the United States from "persecution, humiliation and demoralization." [15] California is then depicted as a kind of promised land:

Those of us who are fortunate enough to live in California can consider it a special privilege to live amid the snow-covered mountains, near the blue Pacific and amid the fragrance of the orange blossoms in all of their glory. To this country nature has given everything and refused nothing. The longer we live here, the more we understand our California friends when they speak of this as "God's Own Country."

This short excerpt is an example of the very optimistic and positive attitude many refugees presented to each other and to the American public after their arrival in the 1930s and 40s. However, reading on through this special issue of the journal, one comes

---

[14] A letter from Felix Guggenheim, who arrived in 1940, to an Austrian refugee friend on the East Coast, clearly shows the optimism that some felt about being in California: "California is very tempting. The climate and the way of enjoying life have a great influence on everybody. The population is increasing every month and there are many opportunities. But of course job hunting isn't an easy business even here. Considering the pro and contra I should say that California would be the right place for you to go if you don't think that the job you have now is the right thing for you. […] We are very happy here and are grateful to our fate that we are here. And there are so many friends here that you feel at home very soon." Letter from Felix Guggenheim to Frederick A. Praeger (August 25, 1941), Felix Guggenheim Papers, Box 32,3, USC Libraries, cited from Ullmann, Michaela. "Felix Guggenheim," *Immigrant Entrepreneurship: German-American Business Biographies, 1720 to the Present* 5, R. Daniel Wadhwani ed., German Historical Institute. Last modified March 19, 2014.http://immigrantentrepreneurship.org/entry.php?rec=114

[15] "America," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 1.

across the more problematic aspects of the refugees' lives. The articles and contributions in this publication of the German Jewish Club in Los Angeles elucidate the spectrum of issues and emotions that German Jews faced upon their arrival, which focused on the building of new lives and meanings in the United States. Thus, the front-page article goes on to point to two central issues: the need and motivation of the newcomers to "become good dependable Americans" on one hand, and problems that frequently inhibited this process on the other hand. In this case, the writer points to homesickness and a sudden overabundance of freedom after years of being constrained by persecution. To become adjusted and able to function in American life was the most important goal for the majority of the refugees, and the term Americanization—used to describe this process—appeared in virtually all contexts related to the new immigrants.

Americanization as a concept dates back to the late 19th century and was a response of native-born Americans to the great influx of immigrants between 1880 and the beginning of World War One. Americanization initiatives were generally geared at transforming these immigrants into "good Americans" by teaching them English and educating them about the country's history, politics, economy, laws, its customs, and ways of life. Organized Americanization efforts remained particularly strong until the passage of the National Origins Act of 1924, which restricted the immigration of Eastern and Southern Europeans and essentially stopped that of Asians.[16] In this way, Americanization must be understood in the context of American nativist discriminatory

---

[16] For a recent account on this topic see Jeffrey E. Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2010)

views and notions of superiority. For American Jews during the late 19th and early 20th century, sponsoring Americanization programs for new Jewish immigrants was a response to such views, in the hope it would take away the "ammunition the critics of the Jews could use against them."[17] In the 1930s and 40s, Americanization as a concept and education practice underwent a transformation based on a more culturally broad and pluralistic understanding of America. Instead of complete abandonment of the immigrants' culture and traditions, intellectuals and educators, Franz Boas among them, then emphasized the diversity of cultures in the United States and the idea that some traits the immigrants bring might contribute positively to the country.[18] While acknowledging the discriminatory and paternalistic aspects of Americanization education, it must be noted that immigrants themselves were not always opposed to Americanization. While this can be partly understood as a strategy to evade negative sentiment against themselves, there was frequently also a genuine interest in learning about the country and becoming "good Americans."[19]

German Jewish refugees embraced Americanization for both these reasons but faced particularly strong discrimination. In 1938-1939, at the height of the influx of German Jewish refugees to the United States, there existed considerable anti-immigration and antisemitic sentiment. When it seemed apparent that Roosevelt's New Deal programs had failed to bring the nation out of the depression, propaganda by anti-immigration and

---

[17] Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 173

[18] Mirel, *Patriotic Pluralism,* 11

[19] It is one of Mirel's major arguments in his book.

antisemitic groups—of which there were over one hundred operating in the U.S., the most influential ones led by fundamentalist Christian leaders—blamed Jews for the economic problems and agitated against the arrival of Jewish immigrants.[20] The Catholic priest Charles E. Coughlin, who led the "National Union for Social Justice and the Christian Front" declared for example, that "Communist Jews" had been responsible for the economic problems. An influx of Jewish immigrants, of whom many were professionals and skilled workers, would thus worsen the situation in an already distressed job market.[21] Beginning in November 1938, Coughlin's speeches were regularly broadcasted by 47 radio stations and reached more than three and a half million listeners. He also published the magazine *Social Justice* running one million copies, which were sold in every major city in the U.S., evidence that antisemitism increasingly found adherents in the United States.[22] In reaction to this anti-immigrant incitement, several organizations, such as the Coordinating Committee for Aid to Refugees, the Committee for Catholic Refugees, and even Chambers of Commerce or Better Business Bureaus in various cities, published statistical information about the refugees to rebut these notions and appease public opinion.[23]

---

[20] The three most influential groups were the Protestant fundamentalist "Defenders of the Christian Faith," the "Silver Shirt Legions" led by journalist William Dudley Pelley who had a fundamentalist Methodist background, and the "National Union for Social Justice and the Christian Front." Appelius, *Die schönste Stadt*, 31ff.

[21] Ibid.; Wyman, *Abandonment of the Jews*, 5ff.

[22] Appelius, *Die schönste Stadt*, 33. Breitman and Kraut, *American Refugee Policy*, 9. For a concise discussion of antisemitism during this time, see Diner, *Jews of the United States,* 207-215

[23] *American Jewish Year Book* 41 (1939-40):195f.

The American Friends Service Committee, for example, published a brochure entitled "Refugee Facts," correcting the notion of a particularly high number of immigrants entering the country at the time. The brochure stated that more people left the United States than entered during the period from 1932 to 1938, during which many of the refugees arrived.[24] For the year 1938 which had seen the highest number of refugees since 1932, the brochure stressed that the net immigration of 1938 in relation to the US population of 130,000,000 "represented less than 4/100 of one per cent."[25] Besides addressing concerns over the sheer numbers of new immigrants, the writers of the pamphlet also commented on their ethnic and religious identity. Playing on the fact that in the eyes of certain Americans, Germans had historically been seen as more desirable immigrants than Jews, the writers of the pamphlet presented the refugees as Germans, playing down their Jewishness while stressing their German, and even Christian identity. Explaining that the Nazi racial laws defined anybody who "has even as little as 25% Jewish blood in his veins," regardless of religion, as a Jew, the brochure stresses that there are many who have been "Christian for generations."[26] After pointing out that the Jews had lived in Germany for centuries, were highly assimilated, and "had intermarried with the Gentile Germans extensively" it goes on to say: "It is necessary to stress once more a fact which the American public has even yet not understood sufficiently, namely, that these refugees from Germany are not all Jews by religion—far from it. In 1938,

---

[24] American Friends Service Committee, *Refugee Facts: A Study of the German Refugee in America* (Philadelphia, PA.: America Friends Service Committee, 1939), 6

[25] Ibid. 7

[26] Ibid. 12f.

about one-third (31%) of all refugees from Germany were Christians."[27] While written to fight negative sentiments against the refugees, the content of the brochure is, besides exaggerated, also in itself at least passively antisemitic in its pandering to the antisemitism of its audience. Even so, *Aufbau,* the most important German Jewish refugee publication in the United States, ignored the apparent distaste for Jews it implied. It welcomed the booklet, without offering any objection to its approach, perhaps taking a realpolitik view and focussing on its attempt to foster a more accepting environment and accepting its dubious method of doing so as the price to be paid. Under the headline "Spread the Truth!" a small article stated that the refugees should know about this resource and distribute it, because it "contained all arguments and counter-arguments about the immigration of the German and other Central European refugees."[28]

By presenting the refugees as not of the Jewish religion and by stressing their high skill and educational level, the brochure also attempted to differentiate them from the previous wave of Jewish immigrants, who had come from the shetls and towns of Eastern Europe. Indeed, the majority of the German Jewish refugees of the 1930s and 40s did not have very much in common with the Eastern European Jews, and the institutions that had

---

[27] Ibid., 13

[28] "Verbreitet die Wahrheit!"*Aufbau* 5 (September 1, 1939) One can interpret this handling by Aufbau in different ways: as a reflection of the insecurity that existed within the German Jewish refugee community about their position in the United States, because of which they did not present objections and welcomed any help, no matter how pernicious. Alternatively one can speculate that in light of recent experience it was not so very offensive to German Jews: They had understood themselves to be Germans first until the Nazis denied them that identity. Thus, the brochure's focus on their Germanness, in the face of American anti-Semites who entertained much the same sort of beliefs as the Nazis, might not have seemed so offensive. The fact that the *American Jewish Year Book* did not raise criticism about the brochure's characterization of German Jewish immigrants either suggests not only that the Jewish refugees from Germany viewed themselves as primarily German, but also that they were seen that way also from an American perspective. *American Jewish Yearbook 1939-40*. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1939, 195f.

previously supported them did not speak to the German Jews.[29] While historians have pointed to the problematic relationship between Eastern and German Jews and the often-described arrogance of the latter group toward the former, the different languages were probably the main reason for separate institution building.[30] Depending on the cities they went to in the United States, the German Jewish refugees usually benefitted initially more from the previous German immigrants and the smaller group of German Jewish immigrants who had arrived in the 1920s. As in the case of New York, German Jews who had previously immigrated to the United States often actively helped the refugees to adjust.[31] In Los Angeles, a group of three German Jews who had come to the city in the 1920s formed the German Jewish Club for this purpose in 1934. An excerpt from the Club's articles of incorporation was reprinted in the aforementioned front-page article of *Neue Welt.* It states that the primary goal of the Club was to be the promotion of "a complete program of Americanization."[32] This included assistance from the Club "in learning about the United States, its principles of government, its laws, its institutions, and its customs," as well as "in vocational guidance ... cultural and social activities," to

---

[29] Diner, *Jews of the United States,* 244

[30] Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson,* 102

[31] These earlier German Jewish immigrants had become very well integrated into American life and often intermarried with American Jews. For them, the arrival of their "co-religionists cast out of Germany" seemed to have inspired or reignited a communal German Jewish identity. See, for example Werner Poli, "Deutsch Jüdischer Club in Philadelphia" *Aufbau* 1 (March 1935), and "Early Days of the German Jewish Club—Jewish Club of 1933 as remembered by Lothar Rosenthal, seems to be an excerpt from June 1976 issue of *New World*, Collection of the Benefactors of the Jewish Club of 1933

[32] "America," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 1. The Articles of Incorporation were signed by Theodor Löwenstein, Dr. Siegfried Bruno Bernstein, and Lothar Rosenthal in Los Angeles on December 22, 1938. The information is taken from Article 6 of the Incorporation Articles, stating the purpose of the organization.

help members "in becoming valuable American citizens."[33] The German Jewish Club in Los Angeles modeled much of its program on the example of the New York Club, as did various other organizations that sprang up in cities that harbored considerable numbers of refugees, such as the Social Club in Baltimore, the Central Club of Philadelphia, the Friendship Club of Pittsburgh, and the Jewish Unity Club of Newark.[34]

While the tasks these institutions put forth to accomplish Americanization may have seemed straightforward, there existed a great deal of discussion and debate among both the newcomers and long-established Americans about how Americanization was to be understood and, particularly, to what degree it was to be realized. As I will show in more detail, there existed divergent opinions about Americanization. The fact that the German Jewish Club in Los Angeles wanted to help its members "along the *correct* lines of Americanization"[35] and the abundance of articles promoting different perspectives featured in *Aufbau* on what those "lines" were are evidence of a multiplicity of views on the subject.

The major factors responsible for diverging views on Americanization was the refugees' German background, their particular German *Jewish* identity, and their relationship to Germany upon their initial arrival in the United States. The discussions on

---

[33] "America," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 1.

[34] In his study on the refugees Gerhart Saenger gives a definition of German Jewish Clubs: "The German Jewish Club is a group of refugees who come together for the purpose of assisting themselves. They hold regular meetings, compare experiences, have sociables, aid those who are in need, advise others, and seek generally to make themselves independent of public support." Saenger, *Today's Refugees,* 157. As far as I know, there are no histories written about these individual Clubs. Because some of them had a regular column in *Aufbau*, I know that they featured similar programs (see *Aufbau* various editions, for example vol. 7 (January 31, 1941). The Los Angeles Club also became a sort of model for other organizations on the West Coast, as a letter from San Francisco inquiring about the structures of the LA Club indicates.

[35] Emphasis mine. "America," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 1.

Americanization were intrinsically connected to questions of how much "Germanness" it was acceptable for them to retain—as Jews from Germany and as prospective, or new, Americans. Thus, the refugees debated whether and when it was acceptable to still use the German language, enjoy German culture, and have interactions with people—Jews and non-Jews— still in Germany. In this regard, it is also important to consider the impact non-Jewish German refugees and German American organizations in the United States had on the refugees. Particularly interesting are reactions to Nazism and antisemitism in the United States, as they reveal nuances in the refugees' understanding of Germanness and the occurrences in the Third Reich. While these different opinions on Americanization highlight once again the heterogeneity of the refugees, the majority of them agreed about the fundamental importance of the Americanization process. Several factors are responsible for this outlook.

First, Americanization was a practical necessity. The refugees' existence in the United States depended on their ability to function in the American environment. For the majority of the Jewish refugees, in comparison to many of the famous artists and intellectuals who came to America, it was clear that they would not be able to return to Germany. This recognition that they could not return is also illustrated by their frequent use of the word "immigrant" when referring to themselves at this time. While much of the scholarship on the Jews who fled Germany has described them as exiles, this description neither matches their lived realities nor their self-identification. The term exile is more poignant for many of the political refugees, among them Thomas Mann and Berthold Brecht, who did consider the United States a temporary exile and returned to

Europe after the war, never having fully adjusted to the American way of life. While Thomas Mann, for example, was involved in American institutions, (such as consultant to the Library of Congress), he did not make particular efforts to familiarize himself and engage with American culture and, as one historian has said, he remained "German to the core."[36] Mann's famous words, "Where I am, is Germany," demonstrate both his belief that the Third Reich was a temporary aberration of German history and that his role in the United States was that of a representative of a better, humanist Germany.[37] For him, a future return to Germany was an option and goal.

While German Jewish refugees did not necessarily believe that all Germans were Nazis, the experiences in Germany—being rapidly and violently excluded from all areas of life in a country that they had truly considered their home—made it impossible for the majority of them to believe that they could ever return. John Baer, for example. a Jew from Breslau explained in his memoir that he felt like an exile in Germany when the Nazis came to power in 1933 " and made me a pariah in the land of my birth."[38] In the the "New World," however, he did no longer feel like an exile, and was determined to build a new life there.[39] Thus, after experiencing great hardships and what historians have termed "social death" in Germany and overcoming the various hurdles of getting to the United States, for the majority life here presented the most feasible option of a future.

---

[36] Jarell C. Jackman, "German Emigres in Southern California," in *The Muses Flee Hitler: Cultural Transfer and Adaptation 1930-1945*, edited by Jarrell C. Jackman and Carla M. Borden (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983), 103

[37] See Thomas Mann, "The Exiled Writer's Relation to His Homeland," in Anderson, *Hitler's Exiles*, 263ff.

[38] Ibid.

[39] John A. Baer, *Witness for a Generation* (Santa Barbara: Fithian Press, 1997), 91

Therefore, familiarizing themselves with American life and ways was in the first place a much desired pragmatic goal.

The refugees' motivation for Americanization was also furthered by the gratitude that many felt for having been accepted into the United States, even if this had often entailed great pains and difficulties, as well as long and circuitous journeys.[40] Thus, many believed that Americanization was their duty. In this vein, the German Jewish Club in Los Angeles appealed to the readers of its publication: "Let us leave no stone unturned in accomplishing this goal [of Americanization and becoming "valuable American citizens"]. If we succeed then we have only paid a small debt of gratitude toward the country which has always given refuge and protection to the persecuted and oppressed."[41] While many refugees felt sincere gratitude, refugee organizations made certain that this message was communicated not only to the refugees—to remind them that they should be grateful and what their 'duty' was—but also to the public, which had a critical eye on the newcomers.

As such, an additional dimension of the refugees' preoccupation with the topic had to do with general economic conditions in the United States at the time and particularly the heightened anti-immigration and antisemitic atmosphere. The refugees were conscious of this. To circumvent negative reactions toward their group, they often and publicly stressed their motivation to become Americanized and presented themselves as one group among many which had come to a country that was built by immigrants —a

---

[40] Memoirs, refugee news organs, and interviews testify to this.

[41] "America," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 1.

frequently used rhetorical move to remind the established Americans of their own roots. Above mentioned issue of *Neue Welt* may again serve as an example of this rhetoric. The front-page article entitled "America," accentuated with "God Bless America" in large, bold letters, is an ode to the United States and a pledge of this group of immigrants to the new country. The fact that they were Jews from Germany was not mentioned at all in the piece. Instead, the writer used the generic term "foreign born persons." This article and its placement on the front page (written in English, while the other articles in the magazine were predominantly in German) was certainly strategic. This special issue of *Neue Welt* was sent to 850 members of the Club as well as to at least 400 non-members and organizations, among them non-immigrants and non-Jews.[42] The picture these readers got of the newcomers was of immigrants like many before, who had the same gratitude and desire to become good American citizens as did previous immigrants. As such, the article worked against possible prejudice or criticism against the newcomers. The need to stress and publicize successful Americanization and loyalty to the U.S. became ever more vital with the outbreak of the war in Europe and the increased fear of infiltration by Nazi spies (fifth columns) in the United States.[43] As will be shown in this and the next chapter, in the public perception of the refugees, it was the refugees' German origin, not their Jewish identity, that became problematic.

---

[42] Alfred Wildberg, "Secretariat," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 8 and Ernest Berg, "Presse," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 11. Also, it can be assumed that many of the non-members who received *Neue Welt* did not read much further than the first few pages or were not able to read German at all.

[43] The term "fifth column" originates in the time of the 1936-39 Spanish civil war when it was applied to those persons who fought for Franco and against the Spanish Republic. Now it is generally used to refer to individuals or organizations that work within one country to help and further an enemy country's political or military aims.

Thus, the ways the refugees thought of, negotiated, and practiced their Americanization was influenced by various factors. There were individual factors such as age, gender, and socio-economic background, as well as one's experiences in Germany and whether one chose to take part in German Jewish community affairs in the United States. These variables were always also entangled with the communal pressures of changing political realities, both domestic and international.

Americanization in Practice

Organizations like the German Jewish Clubs in New York and Los Angeles, as well as their publications, particularly *Aufbau,* played a primary role in the refugees' Americanization process, that is, if people decided to join or engage with them. These institutions functioned as spaces that furthered community building, as the representatives of the public image and the voices of the refugee community, and as agents that actively pursued the refugees' interests.

The refugee organizations were often the first local institutions that refugees communicated with after their arrival in the United States, and they initially assisted in the provision of very basic needs. When the Bunzels arrived in Los Angeles, they immediately had contact with the German Jewish Club, which was, according to Annelise, the common case. She mentioned that most of the German Jews who came to the city heard about the club, because "…whoever you speak [*sic*] or you meet, they mention it."[44] The first help the German Jewish Club in Los Angeles was able to provide

---

[44] Ibid.

to newcomers was a room in the *Clubheim* (Club Home). While many people first stayed with family, friends, or people who had provided affidavits for them, the Club Home served as a temporary residence for newcomers who did not have that option or who wanted to be independent while searching for a permanent place to live.[45] Annelise Bunzel remembered that she and her husband stayed in this "very nice" Club Home— a large mansion with lecture rooms and a lounge for meetings, surrounded by a landscaped garden— during their first few weeks in Los Angeles, paying approximately $7 per week.[46] That there was a need for this kind of accommodation is evidenced by the fact that between February and August 1939 the Home's rooms were occupied for 180 nights.[47] The Club's monthly publication also served as forum to help newcomers find a place by including advertisements for rooms to rent. Many times, these were offered by other Club members. Similar to Washington Heights in New York, refugees rented apartments in which they sublet rooms to other refugees. Especially in the early years, this became a way for some refugees to make a living, as they occasionally also offered board to their renters.[48] In the long run, the refugees rented their very own apartments, especially if they came as a couple or family, which the majority did. Unlike Washington Heights in New York, Los Angeles did not have and never developed a particular German

---

[45]"'German-Jewish Club' in Los Angeles," *Aufbau* 5 (August 15, 1939)

[46] Interview with Annelise Bunzel, conducted by author, Los Angeles: February 4, 2005 February 4, 2005.

[47] Lothar Rosenthal, "Clubheim," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 10.

[48] See for example "Zimmer Nachweis," *Neue Welt* (May 1940): 9. For New York, see *Aufbau*

Jewish neighborhood.[49] It seems, however, that the refugees generally tended to dwell not too far from one another. According to Annelise Bunzel, German Jews did not move very far south of the city and generally lived east of Vermont Avenue and around Western Avenue. Subsequently, many of them moved to the San Fernando Valley.[50]

---

[49] While German Jews had been among the founders of New York, later Jewish immigration was predominantly from Eastern Europe. The number of German Jews who had arrived in Los Angeles in the 1920s was smaller than the number who went to New York, and the Los Angeles refugees did not create a German Jewish infrastructure like the one in New York. The Eastern European Jews in Los Angeles had traditionally lived in the city's Eastern Boyle Heights neighborhood, but in the 1920s many who had moved up the socio-economic ladder moved to the west side of Los Angeles. See Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr (eds.), *Ethnic Los Angeles* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1996), 52. For more on the history of Jewish Los Angeles, see for example, Max Vorspan, and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1970)

[50] Interview with Annelise Bunzel, conducted by author, Los Angeles: March 4, 2005. It is difficult to determine where the German Jews lived. The 1930 census covered the question of race, which was generally indicated with W (White), MEX (Mexican), NEG (Negro) in the case of Los Angeles. Hitler's racial ideology defined the Jews as a race, but it is rather unlikely that Jewish refugees from Hitler's Germany would have defined themselves as being of a "Jewish race." The 1930 census did not ask for religion. Even if religion would have been a question, it is not clear if the German Jewish immigrants would have indicated Judaism as their religion, since many of them were not religious. The problem of determining Jewish residency patterns by using the U.S. Census is still apparent in recent publications. James P. Allen's and Eugene Turner's *The Ethnic Quilt* examines the racial and ethnic composition of Southern California. To determine the status and location of the Jewish population, the authors used people of Russian ancestry stating that a national survey of the mid-1970s had demonstrated that "70 percent of Americans of Russian ancestry were Jewish." (James P. Allen and Eugene Turner, *The Ethnic Quilt: Population Diversity in Southern California*, (Northridge: The Center for Geographical Studies, California State University Northridge, 1997), 5.) While Turner and Allen acknowledged that there were Jews other than just those of Russian origin, they stated that "the tendency of Jews to cluster residentially near other Jews without much regard to national origin and to share socioeconomic characteristics means that Russian ancestry is an appropriate substitute for describing the Jewish population" (Ibid). This is a problematic statement especially when applied to German Jews since their socioeconomic as well as cultural characteristics were very distinct from those of the Eastern European Jewry, and they in fact tended to not live in the same areas. The truth of this observation can be seen by looking at the residential pattern of Jews in New York, where German Jews lived in predominantly German areas like Yorkville before a rising antisemitism forced them to settle in the area that became known as Washington Heights, which was not largely populated by Eastern European Jews. While it is difficult to determine where the immigrants settled in Los Angeles, the fact that the German Jewish Club chose to locate their *Clubheim* on Grand View Street is another reason to believe that a majority of its members settled in the part of the city surrounding Western Avenue, approximately two miles west of Downtown Los Angeles. See A.C. Schenderlein, "German Jewish Refugees in Los Angeles: A Jewish Club and the Americanization Process from 1938-1943" (M.A. Thesis, California State University, Northridge, 2005)

Language and Employment

While not the most important reason, the lack of a neighborhood in Los Angeles where the refugees could get around using their native German, as was possible to some degree in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York, contributed to the immediate need to learn English. Also, similar to New York, a segment of the German American community in Southern California tended to embrace the ideology of Hitler's Germany. The German language press in Los Angeles in the 1930s and 40s catered to that community. Similar to the *New York Staatszeitung*, the *California Staatszeitung*, had been quite conservative all along and increasingly sympathized with Nazi ideas. From 1935 to 1938, the West Coast Nazi movement, the German-American Volksbund, published their own Nazi newspaper—the *California Weckruf*.[51] Besides the latter organization, the central Nazi movement in the United States—the German American Bund—was also very active in Los Angeles during the 1930s and early 1940s. One refugee remembered that when he arrived in Los Angeles in 1940 "every German, former German, who was here, was more or less a Nazi" and that the relationship between the "old German Americans" and the refugees was troublesome.[52] Thus, the existing German language

---

[51] Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific,* 5

[52] Interview with Heinz Pinner, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: Jan. 1, 1972, LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1331811

infrastructure in the city was thus not welcoming and not one the refugees desired to associate with, which was another incentive to learn English quickly.[53]

The prime motivation for the refugees to learn English straightaway was their need to secure employment, if at all possible, in the profession that they had practiced in Germany. Because Nazi legislation had barred many Jews in Germany from continuing to work in their original professions and emigration was often a lengthy process, some refugees had not had a regular work life for many months. Most important, the majority of the refugees did not come with any considerable financial resources. Also, as non-citizens, they were not eligible for welfare from the U.S. government. Consequently, most of them were very driven to rapidly reestablish themselves and to return to some kind of normalcy and self-determined, independent life. Some of the refugees had the advantage of having learned the essentials of English during their high school education or had taken intensive courses in preparation for emigration. Nevertheless, most of them did not know English well enough to work in more than menial jobs.[54]

Like most of the other organizations supporting the new immigrants, the German Jewish Club in Los Angeles provided English education to its members. The Club had an affiliated English teacher who published in the Club's magazine vocabulary for situations

---

[53] Another refugee in Los Angeles, Ernie Sommer, recalls good encounters with Germans in the United States in 1941. When the interviewer asked him "So can we say that you didn't avoid Germans if they happened to cross your path?" he answered "In fact, we felt much more familiar with them than we did with strange Americans!" Wolman, *Crossing Over*, 158. Also, that not all German Americans in Southern California were believers in the "New Germany" is exemplified in the existence of the Deutsch Amerikanischer Kultur Verband (D.A.K.V. German American Cultural Association), which had a local branch in Los Angeles and sent its congratulations to the fifth anniversary of the Jewish Club. "Hans Schmitt (Deutschamerikanischer Kulturverband), *Neue Welt*, (September 1939): 4

[54] See Grebler, *German-Jewish Immigrants*, 20.

of everyday life, such as shopping, and quizzes through which the readers could test their skills by correcting sentences and figuring out correct pronunciation.[55] This column was probably inspired by a very similar column in *Aufbau.* She also gave classes for various skill levels, taught English stenography and business correspondence, and by 1941 even preparation courses for the citizenship exam, which indicates that some of the refugees had become close to their goal of becoming citizens. Further contributing to the readers' English education, the Club's newsletter over time increased the number of English language articles.[56] Studies undertaken in the 1930s and 40s reveal that the younger refugees especially were generally quite successful in quickly improving their skills and that they even strove to a certain level of perfection, for example in their efforts to eliminate their foreign accents.[57] A report of an administrator of the Adult Education Program in New York City described the curriculum of some courses for refugees as follows:

Because of the rather high educational and cultural attainments of the German refugees, the teaching of English assumes a broader and more meaningful aspect. Treated in the lessons of the day are topics such as art, music, literature, government, and sociological problems. A special type of work has been carried on to assist professional

---

[55] *Neue Welt* (March 1940): 6. *Aufbau* included a similar a column which was entitled "Say it in English." See for example *Aufbau* 7 (January 5, 1940)

[56] See *Neue Welt* (May 1940): 8, and "Westküste," *Aufbau* 7 (August 15, 1941)

[57] Davie, *Refugees in America*, 175.

groups … of physicians … lawyers, musicians, journalists, engineers, and dentists. … Numerous students have enrolled … within a week of their arrival in this country.[58]

As can be gathered from this report, the European refugees of the 1930s and early to mid 1940s had a higher educational as well as higher socio-economic background than most of the earlier immigrants to the United States. They were, for the most part, a middle class group composed of professionals, business people, and skilled artisans. Data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service reveals that the majority of immigrants (including non-German and non-Jewish) who arrived between 1933 and 1944 were merchants and dealers, agents, physicians, professors and teachers, technical engineers, clergy, lawyers, scientists, musicians, and other professionals.[59] However, the comparatively high qualifications and specializations of the immigrants made it harder for them to obtain employment in their métier, initially or even ever. Expertise in the English language and specialized English terminology and nomenclature was just one variable in their attempt at reconstructing their professional lives. Many U.S. states had legal and licensing restrictions and also required citizenship status or at least a declaration of intention to become citizens for several professions. The State of California required citizenship status for attorneys, for example. To work as an accountant (C.P.A.), registered nurse, or teacher in California, one had to present a declaration of intention or

---

[58] Report of WPA – Adult Education Program, Manhattan School of Automotive Trades, December 20, 1937. Quoted by Harold Fields, *The Refugee in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), 128f.

[59] See Davie, *Refugees in America*, 41.

application for citizenship.[60] Thus, even if they had acquired the necessary English proficiency and could converse about high culture in English, many immigrants initially had to work in menial jobs, such as gardeners, dishwashers, or factory workers, in order to make a new beginning in the United States.[61]

Some refugees found jobs through the connections of friends and relatives who had been in the country longer. Refugees who already owned businesses commonly tried to employ new immigrants.[62] Also, the needs of some refugees created jobs for others. There were, for example, several driving schools run by Club members, since the large city made it necessary for most people to own a car.[63] One of the great concerns of Americans about the refugees entering the country was that they would take away jobs in a depressed job market. Thus, the refugee community and national American immigrant aid organizations undertook great efforts to help the newcomers secure employment. The chief employment agencies for refugees were associated with the National Refugee Service and such organizations as the American Friends Service Committee and the American Committee for Christian Refugees.[64] In addition, organizations existed to assist

---

[60] Donald Peterson Kent, *The Refugee Intellectual: The Americanization of the Immigrants of 1933-1941* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), 75f.

[61] Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise*, 69 ff.

[62] Bunzel, conducted by author, Los Angeles: February 4, 2005.

[63] See for example *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 10; 11 and "Die Westküste," *Aufbau* 7 (October 3, 1941)

[64] Saenger , *Today's Refugee,* 202 f.

specific professional groups.[65] In certain cases, the local immigrant and refugee organizations set up employment services themselves.

In Los Angeles, the German Jewish Club established the *Beratungsstelle,* the counseling service, for this purpose. This office worked closely and successfully with local Jewish and municipal offices, such as the Jewish Employment Bureau, the Opportunity Placement Office in Beverly Hills, and the Federated Employment Bureau.[66] In Los Angeles and in the rest of the United States, refugee women typically found employment before their husbands, usually in the domestic area as maids, janitors, chefs, tailors, or nurses. Ann Ikenberg, for example, immediately got a job through the Beverly Hills Opportunity Placement office upon her arrival in 1939. She had been a medical student in Berlin and in Los Angeles started working as a private home nurse for the mother of a Superior Court Judge. She had taken that particular job in the hopes that the judge could help to secure work for her husband Fred, who had been a judge in Berlin.

---

[65] Intellectuals and scholars had the opportunity to seek help from the American Committee for Émigré Scholars, for example, while physicians could turn to the National Committee for Resettlement of Foreign Physicians. Lawyers were in the most difficult position when seeking to continue working in the legal profession, but they received assistance from the American Committee for the Guidance of Professional Personnel. Davie, *Refugees in America*, 109 ff.

[66] See *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 2, 10 and *New World* (October 1940): 4, as well as interview with William Stagen, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: Jan. 1, 1972. LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1337416. Also see Franz Bunzel „Berufschancen der Immigration in Los Angeles," „Die Westküste," *Aufbau* 7 (September 5, 1941). In a 1941 article, the head of the *Beratungsstelle* put the Los Angeles immigrant employment situation into national perspective. He stated that the condition of immigrants on the west coast were in many cases more complicated and less favorable than on the east coast. While living expenses were lower in Los Angeles than in New York, employment opportunities in California were scarcer than on the east coast, because in California there were not so many big textile and chemical industries, which usually gladly employed European immigrants because of their special knowledge and experience. The big employers in Southern California were the oil firms, the defense industry factories, and, in Los Angeles in particular, the airplane industry. While many American citizens migrated to California during the war years to work in these industries, non-citizens were in 1941, with few exceptions, not eligible for these professions. Another factor that differed from the east coast and which created difficulties for the immigrants was the vast and widespread geographical dimension of the city of Los Angeles.

Nothing came of it though and it took another nine months before Fred found a steady job.[67] Unlike Ann Ikenberg, many of the women of this particular immigrant group had never worked before and became wage earners for the first time in America. While this shift may have been hard for some of them, studies undertaken at the time, suggest that the majority seemed to have adapted quickly.[68] The widow of a German Jewish banker said in an interview:

> I came from a background of ease and luxury. I never had to do my own housework, but was surrounded by servants. It was not easy for me to adjust to being a servant myself, but I adjusted to it very quickly. I felt happy in all my jobs and everybody has treated me in a respectful manner. All my employers have made an effort to make me feel at home and I had never had the feeling of being a servant.[69]

The refugee press contained many stories about the hardship the refugees went through in these first years in the United States and the difficulties of making a living but also frequently reported about the success rate of the refugees. While the majority of the refugees were not able to go back into their former professions, often because they were too old and could not afford to study for required exams, they were mostly able to transition into other types of employment in which they succeeded. Many former lawyers and judges, for example, became successful accountants. Lothar Rosenthal from the Los Angeles Club said that most people made their way up the career ladder quickly, even if they started in menial jobs. Thus, he remembered a man who started as a janitor sweeping floors and cleaning bathrooms at a large manufacturing firm but eventually became the

---

[67] Wolman (1996), 101f.

[68] Davie, *Refugees in America*, 124 f.

[69] Ibid, 125. Excerpt from interview of life story.

vice president of the company.[70] These kinds of success stories were not only important for the refugees themselves, especially for the motivation of those who were still struggling, they were also important to demonstrate to the American public that the employment of the German Jewish refugees was "not a liability, but actually an asset to the American labor market."[71] Returning to the initial point here, most of the successes the refugees had in the realm of employment were facilitated by their motivation and ability to learn English.

Though, as we have seen, English proficiency was a pragmatic goal for refugees, its symbolic value was just as important. As articles in *Aufbau* and *Neue Welt* illustrate, English language capacity was essential in the eyes of the refugees in order to demonstrate their Americanization to the public. Several articles and letters to *Aufbau* document the sharp criticism of refugees who had not learned English sufficiently or, worse, who spoke German in public settings. One concerned refugee wrote in his letter (composed in German), for instance, that it was "completely absurd and not justifiable" for refugees who knew English to use German in public. He found it "truly shameful how much people sin in this regard." He believed that it was a matter of "tactfulness," at least when in public, to use the "language of the country." Most important, he warned that speaking German was a "sign of lacking the will to integrate" and that it would "put in

---

[70] Lothar Rosenthal, "Early Days of the German Jewish Club," 1976 Collection of the Benefactors of the Jewish Club of 1933

[71] William R. Malsh, "You and Your Job," *Neue Welt* (May 1940): 1. In this article, Malsh describes how the refugees could best communicate to Americans that the refugees do not take away employment from American citizens.

jeopardy the friendly attitude that is being shown to us."[72] While this concern reflected the general anti-immigrant atmosphere in the United States at the time, the concern over the use of German in public took on a more serious dimension when the crisis in Europe worsened and the war began in Europe in September 1939.

While the United States had looked at the developments in Europe initially with distant concern, Hitler's victories in Europe, and particularly in Western Europe, made the threat his regime was for the entire free world clear. Fears of fifth columnists, spies, and saboteurs for the Nazis (and for the Communists, for that matter)[73] in the United States abounded. The State Department, the White House, and a considerable number of Americans believed that they could have entered the country among the recent wave of immigrants.[74] Thus, the use of the German language in public could have potentially led to situations in which refugees would be mistakenly identified as Nazis or Nazi sympathizers.[75] Therefore, the refugee press advised the newcomers to refrain from speaking German in public. The May 17, 1940 issue of *Aufbau* includes this urgent call:

> Do not speak German on the street, and if you cannot speak enough English, speak quietly at least! Avoid loud acclamations, building of crowds when leaving eateries, standing about in front of entries! Behave as unobtrusive as it is customary in this country! It is sad that this still has

---

[72] Reinhold Herz, "Deutsch auf der Strasse?" *Aufbau* 5 (April 15, 1939) Cf. another such letter to the editor in *Aufbau* 5 (December 22, 1939)

[73] See Breitman and Kraut, *American Refugee Policy*, 113ff.

[74] Kraut reported that a Roger survey, published in *Fortune* magazine in July 1940, showed that 71 percent of the respondents believed that Germany had "already started to organize a 'Fifth Column' in this country." Ibid. 117, 113

[75] Of course, this scenario is reminiscent of the experience of German-Americans during the First World War. See, for example, Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974)

> to be said but there are still people who do not want to listen. Do help to bring such people to reason, in the interest of all new immigrants![76]

While acknowledging the importance of demonstrating loyalty by avoiding using German in public, some refugees saw the language issue as more complex. *Aufbau'*s appeal that refugees not speak German in public received both applause and criticism from the readership. In a thoughtful piece, one of the regular contributors to *Aufbau* called attention to the fact that among the refugees were many people who had lost everything: their health, families, profession, homes, and worldly possessions.[77] These people, often elderly but also younger ones who had experienced much tragedy in their lives, had no hope of a better future and frequently even thought of suicide. After all they had gone through, the author wrote, they lacked the strength, energy, and capacity to learn and engage in new things. He continues:

In many cases, these people have their only real existing relationships with the past. They lost everything but their five senses! Do we have, does anybody have, the right to rob them of three of these senses, to leave them blind, deaf, and mute, by prohibiting

---

[76] "Sprecht nicht deutsch auf der Strasse, und wenn ihr nicht genug englisch könnt, so sprecht es wenigstens leise! Vermeidet lautes Zurufen, Ansammlungen beim Verlassen von Lokalen, Herumstehen vor den Eingängen! Benehmt euch so unauffällig, wie es hier landesüblich ist! Es ist traurig, dass das noch gesagt werden muss, aber es gibt immer noch Leute, die nicht hören wollen. Helft alle mit, solche Personen im Interesse aller Neueinwanderer zur Vernunft zu bringen!" *Aufbau* 5 (May 17, 1940). A similar letter to the editor was published in *Aufbau* 5 (December 22, 1939). A few lines from it: "Dieses Land will Euch aufnehmen und gibt Euch die Chance Bürger zu werden. Was das bedeutet, habt Ihr inzwischen alle begriffen. Das Mindeste, was dieses Land verlangen kann ist, dass Ihr Euch bemüht, seine Sprache zu sprechen. " The writer goes on to say that if one has to speak German, one should do it at least quietly, and not loud and fast."Lasst das, Ihr schadet Euch unendlich. Helft alle mit; macht es wie in England; nehmt Euch jeden Lautsprecher vor, sagt ihm höflich und leise auf Englisch: 'Please don't speak so loud German.' Meist erstarren die Sprecher, und das nächste Mal wissen sie Bescheid."

[77] W.C.H. (Wilfred C. Hulse) "An den Rand geschrieben: Nochmals, die deutsche Sprache," *Aufbau* 5 (June 7, 1940)

them from using the only language they know, from using the only means they have that connects them to the outer world? [78]

Thus, the author drew attention to the complicated emotional dimension that Americanization and particularly the abandonment of the native language included. Certainly, the refugees had ostensibly every reason to abhor German, as the language of the people who were responsible for their misery. Max Bodenheimer remembered, for example: "My mother, in particular, wanted to put the past behind her ... There was a rule in our house: we were not permitted to talk any German."[79] Nevertheless, not everybody believed this was right nor was it easy for all of them to just abandon the language. Within the German Jewish community, the question of whether they, as Jews, should want to continue to use the German language was frequently at issue.

The journalist and editor of *Aufbau,* Manfred Georg, himself a Jewish refugee, warned against the "tendency to ban the German language completely from ones consciousness and to treat it, as it were, for all intents and purposes as an enemy language [Feindessprache]."[80] He understood the motivation behind the warnings—the hatred of

---

[78] Ibid.

[79] Anita Kassof and Avi Y. Decter, Deborah R. Wiener, (eds.), *Lives Lost, Lives Found: Baltimore's German Jewish Refugees, 1933–1945 (*Baltimore, Md: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2004), 17. See also interview with Susan Freudenthal, in which she said "We were going to speak English or maybe Hebrew, but never, never any German." Abraham J. Peck and Uri D. Herscher, *Queen City Refuge: An Oral History of Cincinnati's Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany* (West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1989), 195

[80] Manfred Georg, "Eine ernste Frage," *Aufbau* 5 (January 1939). Manfred Georg (1893-1965) was born as Manfred Georg Cohn in Berlin. He first shortened his name to Manfred Georg and later Americanized it to Manfred George. In Berlin, he obtained a PhD in Law and worked as a journalist for the *Berliner Morgenpost*, and as editor in chief for the *Berliner Abendpost*. He was politically active as a pacifist and Zionist and one of the founders of the leftist and short-lived Republikanische Partei. He was left Germany in 1933 for Prague, where he continued his journalistic work, before he escapaed Europe via Hungary, Yugoslavia, Italy, Switzerland, and France in 1938. He served as editor in chief for *Aufbau* from April1939 to his death in December 1965.

the people who had so terribly mistreated the Jews and the feeling of revenge that Jews felt as a consequence— but he believed that one should not equate Hitler with the German language: "Hitler's language is not the German language, as little as the German people are synonymous with the clique of murderers that is dwelling in Wilhelmstrasse right now."[81] Georg was not alone in making a distinction between the German people and the Nazis. Many non-Jewish German émigrés from the Nazis shared this opinion, for which Thomas Mann was perhaps the most famous and outspoken representative.[82] Jewish refugees made this differentiation as well, frequently people who had been politically active in Germany and had fought together with non-Jewish Germans against the Nazis. Appealing to this spirit of the fight against the Nazis, Georg wrote that abandoning the German language would mean giving up "the most effective tool in this fight. It would also mean committing treason against all of our German friends who in their fight against Hitler have already paid with their lives and their health, and against the hundreds of thousands of determined fighters, who will yet bleed on the altar of the true Germany."[83]

The depiction of the German language—and culture—as a bond between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans who were engaged in a common fight against the Nazis was not unusual. It was, for example, frequently evoked by the German American Cultural Association, one of the few German American organizations that was outspokenly

---

[81] Ibid

[82] See, for example, Thomas Mann, "Deutschland in seiner tiefsten Erniedrigung," *Aufbau* 5 (February 1, 1939)

[83] Manfred Georg, "Eine ernste Frage," *Aufbau* 5 (January 1939)

opposed to Nazism and antisemitism.[84] Interestingly, in the American context, some German Jews seemed to even have viewed the knowledge of German language and German culture as something that distinguished themselves and those German Americans who had become followers of the Nazi ideology. Two small examples from the community in New York in 1935 may exemplify this. In the 1930s, *Aufbau* journalists closely monitored the reporting of the *New York Staatszeitung* and the activities of German American organizations in New York City, which both increasingly developed Nazi tendencies. A review of a German play that was published in the *Staatszeitung* received much criticism from an *Aufbau* reporter, who believed that the bad review was based on the fact that the *Staatszeitung* journalist—likely an admirer of the New Germany— misunderstood the play because he lacked knowledge of German culture.[85] In another article denouncing the Nazi efforts of New York City's German Americans, the author mocks them for their poor handling of the German language in a telegram they had sent to Hitler.[86] At least in 1935, then, some refugees evinced a clear sense of pride in their German cultural knowledge and exhibited the determination not to leave the

---

[84] See, for example the letter the local Los Angeles representative of the D.A.V.K. sent on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the German Jewish Club in Los Angeles. In it, he expressed (in German) his hope that the common German mother tongue—"the link for art and culture ["das Bindeglied fuer Kunst und Kultur"]—would be a bond between the groups, "irrelevant of their belonging to different religions" and would unite them in the pursuit of common goals. "Hans Schmitt (Deutschamerikanischer Kulturverband), *Neue Welt*, (September 1939): 4. There are several different articles from the D.A.V.K. in *Aufbau* that use a similar rhetoric.

[85] To make his point and taking on for himself and for, I would argue, his German Jewish community, a clearly German identity, the author writes: "thus it has been proven that the Staatszeitung has no right to call itself the mouth of the Germans in New York." The original German: "... so ist hier der Beweis erbracht, dass die 'Staatszeitung' kein Recht hat, sich als Sprachrohr der Deutschen New Yorks zu bezeichnen." Alfred Eichenberg,"Deutsche Bühnenkunst im Rahmen der W.P.A.," *Aufbau* 2 (May 1936)

[86] "Sturm im Wasserglas: Das vaterländisch gesinnte Deutschtum New Yorks regt sich auf," *Aufbau* 2 (June 1936)

representation of German culture to Nazis. The differentiation between a pre-Nazi German culture and the Third Reich made it possible for German Jews to keep practicing German culture.

The arguments about the necessity and usefulness of the continuing usage of the German language certainly made sense to some of the refugees. But how was the use of the German language compatible with the strong emphasis on Americanization that the refugee organizations propagated? Georg was conscious of the role the use of German played in the discussions about Americanization, but he did not believe that Americanization should mean giving up German entirely. In fact, he criticized this particular understanding of Americanization:

Most of those German Jews, who are one hundred percent anti-German today and who do not want to make any distinction [between German and Nazi], previously were hyper-assimilated and had forgotten their Jewishness entirely. One can become an American citizen by slowly growing into the world of emotions and ideas of this continent, not however by tempestuous ingratiation and taking over of superficial characteristics. This mistake is not only detrimental but a repetition of the arrogant ingratiation at all cost, which, considering some of what one had experienced in Europe, should scare one off.[87]

---

[87] Manfred Georg, "Eine ernste Frage," *Aufbau* 5 (January 1939). The original German: "Amerikanischer Bürger kann man durch langsames Hineinwachsen in die Gefühls- und Ideenwelt dieses Kontinents werden. Aber nicht durch eine stürmische Anbiederung und durch Übernahme von Oberflächenmerkmalen. Dieser Fehler ist nicht nur schädlich, sondern eine Wiederholung jener arroganten Anbiederung um jeden Preis, vor der manche in Europa gemachte Erfahrungen schrecken sollten."

With this, Georg raised a broader issue about Jews living in a majority non-Jewish society and debates about assimilation and Jewish nationalism, themes that occupied the minds of many at the time. Referring to the experience of German Jews—who had been highly integrated into German society and then cast out in a violent manner within just a few years—he criticized refugees who took Americanization to be a complete negation and abandonment of everything German.[88] After the experience in Germany, who could guarantee that this process would not repeat itself in the United States? Evidence that Georg's opinion about a gradual and selective Americanization was shared by other refugees is offered by several articles and readers' opinion pieces in the refugee press.[89]

Culture

This understanding of Americanization as a selective and gradual process was particularly widespread among the refugees when it came to the issue of whether it was still acceptable to be attached to and to practice German culture.[90] In this regard, the refugees followed the general opinion of American immigration theorists and practitioners of the time. They viewed immigrants' native culture as valuable. Instead of

---

[88] Gershom Scholem's essay on the illusion of the German-Jewish symbiosis comes to mind here. Was Georg insinuating that National Socialist antisemitism was to some degree a reaction to the high degree of assimilation of German Jewry? Or rather, that the German Jews, despite their assimilation, did not see that they were still viewed as "other"?

[89] See, for example, Eric de Jonge, "Verwirrung der Gefühle," *Aufbau* 4 (December 1938); W. C. H. "An den Rand geschrieben: Amerikanisierung, überstürzt oder organisch?," *Aufbau* 5 (August, 15 1939)

[90] At this time, the refugee press rarely made a differentiation between German and German Jewish culture. While in certain areas they were arguably difficult to distinguish as separate entities, later on, certainly after the Holocaust, the discourse about a specific German Jewish culture and heritage became more important. When they spoke about German culture in the 1930s, the refugees generally meant all the cultural elements they grew up with and that they experienced in Germany, which for some people included more specifically Jewish elements than for others.

promoting "mechanical uniformity,"[91] institutionalized Americanization programs were modified in the 1920s and directed towards educating the immigrants about American life and institutions by using the immigrants' knowledge and experiences from their home countries. In regard to traditions and customs, the immigrants were encouraged to celebrate their own native holidays as well as American ones.[92] Instead of abandoning native music, literature, philosophy, and art, one sociologist argued for "the conservation of these creative instincts as a means of accelerating progress and increasing the variability and creative powers of the nation."[93]

In this sense, many German Jewish refugees, and particularly representatives of the organized German Jewish community, believed it was acceptable to maintain their love for German culture and arts, as long as they simultaneously learned about American culture. Like Georg, Leopold Jessner, the famous theatre producer and director from Berlin who was president of the Jewish Club in Los Angeles in 1940, communicated to his refugee readership that "America does not expect uncurbed assimilation of her citizens" but rather finds the new and "different souls" to be an "enrichment."[94] Likewise, Siegfried Bernstein, one of the first presidents of the Los Angeles organization, wrote to the refugees that "holding on to German-Jewishness does not separate us from what connects us with other Jews in America."[95] Wilfred Hülse, elaborating on how this

---

[91] Maurice J. Karpf, *Jewish Community Organization in the United States* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1938), 39.

[92] See Ibid.

[93] Ibid. 710.

[94] Leopold Jessner, "The Zion-Soul," New World (October 1940): 1

[95] Dr. Siegfried Bruno Bernstein, "Zusammenschluss," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 5

process of cultural negotiation between the new and the old might work, stated in one of his regular *Aufbau* columns:

> ... the person who fast and without reflection jumps into the ocean of American life, after having thrown everything else off, will [not] be the best American. Our gaze is directed toward the future, and the one who will serve the United States best is he who calmly, consciously, and reflectively places his strength and knowledge to the service of the new country and who knows that the passage into the new cultural world [Kulturkreis] demands, in addition to a conscious effort, also time, learning, and receptiveness.[96]

Understanding American culture was viewed by refugee organizations and American observers alike as a vital precondition for the celebration of German culture and also as a necessity if the refugees were to make a cultural contribution to the new country. Because of this, refugee organizations offered assistance in familiarizing the refugees with American life and culture. For example, the publications of both the New York and Los Angeles Club contained articles about the history of their cities. The organizations also offered trips and walking tours to make the refugees familiar with their new environment and "the American Way."[97] Both clubs put on lectures on such topics as American history, the country's political system, and even how to dress and cook like an American. The Jewish Club in Los Angeles, for example, organized Tuesday Night

---

[96] In the original: "nicht der, der schnell und ohne Besinnung in den Ozean des amerikanischen Lebens springt, nach dem er alles andere von sich geworfen hat, wird der beste Amerikaner sein. Unser Blick ist in die Zukunft gerichtet und derjenige wird den Vereinigten Staaten am besten dienen, der ruhig, bewusst und überlegt seine besten Kräfte und Kenntnisse in den Dienst des neuen Landes stellt und der weiss, dass der Übergang in den neuen Kulturkreis neben gutem Willen Zeit, Lernen und Aufnahmefähigkeit verlangt." W. C. H. "An den Rand geschrieben: Amerikanisierung, überstürzt oder organisch?," *Aufbau* 5 (August, 15 1939)

[97] Ruth Ephraim Rosenthal, „El Pueblo", in *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 7f, Ralph Nunberg, "Hollywood heute: Schattenseiten einer Expansion," "Westküste," *Aufbau* 7 (August 15, 1941), Hans Meyerhoff, "Wo liegt Hollywood?: Hollywood gibt es gar nicht, " Ibid.; "This Is Your City,"*Aufbau* 7 (August 15, 1941); Saenger, *Today's Refugee,* 107.

Meetings with occasional lectures by American and German speakers about current events or topics pertinent to the immigration experience. The organizers of the talks specifically pointed out that they chose the speakers not only for their entertainment value but also on the basis of how they could benefit the immigrant audience in its adjustment to American conditions.[98] In 1939, Dr. Jacob Sonderling, a Reform rabbi from Hamburg who had arrived in Los Angeles in 1923 and had become closely associated with the club, held a seminar about the history of the Jews in America.[99] Hans Schmitt from the Deutsch-Amerikanischen Kulturverband (German-American Cultural Association) talked about Jews, Germans, and Americans, and there were events featuring introductions to American politics and the economy and to financial and tax matters.[100] To help the immigrants become acquainted with American traditions, customs, and practices, the Jewish Club in Los Angeles arranged special lectures. Some, such as a talk by a representative of the Southern California Arizona Association of Ice Industries entitled "Summer Food," were particularly addressed to transplanted housewives, to familiarize them with the variety of vegetables and salad dishes that were unknown in Europe.[101] *Neue Welt* praised the quality and importance of such lectures, while noting and regretting that the number of listeners in the audiences was very small.[102] While the

---

[98] Ibid., 9.

[99] See Vorspan and Gartner , *History of the Jews*, 211., Reinhard A. Braun, "Kulturabteilung, " *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 9

[100] "Vortragsabende," Ibid., 16., "Jahresbericht: Veranstaltungen," *New World* (October 1940): 4. Interview with William Stagen, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA, January 1, 1972, LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1337416

[101] *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 16.

[102] Ibid.

small number of participants might have resulted from a lack of interest in the topics of the talks, it is more likely that many club members were unable to attend those lectures because they were busy dealing with the basic need to make a living.[103] Nevertheless, in Los Angeles, events that had more of an entertainment character, often featuring concerts, plays, or literary readings—a program that was more akin to what the members were used in Germany—seemed to have had higher attendance. John Baer recalled that it was the Los Angeles Club's aim to complement their members' integration into American life with this kind of cultural program that "lifted their spirits"[104] Similarly, the gist of several different *Aufbau* articles was that practicing and enjoying German culture was valuable and benefitted the refugees in America because it made them feel less alienated than they might have in their new environment, providing them with a certain security and thus supporting their well-being.[105]

While the majority of the refugees believed that practicing German culture was acceptable from the perspective of becoming a good American, another discussion among

---

[103] Lothar Rosenthal, "Early Days of the German Jewish Club," 1976. Collection of the Benefactors of the Jewish Club of 1933.

[104] Baer, *Witness for a Generation*, 92.

[105] Walter L.,"Brief eines Neueinwanderers," *Aufbau* 1 (January 1, 1935). In a similar vein and making another pragmatic argument for not abandoning culture, one Reinhold Herz wrote to *Aufbau* that the meaning of culture was not just the accumulation of knowledge but played a central role for the consolidation of one's character. He wrote that the knowledge about one's position and historical, intellectual, and societal relationships—in essence the whole body of memory that constituted culture—was essential for the development of a strong person. Hinting at the situation the refugees found themselves in, Herz then asked: "And when is the consolidation of one's character needed more, than in times, when the struggle to survive is made particularly difficult, with all the temptations this struggle presents to weak and ignorant [ungebildet] characters?""Es geht vor allem auch deshalb nicht an, Kultur auf ruhigere Zukunftstage zu vertagen, weil jene Bildung ihren Sinn nicht in der Wissensanhäufung erfüllt, sondern in der Festigung des Charakters, zu der der Mensch ohne das Wissen darum, in welchen geschichtlichen, geistigen und gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhängen er steht, allerdings in der Regel nicht vordringt. Und wann wäre Charakterbildung nötiger, als in Zeiten erschwerten Daseinskampfes mit all den Versuchungen, vor die er schwache, ungebildete Charaktere stellt?" Reinhold Herz,"Erwiderung," *Aufbau* 5 (February 15, 1939)

the refugees addressed the question whether it was still acceptable—and why it was still enjoyable—from the perspective of a good Jew. In one letter to the editor that appeared in *Aufbau* in early 1940, its author declared German culture to be "as dead as that of the old Greeks and Romans." It was his opinion that it should be the task of every cultured human being [Kulturmensch] and "certainly every Jew who escaped German barbarism" to make that clear to the world, "tirelessly and until the last breath."[106]

Reacting to similar arguments and addressing this difficult issue, Wilfred Hülse explained that many Jewish refugees had understandably had the intention to abandon German language and culture after escaping Germany. In reality, however, it was very difficult to give up what one had grown up with and loved for most of one's life. Hülse went on to say that it was also not necessary for Jews to give up this love, because German culture cannot simply be identified with what the Nazis were doing. He wrote:

> ... the German language and German culture have produced timeless and supranational [übernational] values, which no people on earth can live without, and which are not the possession of a single people's community [Volksgemeinschaft], but of the human community of cultures [Kulturgemeinschaft]. This is why I believe that we as Jews have full rights to participate in German culture [Kulturgut].[107]

While Hülse was writing pieces based on his personal opinion, his views on German culture appear to represent a consensus that seems to have been reached in the early 1940s within large circles of the organized refugee community.[108] While discussions

---

[106] Alex Levy, "Deutsche Kultur ist tot," *Aufbau* 6, (February 9, 1940)

[107] W.C.H., "An den Rand geschrieben: Wir emigrierten Juden und die deutsche Kultur," *Aufbau* 6 (January 26, 1940)

[108] This is what he pointed out in one of his articles. He also was, however, the President of the *New World Club* and regular columnist on the *Aufbau* staff and as such a leading figure with many connections within the refugee community and an extensive first hand knowledge about it.

about the role of German culture in the Americanization process were frequent among the refugees in the 1930s, they tailed off in the 1940s. Even with more and more efforts by the refugees to disassociate themselves from Germany after the beginning of the war—such as the organizations' name changes that will be discussed later and a higher frequency of English language articles in the refugee press—the practice of German culture maintained a strong position in the activities of the refugee organizations. While there were certainly people among the refugees who did not approve of this and who did not continue to hold on to attachments to German culture, these refuges were not likely to join the refugee organizations.[109]

Within these organizations, German cultural events frequently took on a dimension that was indeed antithetical to Nazi culture, since many of the famous artists and intellectuals who had fled from Hitler found a welcoming audience there. In Los Angeles, Thomas Mann, Bruno Frank, and Lion Feuchtwanger were among the writers who frequently appeared to read from their works.[110]Annelise Bunzel lists the Schoenfeld Trio, Andre Previn, Jakob Gimpel, Victor and Frederick Hollander, and Ernst Toch

---

[109] One refugee in Cincinnati recounted in an interview "My husband and I spoke English to each other. We had such [negative] feelings against Germany, against German culture, against German literature. I never even wanted to read German books, German newspapers. Many German Jews, of course, ket on reading the *Aufbau* and so on. I never wanted any part of it." Peck and Herscher, *Queen City Refuge*, 195. *Aufbau* and the Jewish Club in Los Angeles frequently criticized those German Jewish refugees who did not join the organizations, arguing that it lessened the power and impact of their group of immigrants.

[110] Baer, *Witness for a Generation*, 92, Interview with William Stagen, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: Jan. 1, 1972. LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1337416, and Collection of the Benefactors of the Jewish Club of 1933, also see *Neue Welt* (March 1940): 3. Thomas Mann and Bruno Frank both became honorary members of the Jewish Club in 1942 after they appeared as spokesmen for the refugee community in front of the Tolan Committee, an episode that is discussed in chapter 2.

among the famous musicians who played for the Jewish Club.[111]A club member who was not as widely known as Thomas Mann or Ernst Toch, but who had made a name for himself in Berlin circles was Eric Lowinsky. Elow, as Lowinsky was called, was a cabaret artist who became known for the "Kabarett der Namenlosen" (Cabaret of the Nameless), which he established in the 1920s in Berlin.[112] After the Nazis closed his cabaret and barred him from performing and writing, he left Germany in 1939 and came to Los Angeles.[113] Here, he became a member of the Jewish Club and was involved with the organization of cultural events, especially cabaret-type programs. While Elow became legendary in this position and for his efforts for the club, other members, such as Reinhard A. Braun who founded the Berlin "Kabarett am Abend" (Cabaret at Night), were also successful in staging theater productions. Braun was the head of the Cultural Committee of the German Jewish Club in 1939 and in this position supported the establishment of the "Theatre of the Refugees, Los Angeles," also called "Tribüne" (The Tribune).[114] The Jewish Club also cooperated with other famous German émigrés on cultural productions, such as with Walter Wicclair, who founded the German language

---

[111] Annelise Bunzel,"The Jewish Club of 1933, Inc.: A German-Jewish Presence in Los Angeles." *Western States Jewish History* 29 (1997): 115.

[112] *German Jewish Club of 1933, Los Angeles: Ein Vergessenes Kapitel der Emigration*, reconstructed by Marta Mierendorff. Radio-Essay, Süddeutscher Rundfunk, January 9, 1966, 15, Marta Mierendorff Collection, Max-Kade-Institute, University of Southern California. Since I accessed this document, the collection has been moved to the Feuchtwanger Memorial Library where it is held as Marta Mierendorff papers, Collection no. 0214, Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

[113] Attachment to letter from Elow to Professor Krakowsky, undated, Cornelius Schnauber Collection, Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin

[114]*Neue Welt* (September 1939): 9. The Tribüne was managed by Braun and Alfred Pinkus and presented one of its first shows in April 1939 at the Hollytown Theatre. Program of "Panoptikum: The show of 'The 39 Missteps,'" April 6th to 9th, 1939, Marta Mierendorff Collection, Box of German Jewish Club, Max-Kade-Institute, University of Southern California.

theatre group "Freie Bühne" (Free Stage).[115] The press outlets of the club also made a significant contribution to the cultural and intellectual life of the immigrants. Besides reviews of concerts and lectures, the *Neue Welt/New World* and later the *Westküste,* the West Coast edition of *Aufbau*, featured book reviews as well as poems and contemplations by intellectuals and writers such as Berthold Viertel or Ludwig Marcuse.[116] As the largest German Jewish immigrant organization of its kind in the United States, the New York Club featured an even wider array of German cultural events, which through reviews in *Aufbau* reached interested readers all over the United States.

The Jewish Club in Los Angeles specifically stressed as one goal to make Jewish culture part of their cultural program and to raise the interest in Jewish issues among its membership.[117] The rabbis of the Jewish community of Los Angeles, especially Jacob Sonderling, whose Fairfax Temple many club members attended for the High Holidays,[118] frequently wrote for the *Neue Welt* about religious topics.[119] There were also occasional lectures on Jewish topics. However, overall, most of the events that the Club

---

[115] See Johanna W. Roden, "Der 'Jewish Club of 1933, Inc.'—ein deutsches Kulturzentrum am Pazifischen Ozean," John M. Spalek, Konrad Feilchenfeldt, and Sandra H. Hawrylchak, *Deutschsprachige Exilliteratur Seit 1933* vol. 3, no. 3 (Bern: KG Saur: 2002), 487ff.

[116] See for example *Neue Welt* (March 1940). Ludwig Marcuse was a Berlin born German Jewish writer and philosopher who lived in Los Angeles from 1940 to 1950. He was not related to the philosopher Herbert Marcuse.

[117] "Programm-Erklaerung," Neue Welt (March 1940): 1

[118] Interview with William Stagen, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: Jan. 1, 1972. LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1337416 and interview with Annelise Bunzel, conducted by author, Los Angeles: February 4, 2005.

[119] See for example Jacob Sonderling, "Rosch Haschonoh," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 17 and Rabbi Magnin, "New Year's Greetings," *New World* (October 1940): 2.

offered at the time were more specifically German than Jewish. Numerous works of scholarship have illustrated the importance of the New York and Los Angeles Club as major centers of German émigré culture.[120] The focus on German culture in these studies makes these organizations appear like rather isolated islands of German culture in an American setting. The clubs were, however, active participants in the American organizational landscape, as we will see in the following section.

Refugee Organizations within the American Jewish Organizational Landscape

Historian Steven Lowenstein has argued that the organizations the German Jewish refugees founded after their arrival in the United States were "profoundly conservative" and that those who joined them preferred to be surrounded by something familiar rather than to venture out into the American world of social organizations.[121] This was the image that some refugees had of these organizations as well. Edward Newman, who left the New York German Jewish Club after being a member for a few years, explains:

> I had so many friends that I didn't feel the need to seek companionship in the Club. And then very quickly those of us who became assimilated more easily for one reason or another, and now I speak for myself, didn't want to be identified as foreigners or immigrants or Germans, because some people still looked at us as Germans rather than German Jews; and being a

---

[120] See, for example, Middell, *Exil in den USA*, Johanna W. Roden, "Der 'Jewish Club of 1933, Inc.'—ein deutsches Kulturzentrum am Pazifischen Ozean," John M. Spalek, Konrad Feilchenfeldt, and Sandra H. Hawrylchak, *Deutschsprachige Exilliteratur Seit 1933,* vol. 3, no. 3, Bern: KG Saur: 2002, 482-494 and the more general works of famous emigres: Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise*, Taylor, *Strangers in Paradise,* Gumprecht, '*New Weimar' unter Palmen,* Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific*

[121] Steven M. Lowenstein, "Women's Role in the German-Jewish Immigrant Community" in Sibylle Quack (ed.), *Between Sorrow and Strength: Women Refugees of the Nazi Period* (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 1995), 171

> member of a German-Jewish club would very much identify us. I for one wanted to get away from this. I wanted to be an American.[122]

After reading about the significance that these organizations attributed to the Americanization of its members, it may be somewhat surprising to see this kind of response. However, we have also seen how Americanization meant different things to different people and was made to fit different needs and interests. Club members who only went to the German culture events found themselves in an atmosphere that was like being back in Germany. While this made some feel very good, it made others feel rather less comfortable.[123] People who participated in the administration of the refugee organizations, however, worked in cooperation with American community, social, and cultural organizations, frequently even became representatives in them, and as such became familiar with new realms of American life. The following examples will illustrate that by organizing themselves in their own specific interest groups, the refugees were able to participate in American life on an institutional basis, just like other American groups. As such, refugee organizations were not insular, with their focus on the old

---

[122] Edward Newman, interview by Michael Tietz, transcript, New York, NY, June 1972, in Herbert A. Strauss (ed.), *Jewish immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA*, vol. 5 "The Individual and Collective Experience of German-Jewish Immigrants 1933-198: An Oral History Record," Compiled by Dennis Rohrbaugh (New York: K.G. Saur, 1986), 29

[123] Also, Siegfried Bernstein from the Jewish Club in Los Angeles points out that many refugees had been greatly disappointed by the way they felt the Jewish organizations in Germany had let them down or had not been able to help them when the Nazis came to power. Thus, they had lost their trust in organizations and preferred to fare for themselves. Dr. Siegfried Bruno Bernstein, "Zusammenschluss," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 5

country, but rather they were important in giving the newcomers' community a strong and active voice in American society, which they would not otherwise have had.[124]

Selected editions of *Neue Welt/New World* reveal the extent to which the Jewish Club in Los Angeles was connected to different local community organizations in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The Club's employment office, the *Beratungsstelle,* closely cooperated with the Jewish Employment Bureau, subsequently even moving its office to the Bureau's Los Angeles location.[125] The club cooperated with numerous other Jewish and non-Jewish social service organizations such as the Federated Employment Bureau of Los Angeles, the Jewish Community Council, the Los Angeles chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, the Jewish Family Service, the Jewish Vocational Service,[126] and the Coordinating Committee for Aid to Jewish Refugees.[127] The cooperation between the Jewish Club and these Los Angeles community organizations seemed to have been not only successful, but also very friendly. In letters on the occasion of the Club's five-

---

[124] Deborah R. Weiner, in her excellent account on the Jewish refugees in Baltimore, also argues that the "formation of these groups did not represent a rejection of the local community, but rather, provided a way for the refugees to a participate in Jewish communal life on an equal footing." Kassof, Anita, Avi Y. Decter, and Deborah R. Weiner. *Lives Lost, Lives Found: Baltimore's German Jewish Refugees, 1933-1945* (Baltimore, Md: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2004)

[125] See *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 10 and *New World* (October 1940): 4.

[126] Interview with William Stagen, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: Jan. 1, 1972. LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1337416

[127] See *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 2. Besides these service organizations, there were several religious communities that sent their greetings on the anniversary of the Club, such as different Christian and Jewish congregations. In addition, the governor sent congratulations as well as representatives of the B'nai B'rith. All of these messages communicate a sense that the refugees were welcome in Los Angeles and recognized as new and important members of a larger community. Reports from Baltimore give a less rosy picture about the cooperation between the refugee newcomers and native Jewish organizations. Weiner speaks of Easterm Jewish-Western Jewish animosity there (Kassof et al., *Lives Lost)*. Refugees I have interviewed in Los Angeles have told me that there was no such animosity in L.A. Rather, Eastern European Jews were now happy to be in an etablished position and able to help, in a sort of reversal of roles that these two groups had occupied in Europe.

year anniversary, various representatives of local organizations stressed not only the fine work the club had been doing but also the "splendid character attributes of its members."[128] The General Secretary of the Los Angeles Coordinating Committee for Aid to Jewish Refugees particularly emphasized his appreciation for the efforts the Club made to integrate and complement their program with those of the other existing organizations.[129] The Director of the Federated Employment Bureau even noted that "constructive suggestions" on how his agency could help more efficiently would be welcome.[130]

The refugees showed themselves very grateful for the assistance that American organizations provided for them.[131] At the same time, some refugees warned that they should not let the American organizations dominate them, but that their efforts should always be directed at becoming more independent and capable of providing the necessary assistance themselves.[132] For this purpose, they founded bigger supra-local organizations such as the Federation of Jews from Central Germany—an umbrella organization and coordinating council for the majority of the organizations of German refugees —and the mutual aid and welfare organizations Selfhelp of Émigrés from Central Europe and Blue

---

[128] The words of Joseph Bonapart, Superintendent of the Jewish Orphans' Home of Southern California, *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 2.

[129] The General Secretary's name is S.C. Kohs, *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 2.

[130] The Director's name is cited as Ed. Bastheim, *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 2.

[131] One example from Los Angeles: "Early days of the German Jewish Club —Jewish Club of 1933 as remembered by Lothar Rosenthal," *Mitteilungsblatt* XXX, no 6 *(*June 1976)

[132] See, for example Dr. Siegfried Bruno Bernstein, "Zusammenschluss," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 5, and Wilhelm Marcus, "Der neue Bund," *Aufbau* 5 (February 15, 1939)

Card.[133] All of these organizations were modeled after ones that had existed in Germany, and some refugees joined them to continue familiar activities in the new country.[134]

Besides taking care of their own needs, the refugees also paid specific attention to understanding American organizational life.[135] One important aspect of American Jewish community life was the fundraising activities of organizations such as the United Jewish Welfare Fund and the United Jewish Appeal. The organized refugee community viewed the contribution of the refugees as major responsibilities to demonstrate that they were becoming valuable members of American Jewry. They repeatedly appealed to the refugees to give money, using arguments similar to those the Jewish Club in Los Angeles made in May 1940:

> It is our duty to show our American friends that we are cooperating with them in the task of raising the money to show that we appreciate and are thankful for the help we have been forced to accept. It must be our aim to double the collection amount of last year to give not only what we can spare but to dig deeper into our pockets. [...] We owe this to our reputation to make this drive a success.[136]

The fundraising drives of the organizations were to a large extent directed at efforts to help European Jewry as well as Jews in Palestine. As such, *Aufbau* and the leadership of the New York and Los Angeles Club presented their appeals frequently as a task that should be particularly dear and important to the refugees. Nevertheless, the

---

[133] See numerous ads for Blue Card, or Blaue Beitragskarte, in *Aufbau. One of the early ads is here Aufbau* 6 *(*July 19, 1940)

[134] Strauss, *Jewish Immigrants* (1987), 325f.

[135] See, for example, Al H. Katzenstein, "Was die Amerikanischen Juden tun," *New World* (October 1940): 4

[136] "Appeal to the Members of the German Jewish Club," Neue Welt (May 1940): 1

refugee press reveals that the German Jewish refugees were not giving as much as the leaders of the organizations expected them to and this was also noted with distain by some representatives of the established American organizations.[137] This did not, however, single them out but rather, considering the different ideological and political factions with American Jewry, made them one Jewish group among many in the United States.

As such, in addition to their efforts at blending in with the American Jewish community, some German refugees did not shy away from voicing concerns that they felt particularly strong about. These were issues related to Nazism and antisemitism in Germany and in the United States. The refugees believed that, because of their special background and knowledge, they were better able to understand these problems and could help Americans in dealing with them more efficiently. In the mid 1930s, several articles appeared in *Aufbau* that criticized the way American Jewish organizations were dealing with the threat of antisemitism and Nazism. Despite the difference that existed among the spectrum of American Jewish organizations, they all had traditionally reacted to anti-Jewish sentiments and actions by employing a strategy of non-confrontation. They believed that directing attention to their special problems might aggravate the issues and threaten, as they perceived it, their fragile situation in American society.[138] To some of the German Jewish refugees, this method did not seem wise.

---

[137] See, for example, Dr. F. Grubel, "Was leisten die Einwanderer für den United Jewish Appeal," *Aufbau* 7 *(*June 27, 1941) and response by W.C.H., Julius Petzon, "Letters to the Editor: Der United Jewish Appeal und die Immigration, *Aufbau* 7 (July 4, 1941); see also interview with Hugo Zivi, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles: January 4, 1972, LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1337675

[138] Diner, *Jews of the United States*, 172

One contributor to *Aufbau* called on his fellow German Jews to take action, because he believed that the American Jewish "neglect" of these issues was irresponsible and could not be justified, considering the efficiently organized agitation work of the anti-Semites in New York.[139] Another call on German Jews that appeared in *Aufbau* concerned the work of American Jewish organizations in regard to Nazi Germany. The author, Dr. Hans Martin Meyer, called on *Aufbau* readers to gain influence on the American Jewish Committee, which he believed, even though "it has been occupied with the fight against National Socialism for years, completely misjudges the psychology of the Nazi government and the German people."[140] He wrote that the German Jews had first hand knowledge and experience, which, if they were heard, could "prevent useless waste of energies" in the future and lead to more efficient and practical activities. This kind of criticism of American Jewish organizations was not well-received by all readers. One person warned that it was surely not doing much good in terms of advancing the refugees in the United States. Rather, he wrote, actions should come from the refugees first, before they offered criticism that would only cause intra-Jewish-trouble. Discussions about this topic continued in *Aufbau,* and Dr. Meyer consequently called for the establishment of a working group to fight Nazism.[141]

---

[139] "Nazismus in USA: Brauner Antisemitismus in New York, *Aufbau* 1 (April 1935)

[140] Dr .Hans Martin Meyer, "Die Völkerbundaktion des American Jewish Committee," *Aufbau* 2 (September 1936). This article was a reaction to the petition the American Jewish Committee sent to the League of Nations, which he thought to be a completely powerless institution.

[141]See more articles on this in *Aufbau* 2 (November 1936). Dr. Hans Martin Meyer, "Aufruf! Schafft eine Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur Bekämpfung des Nazismus in U.S.A.!" *Aufbau* 3 (December 1936)

Many refugees saw the scrutiny and monitoring of German American organizations as their main task in this regard. Again, they believed that their German background and their experiences as Jews in Nazi Germany provided them with knowledge that was beneficial to analyzing the situation in America. As mentioned before, the refugees closely monitored the German language press, such as the *New York* and *California Staatszeitung,* and *Aufbau* dedicated much space to how these publications reported news related to Germany, National Socialism, and the situation of the Jews in Europe and America. The refugee press also frequently included articles about the political orientation of the German American community at large,[142] and the circulation of Nazi propaganda among these circles.[143] At times, the refugees were indeed successful at these monitoring activities and took pride when they were able to identify Nazi activities in America. This was especially important for the refugees at a time when their loyalty to the United States was questioned and they were faced with an American public and government that believed that there might be fifth columns among the refugees. Early in 1940, an *Aufbau* journalist exposed the newspaper *Today's Challenge*, published by a certain Friedrich E. Auhagen, as spreading Nazi propaganda in disguise. The *Aufbau* article initially only made Auhagen and other people affiliated with the newspaper

---

[142] See for example, "German-American Congress for Democracy," *Aufbau* 7 (July 4, 1941). They also paid pay attention to the efforts of "Anti-Nazi Germans" in the United States. See, for example, "Deutschamerikaner in der Antinazi -Front,"*Aufbau* 7 (March 7, 1941), and "Deutsch-Amerikaner im Zeichen der Nazi-Abwehr," *Aufbau* 7 (August 1, 1941)

[143] Concerned that for many German-speaking Americans there were practically no other German news sources—written and broadcast on radio— available than those tainted by Nazi propaganda, one refugee proposed in *Neue Welt* that the establishment of an alternative program might be a task for the refugees. Martin Hall, "Hitler-Propaganda in U.S.A.," *Neue Welt* (March 1940): 1 and 4. Later, Thomas Mann and *Aufbau* actually provided German language broadcasts for that reason.

indignant. Half a year later, however, a *New York World Telegram* journalist confirmed the American Nazi connections of the paper and its publisher. This confirmation of *Aufbau*'s investigative work was commented on by *Aufbau* with the following: "This is a small example of the fact that the immigrants who fled Hitler for the most part have sharper ears for the whisperings of the real fifth columns than the residents of the countries, which, because of their lack of knowledge of the tactics, have long been misled."[144]

The refugees' demonstration of loyalty to the United States and of how their German background was in fact beneficial to the new country became ever more important with the situation in Europe worsening. Under these circumstances, the U.S. government emphasized the common German background of the refugees and German Americans. As we have seen, in many ways, the German Jews were perceived as having more connections with Germans than other American Jews. While this was true to a certain degree about the self-perception of the refugees as well, with the beginning of the war in Europe and the consequences this had on policy in the United States, German Jewish refugees seemed to have increasingly turned to discussions about their Jewish identity. This is evidenced, for example, by the fact that *Aufbau* declared itself a specifically Jewish and American newspaper, dedicated to Jewish traditions and themes,[145] as well as by several contributions in *Aufbau* that reflected these issues. There

---

[144] "Was der 'Aufbau' entdeckte…" *Aufbau* 6 (June 21, 1940) The refugees did not only stress how their particular expertise was beneficial for the country, but they certainly also had the motivation to find out these things, because they feared being infiltrated by real fifth-columns themselves.

[145] "Statement of Policy," *Aufbau* 6 (September 27, 1940)

is, for example, a collection of statements that present the results of an *Aufbau* survey about personal positions that several "leading personalities" of the refugee and emigre community had on the "Jewish question." The newspaper stated that the upheavals of the last years had led to revisions of the Jewish identity of the majority of the refugees and emigres. In such times, the paper stated, Jewish artists and intellectuals played a "responsible role" in guiding their fellow Jews. Two representatives of that group who replied to the inquiry were Bruno Frank and Albert Einstein, who avowed their Jewishness explicitly.[146] Bruno Frank wrote, for instance: "Even if one has felt as a German, Czech, Dutchman, or Frenchman all of one's life, knowing about the diluted drop of Jewish blood in one's veins, one must avow oneself as a Jew, wherever one can, and as loud as one can."[147] Other respondents to the survey stated that their Jewish consciousness had not become stronger since they had left Germany—which was one of the questions that the survey had asked—or that being Jewish had never mattered that much to them. The range of the answers again demonstrate the heterogeneity of the community of German Jewish refugees in America. The discussion of Jewish identity aroused the interest of many readers, as is evidenced by follow-up discussions about the topic in later *Aufbau* issues.[148] In 1940 and 1941, the occupation of the refugees with their Jewish identity was connected to the necessity of, distancing themselves from their

---

[146]Eine Umfrage des 'Aufbau:' 'Meine Stellung zur jüdischen Frage,' *Aufbau* 6 (December 27, 1940)

[147] Interestingly, Frank at the same time emphasizes the importance of retaining the German language. Bruno Frank, "Juden müssen die deutsche Sprache bewahren," *Aufbau* 6 (December 27, 1940)

[148] See *Aufbau* 7 (February 7, 1941)

Germanness not only because of the war in Europe but also because the situation in Europe held personal meaning for them as Jews.[149]

War

The beginning of the war in Europe affected the refugees in the United States psychologically and practically—and particularly in regard to their Americanization efforts and their relationship to Germany. They had been among the first who experienced and understood the power and brutality of the Nazis and considered themselves fortunate to have escaped Europe in time. In his speech on the occasion of the beginning of the war in Europe, President Roosevelt had called for the neutrality of the American people toward the fighting parties in Europe. While an *Aufbau* statement declared that the refugees must act according to the provisions of this neutrality legislation, they were naturally inclined to the interpretation that the following *New York Times* editorial offered on the legislation:

> The advice of our Government to its citizens to observe in their conduct the strict neutrality of the people of a neutral nation is sound advice, which must be followed even at the price of personal and individual convictions. … But when this much is said, it must also be said, in justice to its facts and to the record, that no scruples of strict neutrality can conscript the underlying sympathies of the American people. We know where responsibility lies for this reckless act that has plunged Europe into war. … Hitler has said that this is victory or death for him. It is also victory or

---

[149] For an example of an article on the refugees and the war at this time, see: "Ein wichtiges jüdisches Kriegsziel,"*Aufbau* 7, (February 7, 1941), and in relation to their efforts at strengthening their American Jewish identity "Our American Brethren and We," Ibid. The German Jewish refugee community did not publically engage in debates over American "isolationism" or "interventionism" in regard to the war in Europe. During these years, refugees were careful to present a picture of themselves as loyal to the American government, whatever decisions they may take. Their actions focused on helping Jewish refugees enter the country, which was what American Jewish organizations focused their energies on as well. The articles in Aufbau show however, that they saw the war in Europe as a "battle for freedom against Hitler" (the title of one article "Der Freiheitskampf gegen Hitler" in *Aufbau* 8 (Feburary 21, 1941)).

> death for decent standards of international conduct and the democratic way of life.[150]

The refugees were eager to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States not only because they had a stake in the country but also because, as we have already seen, it was necessary to divert suspicion that there could be enemy spies among the refugees. While President Roosevelt was generally sympathetic to the refugees, he acknowledged at a press conference in June 1940 that,

Now, of course, the refugee has got to be checked because, unfortunately, among the refugees there are some spies, as has been found in other countries. And not all of them are voluntary spies – it is rather a horrible story but in some of the other countries that refugees out of Germany have gone to, especially Jewish refugees, they have found a number of definitely proven spies.[151]

Roosevelt explained that those refugees acting as spies must have been forced by the Nazis under the threat that "your father and mother will be taken out and shot." He added that the number of these cases was extremely limited but that nevertheless it was "something we have got to watch."[152]

The concerns over fifth columnists in the United States led to the passing of the Alien Registration Act of June 1940. This legislation reminded the refugees that even with all their efforts to Americanize they were still legally aliens in the United States.

---

[150] "Our Neutrality," *New York Times* Editorial reprinted in prominent position in *Aufbau* 5 (September 15, 1939)

[151] This is from Roosevelt's response when he was asked what should be done to avoid imposing suffering on the refugees already in the United States who were unjustifiably perceived as potential spies. Breitmann and Kraut, *American Refugee Policy,* 212f.

[152] Ibid.

Title III of the Act required all aliens residing for thirty days or more in the United States to be registered and fingerprinted.[153] The instructions on the registration form stated that registration was compulsory and was done "…so that the United States could determine exactly how many aliens there are, who they are, and where they are."[154] However, the questions posed on the registration form implied that the Justice Department was really looking for subversive elements among the alien population.[155] While some refugees warned against an exaggerated fear of fifth columnists and rejected the idea that there could be any spies among the Jewish refugees, they generally had a positive response to the legislation.[156] *Aufbau* repeatedly posted appeals to the refugees to make sure to register and included a number of articles that explained the necessity of the legislation

---

[153] U.S. Statutes at Large, 76. Cong., 3rd Sess., 674

[154] AR-1, *The National Registration of Aliens: Instructions for Registration and Specimen Form*, 1.

[155] The data aliens had to provide on the registration form was personal information about birthplace, birth date, outward appearance, race, sex, and marital status. Furthermore, there were questions about the date of entry, duration and place of residence in the United States, occupation and employer facts, participation in military or naval services of any country, and the status of citizenship application. (AR-1, *The National Registration of Aliens: Instructions for Registration and Specimen Form*, 2ff.) Additionally, aliens had to report on their activities within the past five years relating to "memberships or activities in clubs, organizations, or societies." More specifically, they were required to state whether or not they had been affiliated with "organizations, devoted in whole or in part to influencing or furthering the political activities, public relations, or public policy of a foreign government" as well as whether or not they had ever been arrested. See Ibid, 4

[156] See for example "Spies Among Refugees?" *Aufbau* 6 (September 6, 1940), and "Refugees sind keine Spione," an article quoting Manfred George who rejected the idea that there were spies among the refugees. "Die Westküste," *Aufbau* 7 (September 5, 1941)

and characterized it as a democratic act and protective measure for the security of the United States.[157]

Even though the refugees saw the Alien Registration Act as a bureaucratic measure with which they were eager to comply—also because it gave them another opportunity to show their loyalty to the United States—it did increase their concern over unwanted identification with Germany. As a consequence, the two largest refugee organizations in the United States erased the word "German" from their name. Many immigrants did not wish to have anything to do with Germany anymore, and they also worried that in case the United States became a belligerent, the word German would arouse mistaken hostility from the American public.[158] While the members of the German Jewish Club in Los Angeles had discussed the name change already in the spring of 1940, the decision was finalized after the Alien Registration Act was issued in the end of June of that year. In September 1940, the members unanimously voted to change the name of the German Jewish Club to Jewish Club of 1933, Inc., stressing the Jewish character of the organization.[159] In October of the same year, the Jewish Club in Los

---

[157] See, for example, "Achtung Nichtbürger: USA Registrierung!" *Aufbau* 6 (August 16, 1940), and "Akt der Demokratie: Thomas Mann über die Fremden-Registrierung," *Aufbau* 6 (Sept. 20, 1940) and "Eine notwendige Massnahme gegen die fünfte Kolonne," *Aufbau* 6, (May 31, 1940). The author of the latter piece even thought that the act might help fight anti-foreigner sentiments in the United States. This was not entirely the case, however, because the legislation actually augmented fifth column fears so that some employers did not want to employ aliens. While officials of the Justice Department made clear that the discrimination of loyal aliens in employment was not in line with any United States law, several cases of discharging such individuals from their jobs were reported from different parts of the country. (See Francis Biddle, "No Discharging of Alien Employees," *Aufbau* 6 (October 18, 1940). This was the only direct effect the legislation had on the everyday life of the refugees and other aliens though, and it appears that these incidents were quite rare.

[158] "Namensaenderung (?)," *Neue Welt* (March 1940): 3.

[159] Certificate of Amendment of Articles of Incorporation, October 14, 1941, Archive of Max- Kade-Institute, University of Southern California.

Angeles also "Americanized" the title of its press organ by translating it to *New World* and began publishing a greater number of articles in English. Similarly, the German Jewish Club in New York changed its name to New World Club the same year. In a September issue of *Aufbau*, the members of the Club were called on to make a decision about the new name quickly:

> Time is short. The term 'German Jewish' has become obsolete. The connection with the past has been broken. And this must be emphasized. One looks to the future, believes in the New World and the building of a new life in it.[160]

While this statement about the broken connection to the past was far from the lived realities of the vast majority of the German Jewish refugees—because it was forced on them to a certain degree by the political situation—we have seen that the desire to create a new future was real. With the intention to make the United States their permanent home, many of the refugees had taken out their first citizenship papers soon after their arrival. In November of 1938, the New York Jewish Club even made membership in the organization contingent on American citizenship or the filing of the first application for citizenship.[161] This, once again, shows that the focus of the organized refugee community was on Americanization.

The political situation and general fear of subversive aliens in the U.S. after the beginning of the war in Europe made it imperative for the refuges to get the year-long application process for citizenship going. *Aufbau* urged those who had not done so to

---

[160] "Der Begriff 'German Jewish' ist obsolet geworden. Die Verbindung mit dem, was war, ist gelöst. Und das soll betont werden. Man sieht in die Zukunft, glaubt an die Neue Welt und den neuen Lebenslauf darin." "G.J.C. Auf der Suche nach einem Namen," *Aufbau* 6 (Sept. 27, 1940)

[161] "Der Clubvorstand gibt bekannt:" *Aufbau* 4 (December 1938)

immediately follow up on it, as the possession of the first papers might soon become an immediate legal necessity and because it would, once again demonstrate the refugees' loyalty.[162] Possessing the first papers, also meant—beginning in the fall of 1940—that the refugees had to register for military service. The U.S. government passed a law that required all male American citizens and first paper holders of a certain age to register. The majority of the refugees welcomed this opportunity to make themselves useful to the new country and also perhaps to contribute to a future fight against Hitler's forces.[163] Officers at one military camp articulated how surprised they were about the great number of refugees who were among those who had enlisted.[164] The enthusiasm that many refugees showed in enlisting in military service may be illustrated by the first few lines of a poem one refugee composed:

> Equal in duty and equal in right
> The not-yet citizen is ready to fight,
> and I raise my heart and I raise my voice
> For the U.S.A. the land of my choice.[165]

The organized refugee community believed that there were other efforts that were important for the newcomers to engage in to make themselves useful to the United States in its preparation for a possible war. *Aufbau* articles directed their readers' attention to buying United States Savings Bonds and to considering making themselves available to

---

[162] "Wer hat noch keine 'First Papers'? *Aufbau 6* (May 24, 1940), See also W.C.H."An den Rand geschrieben: Das erste Bürgerpapier," *Aufbau* 6 (March 8, 1940)

[163] "Wehrpflicht und First Papers," *Aufbau* 6 (Sept. 20, 1940)

[164] "Refugees melden sich bei Uncle Sam," *Aufbau* 7 (May 2, 1941)

[165] The author of the poem was convinced that his sentiment was like that of "many in his position." Henry Serlin, "Declaration of Intention," *New World* (November 1940): 8

work in industries vital for the defense of the country.[166] The refugee press presents a clear picture of the refugees' desire not only to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States but also to engage in activities that strengthened the country in preparation for a future war. After all, it was the refugees' hope that the United States could make a difference in the outcome of the conflict in Europe. While these examples show that the beginning of the war strengthened the refugees' Americanization efforts in some respects, they also show that the war nevertheless complicated their relationship with the United States, especially in light of the American response to the European crisis. With the beginning of the war, the refugees directed their attention more frequently toward Germany and the European continent than they had earlier.

The Situation of Jews in Europe

Many of the refugees still had relatives in Germany or Europe and were naturally concerned about their fate. With the outbreak of the war it became increasingly difficult to maintain contact with those who had remained behind. The refugees were anxious to hear about the situation in Europe, and *Aufbau* made particular efforts to complement American newspapers through its—as it stated—connections with Jews around the world to inform the refugees in America about what was happening in other parts of the globe.[167] During the war, *Aufbau* continuously reported on incidents concerning Jews in Europe, often through eyewitness accounts and analyses of local European

---

[166] "Auch Du musst helfen!," *Aufbau* 7 (May 9, 1941)

[167] "Unentbehrlich," *Aufbau* 5 (September 15, 1939)

newspapers.[168] The press organ of the Jewish Club of Los Angeles also published articles of that sort under the title "Kurzberichte aus aller Welt" (Brief Reports from Around the World). Those short accounts included letters from Shanghai,[169] reports about the expulsion of the Jews of Danzig,[170] and descriptions about the effects of the harsh winter in 1940 on everyday life in Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. These reports particularly stressed the conditions of the Jews in these areas but also included comments on the circumstances of the Polish people and native Germans who had been resettled in the Eastern regions of the Reich; their situation was not much better than that of the Jews.[171]

In addition to communication with friends and family becoming more difficult, the prospects of bringing them to the United States grew less promising. Getting relatives or friends over had been an ongoing concern for many refugees. Most nationwide refugee agencies, especially the National Refugee Service, provided aid for such migration issues, and the German Jewish Club in Los Angeles too made it one of its goals to provide assistance in these matters. In his personal account about the early years of the club, Lothar Rosenthal reported that members of the club went out to remote communities to tell them about the situation of the Jews in Germany and to call attention to the

---

[168] As an example see *Aufbau* 6 (January 5, 1940) with articles such as "Deutsche Zeitung gibt Judenmassaker zu" (German Newspaper Admits to Massacre of Jews), which is a report on an article in the Breslau "Schlesische Zeitung" (Silesian Newspaper), or "Verstärkung der deutschen Judenhetze" (Intensification of German Agitation against Jews) reporting from Paris. Similar reports appeared in every issue of *Aufbau* during the war.

[169] Al Katten, "Brief aus Shanghai,"*Neue Welt* (September 1939): 13.

[170] Ibid., 14.

[171] See *Neue Welt* (March 1940) no page number available.

importance of providing affidavits.[172] The Club also established an office that offered advice and assistance in the search for relatives in Europe as well as in efforts of getting those relatives out of Europe.[173] All these undertakings, however, were in the end made difficult and increasingly impossible by American immigration policies, which got progressively restrictive.[174]

In July 1941, the U.S. State Department passed visa regulations stipulating that visa applicants with relatives in Germany or in any of the territories that were occupied by Germany were no longer eligible to receive visas. Further, the State Department became more involved in checking and verifying visa approvals, which meant that even people who had gone through the screening proceedings once, but whose visa application was still pending, were put under review again.[175] The new legislation reduced the chances of Jews leaving Europe almost to nil and caused great concern among the refugees in the United States. The refugees had continuously admitted that the United States had to protect itself from people entering the country who would be harmful to its

---

[172] See Weiner. Lothar Rosenthal, "Early Days of the German Jewish Club," 1976. Collection of the Benefactors of the Jewish Club of 1933.

[173] "Jahresbericht: Beratungsstelle, " *New World* (October 1940): 4.

[174] Although the German immigration quota was 95 percent filled in the fiscal year that ended in June 1940, only approximately 10 percent of the people whose names were on the visa waiting lists in Germany were actually able to receive visas when their quota number came up. One reason for this was that the U.S. State Department issued stricter regulations on affidavits in the fall of 1939. Stating that it had discovered fraudulent affidavits, the State Department would only issue visas to holders of affidavits provided by family members. (See Wyman, *Abandonment of the Jews,* 169ff.) In the summer of 1940 visa restrictions began to tighten. This time, it was fear of fifth columnists arriving as immigrants that led the State Department to reduce immigration to America. Officials were advised to examine visa applicants very carefully and to reject them if there was any hint of suspicion. Moreover, in April 1940, cases of visa fraud came to the attention of the State Department. Apparently, German officials had cleaned up criminal records of Jews who wanted to emigrate (Breitman and Kraut, *American Refugee Policy*, 120.) Hence, in addition to fears of Communist or Nazi fifth columnists, the possible influx of criminals became a concern.

[175] "Eine Tür faellt ins Schloss," "Die neuen Einwanderungsbestimmungen vom 1. Juli", "Der Schlag gegen die Einwanderung," *Aufbau* 7 (July 18, 1941)

security. Even now, one representative of the community stated in *Aufbau* that he understood the need for strict screenings. However, the uniform exclusion of all people from Germany or German-occupied territories he did not find comprehensible, as it did not align with the emphasis on individual screenings that the government had been following all along.[176] The refugees were not alone in their criticism, as outrage over the regulation extended far beyond their circles.[177] An editorial from *The Nation*, for example, questioned the decision of the State Department and demanded clarification about the facts that stood behind the regulation:

Until we hear of at least one, from the State Department or elsewhere, we shall continue to suspect that the ruling represents a ruthless determination to bar as many victims of Hitler's terror as can possibly be covered by the least plausible excuse. If only the department had thought of this earlier, it could have shut out Thomas Mann and Einstein.[178]

In the quest for becoming valuable citizens of the United States, this episode was one of the first in which the refugees as a community voiced their critical opinion about the government. They did so frequently by noting that the actions of the U.S. government did not fit their expectations and image of the democratic country they had been glad to find a haven in. Leopold Jessner, president of the Los Angeles Jewish Club, reminded the refugees, however, that this conflict of opinion, this disagreement with the government

---

[176] "Demokratie und Fremdenpolitik," *Aufbau* 7 (July 11, 1941)

[177] "Wir warten," *Aufbau* 7 (August 8, 1941)

[178] From an Editorial in *The Nation* from July 4, 1941, reprinted in Aufbau, "Schlag gegen Unschuldige: Noch eine Stimme der Kritik," *Aufbau* 7 (July 11, 1941); also Werner Guttmann, "The Truth about Refugee Agents" *Aufbau* 7 (June 27, 1941)

and the fact that it could be voiced, were part of the democratic experience and as such, part of the refugees' Americanization.[179] And while the refugees' loyalty to the United States never waivered, with the situation in Europe worsening and U.S. policy not delivering relief for the Jews in Europe, many refugees lost some of their optimism about the United States. At the same time, the refugees focused their attention more closely on the continent they had left, which inevitably gave rise to discussions among them about this interest.

Since their arrival in the United States, many refugees had been sending money and food parcels to family or friends in Europe in order to help ameliorate their situation.[180] After the start of the war, this practice was widely criticized in the larger refugee community. One critic argued that sending food packages to Germany meant breaking the Allied blockade that was aimed at weakening the Germans. Those who send packages were committing treason, he wrote.[181] His anger was directed at those refugees who disregarded that they were in America now and ought to stand behind the new country's policies. Critics of the food parcels generally believed that they would not actually help the Jews but only benefit the Nazis. In March 1940, the Joint Boycott Council of the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Labor Committee, together with the Volunteer Committee to Boycott Germany, warned that goods sent to

---

[179] Leopold Jessner, "Amerikanisierung und demokratisches Gefühl," *New World* (July 1941), reprinted in *Aufbau* 7(July 25, 1941)

[180] Aufbau also called for refugees in the U.S.A. to donate money to the *Reichsvereinigung* (Reich Association) of Jews in Germany. For more on this, see, for example "The Haavaramark Miracle," *Neue Welt* (September 1939): 15, "Du musst helfen," *Aufbau* 5 (November 15, 1939)

[181] Dr. H.H., "Lebensmittelpakete nach Deutschland? Ich klage an!," *Aufbau* 5 (15. Oktober 1939). See also responses to his letter.

Germany would most likely be used to feed German soldiers.[182] *Aufbau* received several letters and contributions of readers who were concerned about this issue.[183] These letters were often very emotional, and feelings ran so high on both sides of the debate that participants even accused each other of supporting the Nazis.

Thus, the people who were against sending packages were accused of accelerating Hitler's work of getting rid of the Jews by leaving them to starve to death. Those who were for sending parcels were accused of "playing directly into Hitler's hands" by allowing the Nazis to use the resources for their purposes.[184] Another *Aufbau* article under the headline "Nazis will have to pay" and the responses to it further illustrate the debate over sending aid.[185] The writer of the article, outraged over the cruelties the Nazis had been carrying out in Europe, particularly the latest violent deportations of Jews from several Baltic cities, announced that committees in Europe were planning the legal prosecution of the Nazis after the war. Reacting to this report, a Joseph Loewenberg wrote that he and his friends believed that the prominent presentation of such information by a Jewish newspaper could have the "most terrible consequences" for the Jews still in Germany or other Nazi-occupied territories in Europe. He sharply criticized the newspaper for being so "imprudent and irresponsible," as they did not take into

---

[182] "Warum keine Lebensmittel nach Deutschland?" *Aufbau* 6 (March 15, 1940)

[183] "An den Rand geschrieben: Verwirrung der Gefühle," *Aufbau* 6 (November 22, 1940); "Vitamin in Briefen" *Aufbau* 6 (December 6, 1940)

[184] "An den Rand geschrieben… Verwirrung der Gefühle," *Aufbau* 6 (November 22, 1940)

[185] "Nazis weren zahlen müssen—Nach Stettin und Königsberg: Gerichtliche Verfolgung von Naziverbrechern geplant" *Aufbau* 6 (February 23, 1940)

consideration that such threats could lead the Nazis to retaliate against the Jews in Europe. The response of the *Aufbau* staff to this accusation was aggressive:

We believe that the attitude that you and your friends have toward these things constitute an unintentional encouragement of National Socialism, since the politics of the current German government aims at intimidating and muzzling their foreign enemies. They shall not and must not be successful in this with "Aufbau," however. The tragic fate of the Central and Eastern European Jews cannot be ameliorated by treating National Socialism lightly and by glossing over or covering up its crimes.[186]

The general disagreement over the way refugees ought to behave toward Germany—even if such behavior was only visible through indirect channels such as the refugee press—demonstrates the high level of angst and insecurity that existed among the refugees in light of the terrible news coming from Europe. While they themselves were relatively secure in America—in the country that they had put so much faith in—the United States was actively impeding further immigration of Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe, and the country had not entered the war either. As such, there was little the refugees could do to help those who remained, and the victories of the German army left many in somber moods.

Reinhard A. Braun, who regularly contributed to the magazine *New World* of the Los Angeles Jewish Club, wrote that the military advances of the Germans caused

---

[186] "Ein Briefwechsel" between Joseph Loewenberg and Wilfred C. Hülse, Chair of the *Aufbau*-Committee, *Aufbau* 6 (March 15, 1940) "Wir glauben, dass die Einstellung, die SIe und Ihre Freunde zu diesen Dingen haben, einen ungewollte Unterstützung des Nationalsozilaismus darstellt, da die Politik der derzeitigen deutschen Regierung die Einschüchterung und Mundtotmachung ihrer ausländischen Gegner zum Ziele hat. Das aber soll und darf dem Nationalsozialismus beim 'Aufbau' nicht gelingen."

depression and hopelessness among many of his fellow refugees.[187] To counter these sentiments, Braun urged his readers not to take these victories to be the decisive. Using English military news sources and eye-witness accounts, he presented the refugees with information that showed that the Germans were not doing as well as it seemed from daily news. In his regular column, "Brief Reports from Around the World," he presented a list documenting the destruction that British bombs had caused in over 150 German cities.[188] Together with reports about anti-Nazi activities in occupied territories—Norwegians stealing German army weapons and killing German soldiers, and the protest of Dutch church officials against antisemitic activities in their country, for example—Braun hoped to raise the optimism of his fellow refugees.

Articles and letters to *Aufbau* also showed that depression, as well as anxiety and pathological distrust, were not uncommon symptoms among the refugees and seemed to have become more widespread in 1940 and 1941.[189] One letter published at this time was representative of the story of many immigrants in this regard. It came from a twenty-one year old woman who was given the alias Rose. She wrote that Hitler came to power when she was twelve and that her life from that time on was dominated by worries over emigration. Since her arrival in the United States, she had only known "hard work and worry about my parents, who are still in Germany." Hinting at the new immigration

---

[187] Reinhard A. Braun, "Kurzberichte aus aller Welt," *New World* (November 1940): 2,3,5

[188] At this time, the RAF had not began their most destructive bombings campaigns yet.

[189] Dr. Max Guenthal, "Seelische Anpassung in der Emigration," *Aufbau* 7 (August 8, 1941). See also Hans Habe, "Warnung vor dem Detail: Optimistischer Brief eines deprimierten Menschen," *Aufbau* 7 (June 27, 1941); Siegfried Peine, "Vom Seelischen Aufbau: Zur psychologischen Ueberwindung der Emigration," *Aufbau* 7 (November 21, 1941)

restrictions, she went on to write: "The hope to see them again soon is now also gone."[190] Rose did not want to be misunderstood, she wrote. She had learned to speak English well, had made American acquaintances, and had, "at least on the outside," become Americanized. She stressed: "I like America, and I mean it." Nevertheless, she explained, she was still depressed and was unable to find a goal that would make life worth living.[191]

These examples illustrate that Americanization was not, in fact, the panacea to all the problems of being a German Jewish refugee. As it turned out, Americanization and the distancing from Germany did not take place in a simple ratio in which more Americanization meant less German orientation. While German Jewish refugees had become ever more Americanized, the trauma of their experience in Germany, of leaving a way of life and in many instances loved ones behind, as well as the ever deteriorating situation of remaining European Jews was inescapable, and it shaped their experiences in America significantly. Even for those refugees who wished to leave their past behind and distance themselves from Germany, their efforts were made impossible by the political developments in Europe and the reactions to these events by the United States government. During this period, before the United States entered the war, some refugees experienced feelings of helplessness or forlornness, even though they had come much closer to their goal of becoming American citizens. The next chapter will show how the refugees welcomed the entrance of the United States into the war because they hoped it

---

[190] "An den Rand geschrieben: Frage und Antwort," *Aufbau* 7 (August 22, 1941). Interestingly, the letter was composed in German, only the words "I like America, and I mean it" were written in English.

[191] "An den Rand geschrieben: Frage und Antwort," *Aufbau* 7 (August 22, 1941)

would make a difference in the fight against Germany. At the same time, their hopes of participating in this fight were made complicated by a new U.S. legislation.

Parts of this chapter are a reprint of my M.A. Thesis "German Jewish Refugees in Los Angeles: A Jewish Club and the Americanization Process from 1938-1943," submitted at California State University, Northridge in 2005. I have also used parts of this research in my essay "Zwischen-Orte: Dimensionen von Identität deutsch-jüdischer Migranten" published in *Makom Orte und Räume im Judentum. Real. Abstrakt. Imaginär. Essays.* Michal Kümper, Barbara Rösch, Ulrike Schneider, and Helen Thein (eds.), Haskala, vol. 35. Hildesheim: Olms, 2007, 311-320.

Chapter 3

The Enemy Alien Classification

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 the German Jewish immigrant community promptly and explicitly demonstrated their total and unanimous support for the United States. Under the capital lettered headline "United We Stand," the first issue of *Aufbau* after Pearl Harbor delivered the following unequivocal statement:

At this moment, the immigrants who in recent years have found asylum and a new homeland under the Star Spangled Banner, put forth but one desire and pledge: to stand side by side with the American people, to help them to the best of their abilities in the defense of our country and its ideals. These immigrants, composed of people from many countries and speaking many languages, are one in their faith in democracy, their hatred of any kind of dictatorship, and their love for the nation that gave them a home.

> From the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, and in every corner where the American and Pan-American idea has taken shape and been imbued with content, these immigrants stand with the President and with the American people with all that is theirs materially and spiritually. Their hearts and minds are possessed but by a single idea: Come what may – we stand united for the defense of America![1]

This declaration of loyalty toward to the United States reflects the determination of the majority of the refugees who strove to establish themselves as Americans. As with

---

[1] *Aufbau* 7 (December 12, 1941). The statement was translated into several different languages—among them Spanish, French, and Hebrew, representing the different places German Jews had fled to.

many of their public statements at this time, in this declaration the German Jewish refugee community emphasized their belonging to the multitude of other immigrants in the United States, rather than their particular German Jewish identity. Their desire to disassociate themselves from Germany by such statements was in part motivated by the particular political climate of deep suspicion toward immigrants from Axis countries in the United States at the time. Prior to Pearl Harbor, there was concern within the refugee community that America's entry into the war might exacerbate this suspicion. Yet despite these concerns over its affect on their own status in the country, the entry of the United States into the war was particularly meaningful for the Jewish refugees from Germany, clearly different than it was for most other immigrants in the United States. Though the declaration above emphasizes the refugees' determination to defend America in solidarity with any other immigrant group, many refugees had, impatiently, awaited American participation in the conflict in hopes that it might change conditions in Europe. The words of Kurt Klein, a refugee who had arrived in the United States in 1937, leaving behind his parents in Germany, exemplify this attitude:

> I had hoped that, once the war started in Europe, America would get involved because I saw it as the only way to stop that tremendous evil. All of the political developments were absolutely predictable to someone who knew the conditions in Germany and the brutality of the Nazis. So I did expect war to break out, although I didn't know when that would be. It was a great frustration for me to stand by and see all of these developments that I knew were going to happen without being able to do anything or help my parents more. So it came as a great relief when America entered the war, for as tragic and dramatic that was for its people,

> it had to be done. Instead of being a powerless bystander, I found out that now I could actually play a small role in the defeat of this monster.[2]

Both their own experiences of discrimination and persecution in Germany and the news they continually received about atrocities against Jewish communities in Nazi-occupied Europe, then, made the United States' entry into the war a positive development for many refugees. Like Klein, they hoped that America might come to the rescue of family members and friends who had remained in Europe. Furthermore, the participation of the United States in the war seemed to promise an escape from the helplessness many refugees had increasingly felt in the face of what was happening in their former homeland. Many hoped to take part in the fight against Hitler on the side of the Americans.[3]

These sentiments—the desire to be identified as Americans and to fight as such for American ideals and against Hitler—were stifled however when the German Jewish refugees were classified by the U.S. government as enemy aliens after the outbreak of the war. By this designation, the refugees, despite all their efforts at Americanization before the declaration of war, and demonstrations and declarations of loyalty to the U.S. after it, were officially and inescapably reduced to their German origin, and their Jewish identity and specific history with Germany was ignored. In this way, their relationship with Germany and their German Jewish identity was, at this time, significantly influenced by the United States' policy towards them.

---

[2] "Kurt Klein," Stephen Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*: *German Jews in the Allied Military in World War II (*Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2009), 273

[3] American Jews welcomed to the outbreak of the war with similar feelings: American patriotism and relief that finally something could be done to fight "the Jewish people's greatest enemy of modern times." Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 221

This chapter examines the impact that the enemy alien classification had on the refugees and how they reacted to it. While scholars have noted the classification of German Jewish refugees as enemy aliens, they have treated it largely as a technical issue which did not have significant repercussions on that community.[4] This understanding results largely from the general focus in German Jewish immigrant history on studying the East Coast of the United States, where the effects of the classification were not as extensive as on the West Coast. This chapter, however, in taking a closer look at the situation of the refugees on the West Coast, observes that the enemy alien classification had immediate and significant practical and psychological consequences for the refugees in that area.[5] As such, it makes clear that the refugee experience within the United States at times varied significantly depending on their place of residence.

---

[4] In her book on German Jewish refugees in New York—one of the few social history accounts that exist about the refugees—Claudia Appelius insinuates that the enemy alien classification did not have much of a negative impact on the refugees. She states that the government "sought to limit the "detrimental effects" of the enemy alien classification on the refugees and that it was therefore "not surprising" that restrictions against German and Italian enemy aliens which had been declared in early January 1942 were revoked after a short time (Appelius (2003), 113) Appelius supports her point by referring to *Aufbau* articles from January 16 and 23, 1942. These articles only affirmed the legal protection of enemy aliens as plaintiffs before the U.S. Supreme Court, however, and did not mention the impact longer term restrictions had on the refugees.

[5] One major argument of this chapter is that the refugees suffered great hardship from the enemy alien classification, as this is what is represented in the contemporary sources of the Jewish Club of 1933. Interestingly, juxtaposing these archival documents with oral history interviews of refugees conducted many years after the war, shows an incongruity. When I asked refugees during my interviews how they experienced the enemy alien classification, they mostly remembered that they had to turn in radios and cameras to the authorities. Many of the men pointed out that they found it ridiculous that they could not volunteer for the Army. They generally did not report about great hardships they endured because of the enemy alien classification. Rather, when I questioned them particularly about that, they often stated that the Japanese had had it so much worse. One explanation for this incongruity may be related to the fact that there has been much public criticism of the U.S. treatment of the Japanese during the war and of the absence of significant protest against it then. Thus, the interviewees might have felt that complaining about their own—comparatively less difficult fate—after what had happened to the Japanese was not appropriate. Also, since things turned out well for the refugees in the end and the classification affected them for a relatively short time, it is possible that they forgot about the fear and anxiety about the future they felt at the time.

The chapter draws primarily on two distinct source bases: *Aufbau* and documents collected by Felix Guggenheim. Guggenheim, born in Constance, Germany, in 1904, arrived in the United States in late 1940 and became active in the Los Angeles Jewish Club, where he took over the leadership of a Committee concerned with addressing the problems of the enemy alien classification on the West Coast.[6] In the first part of the chapter, *Aufbau* serves as the primary source for information about the German Jewish refugee community and the enemy alien classification in general. Several reasons make *Aufbau* particularly important as a source of information about the refugee community, though various things must also be kept in mind. Firstly, *Aufbau* understood itself to serve the interests of the general refugee community and the appearance of the enemy alien classification in the newspaper is an indicator of when the issue was more and less important for the refugees. Yet, while *Aufbau* certainly served as a main source of information on the classification for the refugees, the newspaper at the same time projected a significant representation of the refugees beyond the community. This factor of outside representation was particularly crucial during a time when the refugees were subject to increased scrutiny under the enemy alien classification. Thus, *Aufbau*'s information, advice and commentary on the enemy alien classification was directed at once at the refugee community, the general public, and the state. Secondly, like any other

---

[6] Felix Guggenheim had worked in the publishing field in Germany and had held a leading position with the Deutsche Buch-Geimschaft. He fled Germany in 1938 and following a circuitous route with a longer stay in England arrived on the West Coast of the U.S. In Los Angeles he first made a living by renting out apartments in a building he was able to buy. In 1942, he started a small publishing house, Pazifische Presse, which published German language works by some of the famous writers that had found a refuge in Southern California. See Michaela Ullmann, "Felix Guggenheim," In *Immigrant Entrepreneurship: German-American Business Biographies, 1720 to the Present*, vol. 5, edited by R. Daniel Wadhwani. German Historical Institute. Last modified March 19, 2014.http://immigrantentrepreneurship.org/entry.php?rec=114

newspaper, *Aufbau*'s editorial board determined the politics of the newspaper and decided what information and opinions (i.e. letters to the editors) were printed. While the makers of the newspaper understood it to serve the interests of the general refugee community across the USA, the location of the newspaper in New York City made the task of broad representation difficult. This becomes particularly apparent in the case of the enemy alien classification when the situation and experiences differed for the refugees on the East and West Coast. A juxtaposition of *Aufbau* reporting on the enemy alien classification *and* primary sources of the refugee community from the West Coast—such as correspondence with officials and among the refugees, minutes of meetings of refugee committees on the issue—reveals this regional discrepancy in perspective and also demonstrates that the newspaper's coverage cannot be taken at face value: alone representing the way refugees in the United States understood the enemy alien classification.

In examining the enemy alien classification's effect on west coast German Jewish refugees, I focus particularly on the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. in Los Angeles, between December 1941 and 1943.[7] This organization is a useful example because it was the second largest of its kind in the country. By 1942, around 4000 German Jewish refugees

---

[7] The main sources for this chapter come from the Felix Guggenheim Papers of the Feuchtwanger Memorial Library at Special Collections at the University of Southern California. Parts of my research happened before a major reorganization/re-cataloging of the documents of the Felix Guggenheim papers. Then, the materials I consulted were mostly found in boxes 107 and 108. From the Finding Aid I gather that these now hold different documents and that the folders I accessed in the past are now primarily held in boxes 165 and 166.

had taken up residence in Los Angeles.[8] While only about half of them were members of the Club, the organization became an important representative for all German Jewish refugees in the region, as it transformed itself from being a primarily social and cultural support organization to becoming a political actor, negotiating and demanding an exemption from the enemy classification and its restrictions as it applied to the West Coast refugee community. As such, the Jewish Club in Los Angeles and other refugee organizations in the West developed differently than did their sister organizations in the East, which remained mainly concerned with culture and entertainment.

In this chapter, I show that the refugees' outrage over the enemy alien classification was particularly strong on the west coast because of both its psychological and practical implications. It revived memories of their recent oppressive past in Germany while at the same time it complicated their pursuit of Americanization and their participation in the war effort. It was hurtful not only because it equated them with Nazis, on the one hand, but was especially serious because it practically inhibited their Americanization on the other. As such, it initially caused fears and deep feelings of insecurity for a future in America.[9]

---

[8] Thomas Mann & Bruno Frank, "Are refugees "Enemy Aliens"? Marta Mierendorff Papers, Collection no. 0214, Box 39, Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

[9] See, for example, a letter to John E. Davies, special assistant to Secretary of State Hull, in charge of War Emergency Problems and Policies: "The refugees are used to sacrifice and wouldnt [sic] mind any sacrifice or hardship benefitial [sic] to the war effort. But curfew stops their Americanization. No American friend will continue to regard them as refugees, friends and natural allies, if the government identifies them with the Nazis and keeps them indoors as dangerous enemies." Felix Guggenheim papers, Collection no. 0312 , Box 107, Correspondence 1942-1943, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee, 1 of 2, Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California. From here on I will use abbreviated citations for this Collection.

The refugees did not simply accept the enemy alien classification though. In their arguments against it, they now— in contrast to their previous endeavors to stress the similarities with other immigrant groups in the United States—emphasized their particular German Jewish identity and especially their position as victims of the Nazis. Representatives of the organized refugee community that lead the discussions presented their experiences as German Jews as evidence that they were not simply Germans and as testament to their loyalty to America. In this way, it was American legislation that led, perhaps forced, the refugees to engage with their German past and grasp on to their German Jewish identity at a time when they were trying to focus on their American present. Whereas the scholarship on German Jewish refugees in the United States has identified problems of this group in integrating into American life as a product of their specific background and of individual characteristics of the refugees (age, profession etc.), this chapter shows that discriminatory U.S. legislation constituted a major impediment to integration at this time on the west coast.

The chapter is organized chronologically between December of 1941 and 1944 and illustrates the manner in which the enemy alien classification affected the refugees at different points in time and how they in turn reacted to it. Many of these reactions follow changes in the legislations connected with the refugees' classification as enemy aliens.[10]

---

[10] Here are, in brief, the most important policy announcements: President Roosevelt passed the executive order that designated the refugees as enemy aliens on December 8, 1941. On February 19, 1942, the president signed another executive order, which authorized the War Department to establish special military areas, from which, if deemed militarily necessary, all enemy aliens could be removed. Thereupon, Western Defense Commander General John L. De Witt established military zone 1 on the West Coast of the United States, from which he ordered the gradual evacuation of all enemy aliens on March 3, 1942. On March 24, 1942 German and Italian enemy aliens in military zone 1 were placed under curfew and travel restrictions. These regulations were lifted for German aliens on December 23, 1942.

Throughout the war, the refugees' fight against the classification and its consequences was intrinsically linked to their desire to contribute to the war effort. While such participation was initially stifled by the enemy alien classification, particularly on the West Coast, the latter part of the chapter illustrates the manner in which the refugees were ultimately successful in creating opportunities for themselves to participate in the war effort and in fighting for their continuing Americanization.

Distress over the Refugees' War Time Status in the United States

While German Jewish refugees generally applied for U.S. citizenship soon after their arrival in the country, the majority of them arrived about 1938, which meant that by 1941 they had not reached the five year residence requirement that would have made them eligible for naturalization.[11] In the weeks preceding Pearl Harbor, many refugees were concerned about how it might affect their status as non-naturalized aliens should the United States enter the war. Increasing suspicion and anxiety on the part of various government agencies, particularly the Justice and War Departments, and media speculation over potential threats posed by refugees and other aliens to the security of the United States—rumors were heard about the government building internment camps—fostered a hostile atmosphere which led the refugees to worry about their future.[12] Reenforcing such insecurities was the knowledge of how other countries had treated German Jewish refugees when war broke out. Most well known, and foreboding, was the

---

[11] Davie, *Refugees in America*, 189

[12] See Herbert Weichmann, "'Ausländer, Fremde sind's zumeist...'" *Aufbau* 7 (October 24, 1941); J.P.S. "Status of the Refugee,"*Aufbau* 7 (November 7, 1941): 4

mass internment of aliens, including German Jewish refugees, in Great Britain that began in May 1940.[13] Several articles in *Aufbau* addressed these insecurities, some subscribing to them, others not. While one author called for the government to publicize definite, unambiguous information "so that much unnecessary mental anguish might be spared to tens of thousands of the refugees and their families,"[14] *Aufbau* journalist Wilfried Hülse, in his usual authoritative way, cautioned the refugee readership not to let themselves be drawn into such a state of anxiety. He told them that their fears emanated from rumors, exaggerations, and their own past negative experiences, and believed that there was not much factual grounding to them. He went on to articulate his conviction that the United States was a country deeply dedicated to democratic principles and as such would not impinge on the freedom and human rights of the recent immigrants. Opinions of politicians and spokespeople who had long been advocates for the Central European refugees in the United States were the basis for Hülse's faith. Some of these figures came together for a Symposium on "Recent Immigrants and National Defense" held under his chairmanship at the Immigrants' Conference on December 3, 1941 in New York. There,

---

[13] For more detail on this see, for example, David Cesarani, Tony Kushner (eds.), *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain*, London: Frank Cass, 1993 and a novel based on the internment experience of a young German Jewish refugee woman, Ruth Borchard, *We are Strangers Here: An 'Enemy Alien' in Prison in 1940*, London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008. New Zealand also interned German Jewish refugees. See, for example: Ann Beaglehole, "'Locked Up and Guarded 'Lest [they] escape to help their mortal enemies': Jewish internees in New Zealand during the Second World War," Emily Turner Graham and Christine Winter (eds.), *National Socialism in Oceania: A Critical Evaluation of Its Effect and Aftermath*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010.

[14] See J.P.S. "Status of the Refugee,"*Aufbau* 7(November 7, 1941)

four days before Pearl Harbor, Eleanor Roosevelt herself had assured the audience that "Non-Citizens Need Feel No Anxiety," about detention or internment.[15]

But Hülse's views were overly optimistic, and initially, many of the communities' fears were realized. Eleanor Roosevelt's words only reached the larger refugee community through publication in *Aufbau* after the war had already begun and, robbing them of much of their comfort, after President Roosevelt had passed an Executive Order on December 8, 1941, that declared all non-naturalized Germans and Italians over 14 years old to be enemy aliens, including stateless aliens who had once been citizens or subjects of Germany and Italy.[16] The Executive Order mandated the conduct of enemy aliens as follows:

> All alien enemies are enjoined to preserve the peace towards the United States and to refrain from crime against the public safety, and from violating the laws of the United States and of the States and other Territories thereof; and to refrain from actual hostility or giving information, aid or comfort to the enemies of the United States or interfering by word or deed with the defense of the United States or the political processes and public opinions thereof; and to comply strictly with the regulations which are hereby or which may be from time to time promulgated by the President.[17]

These regulations were the same as those the President had passed on December 7, 1941 for Japanese Americans. While not all of the regulations affected many refugees on a daily basis, the following list of just the initial rules illustrates not only the restrictive character of the enemy alien classification, but also its byzantine nature, such that it not

---

[15] *Aufbau* 7 (December 12, 1941); "Keine Konzentrationslager für loyale Nichtbürger" *Aufbau* 7 (December 12, 1941)

[16] See Proclamation 2526 of December 8, 1941, U. S. Code Congressional Service, 77. Cong., 1st Session.

[17] Proclamation 2526 of December 8, 1941, U. S. Code Congressional Service, 77. Cong., 1st Sess., 890.

infrequently led to misunderstanding both among refugees and the general public about what was allowed and what was not. Free movement to and from certain areas such as the Hawaiian Islands, the Philippine Islands, Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands was restricted. Furthermore, no enemy aliens were permitted in areas surrounding military and naval facilities, airports, harbors, power plants, and any places connected to national defense.[18] There were also restrictions of movement, travel, and change of occupation. Air travel of any kind was only allowed with permission of the Attorney General, Secretary of War, or their respective representatives.[19] In addition, enemy aliens were not allowed to possess or use firearms, ammunition, bombs, explosives or material that could be used to produce such, short-wave radios, transmitting sets, signal devices, codes, cameras, or any kind of material such as books, pictures, documents, maps etc. that could reveal anything about United States defense.[20] Any kind of affiliation or support of organizations deemed potentially threatening by the Attorney General was prohibited as well.[21] Yet the aspect of the proclamation that caused most anxiety to the refugees, because speculation about it had existed before the outbreak of the war and because of its breadth and vagueness, was the declaration that all enemy aliens could be subject to removal, apprehension, detention, and interment.[22]

---

[18] Proclamation 2525 of December 7, 1941, U. S. Code Congressional Service, 77. Cong., 1st Sess., 886ff.

[19] Ibid., 886.

[20] Ibid. 887.

[21] Ibid., 889.

[22] Ibid., 888.

In the first weeks after the enemy alien classification was applied to German Jewish refugees there was much confusion over its specifics and the practical consequences that it would have for them, particularly because after their first issuance in December 1941, the regulations were subject to change, re-designation, and re-specification by the Attorney General and other authorized officials. Confusion was exacerbated by the contrary messages communicated to the community by the designation and enforcement of the act on the one hand and mollifying pronouncements by public figures, echoing that of Eleanor Roosevelt, on the other. *Aufbau* served as the primary medium that communicated information about the regulation to the refugee community while it also offered advice on how refugees ought to act. In the first issue after Pearl Harbor, prior warnings against speaking German in public were reinforced. *Aufbau* writers warned refugees to avoid making themselves identifiable as Germans, as there had reportedly been incidents where German speakers had been treated in "displeasing" ways.[23] The refugees were further advised to eschew obviously foreign or conspicuous behavior that could attract negative attention. They would be wise to carry their registration cards at all times and keep first citizenship papers in places that allowed immediate access. Beyond providing suggestions for the security of the immigrants, *Aufbau* also urged them to engage in activities that would demonstrate their loyalty and support of the war effort, such as donating blood and purchasing war bonds.[24]

---

[23] "An Alle! Wichtige Mitteilungen für die Leser des Aufbau,"*Aufbau* 7 (December 12, 1941)

[24] Ibid.

While advising refugees on their conduct under the new regulations, *Aufbau* also acted to make sense of and justify Government actions to the community, in doing so once again projecting a stance of compliance and loyalty to the state and the non-German Jewish public. *Aufbau* journalists presented a consistent message of trust in the U.S. government and its efforts to prevent hardships for Jewish refugees from Germany and other Axis countries. As it had in the months leading up to the United States' entrance into the war, the paper frequently referred to statements by politicians and officials, who assured the public that loyal aliens would be safe. One such statement was by Attorney General Francis Biddle who had declared that many of the people classified as aliens were "'aliens' in the technical sense of the word only" and that the government would take very effort "to protect them from discrimination or abuse."[25] Significantly, *Aufbau* commentators made it a point to convey to the readers the necessity of the different regulations and controls and to emphasize repeatedly the goodwill of the government even in the face of such contrary signs. The way *Aufbau* reported on the new registration requirement for aliens illustrates both sides of this point. On January 14, 1942, President Roosevelt had announced that all alien enemies were obligated to apply for certificates of identification, which they would henceforth be required to carry with them at all times.[26] The government officials dealing with the registration—Attorney General Francis Biddle and his Special Assistant Earl G. Harrison—referred to the procedure in an appeasing tone that was by then almost habitual. In a radio speech Harrison explained that the new

---

[25] "Loyal Non-Citizens Safe: No Wholesale Distrust," *Aufbau* 7 (December 19, 1941)or see for example See, for example New York City Mayor La Guardia's statement, *Aufbau* 7 (December 26, 1941)

[26] Proclamation No. 2537 of January 14, 1942, U. S. Code Congressional Service, 77. Cong., 2nd Sess., 53.

identification certificates were intended, in building on the information collected during the Alien Registration Act of 1940, to strengthen the interior safety of the country and to protect loyal immigrants, who had become, and Harrison repeated Biddle's expression, "in the sense of a mere technicality," enemy aliens.[27] In its own commentary on the legislation, *Aufbau* argued that the registration's aim was to determine detailed and correct information about the personalities and pasts of every enemy alien. Further, extrapolating from the fact that the registration questionnaire inquired why and how aliens left their former home countries, the writer of the article optimistically presumed that the United States administration intended to later revoke enemy classification of all those who could demonstrate consistency in their loyalty to the United States and opposition to the Axis powers.[28] This revocation never actually materialized, however, and the designation held throughout the war. With these hopeful comments and its regular reiteration of the idea that there was no reason to panic or be anxious, *Aufbau* statements continually communicated a sense of trust in the actions and statements of the

---

[27] See "Warum diese Verordnung? Aus der Radioansprache von Earl G. Harrison," *Aufbau* 8 (January 30, 1942)

[28] See "Registrierung und dann?" Ibid. In a similar vein was a report on a German language radio show that the Department of Justice broadcasted to listeners in the New York area, which discussed and clarified questions about the alien classification. The writer of the report called this program "excellent propaganda to demonstrate the good will of the American government to avoid any hardships/harshness in the execution of the measures that were deemed necessary, as long as the "alien of enemy nationality" also finds some understanding for the complicated situation." In the original German: "Das Programm ist eine ausgezeichnete Propaganda zur Demonstrierung des guten Willens der amerikanischen Regierung, jedwede Härten bei der Durchführung der für notwendig erscheinenden Massnahmen zu vermeiden, solange auch der 'alien of enemy nationality' Verständnis für die komplizierte Situation aufbringt."'Ein aktuelles Quizz' Programm für alle Aliens,"*Aufbau* 8 (Feb. 13, 1942)

authorities.[29] *Aufbau*'s particular editorial stance in reporting on the enemy alien classification appears to have been aimed at keeping the refugees hopeful and calm while sending a message of compliance and goodwill to the authorities. However, as will be explained in due course, there is reason to believe that this kind of reporting was not done purely for manipulative reasons but inspired by a genuine belief in the regular sympathetic pronouncements of the government authorities.[30]

Individual contributions from refugees to *Aufbau* show that in the weeks after Pearl Harbor, the refugees for the most part went along with the message that the paper and the authorities had promulgated: they took the classification as a necessary but temporary evil. Alfred Pinkus from Los Angeles, for example, wrote that it must be clear to any refugee that the enemy alien legislation was really in their own interest and that they as a group would not want to be spared any discomfort if it meant risking that actual enemies got away.[31] Elow, who was an active organizer of cultural events for the Jewish

---

[29] While the Smith Act of 1940 had been promoted as a measure protecting loyal aliens and found much publicity and support in the media, the registration ordered on January 14, 1942 received, in contrast, quite limited public attention, which caused much confusion among the refugees, judging from the *Aufbau* reports. Registration began less than a month after its proclamation – from February 2 to February 9 in California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Arizona, Montana, Utah, and Idaho, and then in all the other states including the District of Columbia from February 9 to February 28. See "Erste Pflicht: Registrierung," *Aufbau* 8 (February 6, 1942). *Aufbau* repeatedly issued amended information about who had to register as well as when and where the registrations would take place. See *Aufbau* starting from vol. 8 (January 16, 1942). According to J. H. Pollack, this scarcity of information were strategic "de-informationizing" tactics, which were in accordance with the Justice Department's strategy "of not needlessly embarrassing those affected by the law," hinting at the fact that this legislation was viewed as likely to draw criticism. (J. H. Pollack, "Public Relations Problems of Alien Registration," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 6 (Winter 1942): 622)

[30] See letter from Manfred George to Felix Guggenheim, June 26, 1942, FGP (Felix Guggenheim Papers), B (Box)25, Correspondence 1940-1952, General A

[31] Alfred M. Pinkus, "Die Front," *Aufbau* 8 (January 9, 1942)

Club of 1933 in Los Angeles, expressed his attitude toward the classification in a small poem:

> **We Aliens**
> What do we have to do?
> We have to wait,
> until we are called. —
> But then we have to be there.
>
> What do we have to do?
> We have to wait.
> But before we are called,
> we have to be ready.
>
> What do we have to do?
> We have to wait.
> But when we are called,
> we have to give everything.
> Our life too.—
>
> THAT is what we have to do.[32]

Other refugees believed that they could best present their readiness and loyalty by supporting the United States' defense effort. Several articles in *Aufbau* showcased the different ways the refugees could participate: by being active in the State Guard or, if one did not have much time or money, raising funds for the war by buying war stamps.[33] *Aufbau* contributors explained that the general public would view such activities as most efficient demonstrations of the true position of the refugees's loyalty and expose the

---

[32] Elow, "Wir Aliens," *Aufbau* 8 (January 9, 1942), The original German bears the title "Wir Aliens" and is as follows: "Was haben wir zu tun? Wir haben zu warten, bis man uns ruft.—Aber dann haben wir da zu sein. Was haben wir zu tun? Wir haben zu warten. Aber ehe man uns ruft, haben wir bereit zu sein. Was haben wir zu tun? Wir haben zu warten. Aber wenn man uns ruft, haben wir alles zu geben. Auch unser Leben.— DAS haben wir zu tun."

[33] See, for example different articles in *Aufbau* 8 (January 23, 1942) and *Aufbau* 8 (January 30, 1942)

classification as a misnomer. These articles all gave the sense that these actions would surely soon lead to the classification being lifted.

An event that further bolstered the refugees' hope that the enemy alien classification would be lifted was the passing of the German Legislation that expatriated all Jews residing outside of the German Reich in November 1941. *Aufbau* characterized this deprivation of German citizenship an honor for the Jews, and it seems reasonable to suggest that the majority of the refugees in the United States welcomed their complete legal separation from the German nationstate.[34] The experiences of discrimination, persecution, and alienation in Germany during the years prior to their emigration had practically ousted Jews from the society of the Third Reich, and, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the majority of the refugees viewed themselves as permanent immigrants to the United States—they were eager to make the United States their new home and the acquisition of American citizenship was naturally part of this endeavor. Thus, the German expatriation decree was but a legal recognition of the lived reality of the refugees, rather than some further iniquity. Nevertheless, the announcement of the German decree was particularly welcome at the time, since the United States had not heretofore legally acknowledged the refugees' actual detachment from Germany. Paradoxically then, and disconcertingly for the community, it was American legislation that was harmful to the refugees' aspirations, while Nazi legislation advanced their

---

[34] "Du bist kein Deutscher mehr! Alle jüdischen Auswanderer ausgebürgert," *Aufbau* 8 (January 9, 1942). See also letter by Dr. Ernest Golm, Feb. 10, 1942 "In reality, we are not Germans any longer, and we are proud of the fact that all ties which in any way, whatsoever, could connect us with Nazi-Germany have been cut for good an all." FGP, Collection no. 0312, Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

purposes. The German legislation did, subsequently, become extremely important in the refugees' demonstrations of loyalty to the American state and arguments against their classification as enemy aliens. With this legislation, as an *Aufbau* commentator wrote,

> the German Government has made abundantly clear to all the world that it considers as enemies all Jews residing abroad. Unfortunately, however, many of them are still regarded by the authorities as German nationals in a formal legal sense. [...] Our fellow American citizens will undoubtedly realize that the term 'enemy alien' is hardly applicable to the loyal immigrant from Nazi-occupied countries, and that it has no reality but a questionable, formal, legal meaning.[35]

While the articles in *Aufbau* continually projected an attitude of optimism and faith in the state, there were refugees who were concerned that American citizens would actually not be able to appreciate that the refugees were only "technically" classified as enemy aliens and that they might not be able to differentiate between 'real' and 'un-real' enemy aliens. Voices representing this attitude were particularly heard on the West Coast of the United States, where the situation regarding enemy aliens was more unsettling than in the rest of the country. The optimistic voice of *Aufbau* journalists was, I believe, intrinsically connected to their residence on the East Coast. In California, with its concentration of defense industries, military locations, and a large Japanese population, the enemy alien issue was a pervasive and fraught topic. In the weeks following Pearl Harbor, many Californians, perceiving people of Japanese ancestry as a very real threat, became exceedingly concerned about Japanese living amongst them. The newspapers published avid accounts—in most cases unfounded—of Japanese people performing sabotage and other subversive activities. As a result, demands for moving the Japanese

---

[35] "Du bist kein Deutscher mehr! Alle jüdischen Auswanderer ausgebürgert," *Aufbau* 8 (January 9, 1942)

inland and away from the strategic defense zones on the Pacific Coast, became quite pronounced and at times hysterical.[36] While the term "alien enemy," as it was widely used in the press, focused mainly on the Japanese and only mentioned German and Italian aliens as an aside, some refugees feared for their own safety and that people might direct their suspicious attitude toward them as well. Signs in restaurants saying "enemy aliens keep out" gave credence to these fears, and this sort of behavior was disturbingly reminiscent of what the refugees had experienced in Germany when their countrymen had hung up signs saying "non-Aryans keep out."[37]

In a statement that a group of refugees from the San Francisco Bay Area sent to Attorney General Francis Biddle, they expressed a belief that terms like "'friend and foe', 'ally' and 'enemy' mean so much to the nation in wartime" and that people would likely make judgments based on those names.[38] The writers were concerned that "emergency measures [might be] extended to all those who are called 'enemy aliens,'" irrespective of their true attitude toward the United States.[39] In order to show this 'true' attitude of the

---

[36] Eisenberg (2003), 112. Starting immediately after Pearl Harbor, all ethnic Japanese were treated as if there were enemy aliens. 736 Japanese immigrant leaders were confined, and in the following months up to February the FBI detained 2,912 people. (Misiko Hane, "A Round Table: The Living and Reliving of Word War II, Wartime Internment," *The Journal of American History* 77 (September 1990): 570

[37] Thomas Mann points this out in a letter he wrote to Agnes Meyer, publisher of the *Washington Post*, on February 6, 1942. English translation by Frey from unpublished letter, Beinecke Library, Yale University," (Frey, 1982): 203f.

[38] Letter from Richard B. Goldschmidt (Professor at University of California), Oscar Meyer (former leader of Democratic Party in German Reichstag), and over thirty German refugees to Attorney General Francis Biddle, Jan. 31, 1942, FGP, B107, Correspondence, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee 10f2

[39] Ibid. See also, for example Dr. Bernstein, board member of the Jewish Club of 1933, who assured the refugees that the Jewish organizations would do everything to "free the Jewish emigrants from Germany, who have in the meantime been expatriated, from the terminology of 'German' 'enemy aliens.'" See "um die jüdischen Emigranten aus Deutschland, die inzwischen von dort aus noch ausgebürgert worden sind, von der Bezeichnung der 'Germans' als 'enemy aliens' zu befreien." *Aufbau* 8 (Feb. 13, 1942)

refugees, the writers argued their dedication to America and its ideals based on the German expatriation decree, and their own "fight" against Hitler which had caused them much hardship and suffering (among the writers of the letter were former active political opponents of the Nazis). The writers thus petitioned Attorney General Biddle to have the refugees "be named and treated as 'refugees from Nazi Oppression' instead of 'enemy aliens.'"[40] No such amendment of status was granted however.

This letter was just one early example of the many pleas from refugees to government authorities for revocation of the enemy alien status. The arguments for the reclassification frequently relied on similar reasoning and all centered around the refugees' "true identity." While they had previously liked to refer to themselves simply as immigrants or refugees, *Aufbau* reporters now frequently used the terms "refugee-immigrants" and "anti-Hitler refugees" in an attempt to leave no room for doubt about their more specific, anti-German and loyal to the US, identity.

On February 9, 1942, Attorney General Biddle announced that all those who had registered as Austrians, Austro-Hungarians, and Koreans under the Alien Registration Act of 1940 and who never thereafter became citizens of Germany, Italy, or Japan voluntarily, were exempted from the alien enemy regulations. The same exemption even applied to former German, Italian, or Japanese citizens, who before the declaration of war had become citizens of another country. These exemptions were not fully comprehensible to the refugees. As they were keen to point out, there were more likely to be Hitler-friendly

---

[40] Letter from Richard B. Goldschmidt, Oscar Meyer, and over thirty German refugees to Attorney General Francis Biddle, Jan. 31, 1942, FGP, B107, Correspondence, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee 10f2

people among the Austrians, for example, or among some of the other immigrant groups, than among German-Jewish refugees. They argued that it was much easier for them to demonstrate that they could have no allegiance to their homeland left, as they had not only been persecuted by Germans, but also legally expatriated and expropriated by their former home country. In the case of the exemption for individuals who had acquired citizenship of another non-Axis country before arriving in America, the refugees argued that this could hardly be a criterion for loyalty to the United States. One Willy Jacobsohn of Los Angeles, for example, in a letter to the director of the Enemy Alien Control Unit, pointed out that it would have been easy for him and his wife to get Dutch citizenship or a passport of Liechtenstein when he had initially fled to these countries from Germany. But, "I refused to do this ... The reason was the feeling that we should not apply for another citizenship than the citizenship of the country in which we intend to live permanently, i.e. the United States of America."[41] Another statement contesting the idea that refugees who took citizenship in another country first "excel in loyalty to the United States" included the title, "'Enemy aliens' is a term which is not a mere technical concept, but has become a vital problem for those concerned," which shows that the refugees by then explicitly rejected the technicality argument the authorities had been driving.

The insecurity in the refugee community over the consequences their status as enemy aliens would have for them reached a new height in mid-February of 1942. After

---

[41] Letter from Willy Jacobson to Edward K. Ennis, Director of Alien Enemy Control Unit, February 24, 1942, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1942-1943, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee, 1 of 2. The other example for this argumentation states more fully: "It can hardly be presumed that these people – although of course ardent Anti-Hitlerites too – excel in loyalty to the United States, their co-refugees who took directly refuge in this country without first going to another country or acquiring otherwise the nationality of another country." "'Enemy aliens' is a term which is not a mere technical concept, but has become a vital problem for those concerned," undated, FGP, B108, 2, Correspondence 1942-43

weeks of repeated assurances to loyal aliens by government authorities that they should "not be afraid,"[42] President Roosevelt signed an executive order on February 19, 1942, which authorized the military, namely the Secretary of War and his commanders, to establish military areas as deemed necessary. From these military areas, which, in the main, were subsequently set up in strategically sensitive areas along the Pacific Coast, "any or all persons may be excluded" by the military commander. This legislation was the legal basis for the removal and interment of the Japanese Americans.[43] While it only immediately affected six German Jewish refugee families, who were forced to leave their homes, the refugees on the West coast found the insecurity about their status increasingly unsettling.[44]

On March 3, the actions of Western Defense Commander Lieutenant General John L. De Witt demonstrated that the fears and worries of the refugees on the West Coast had not been unwarranted. While civilian authorities had continuously tried to appease the concerns of the refugees (and *Aufbau* had emphasized these efforts in its coverage), De Witt belied this stance by announcing the gradual evacuation of all enemy aliens from Military Zone No. 1—the entire California, Washington and Oregon coasts, as well as the southern sections of California and Arizona along the Mexican border—

---

[42] The local United States Attorney was invited to speak to refugees at the Fairfax Temple in Los Angeles and told them to "not be afraid" since recent evacuation propositions of had generally only referred to the Japanese. "Kein Grund zur Panik," *Aufbau* 8 (February 13, 1942)

[43] Eventually, 119,803 individuals of Japanese descent were incarcerated in internment camps, 65 percent of whom were American citizens. Hane (1990): 570.

[44] "Die Sicherung der Westküste," *Aufbau* 8 (Feb. 27, 1942). Another article reports that besides the general state of anxiety that comes with being a refugee, a lot of people became slightly depressed about being called"enemy," even if this was supposod to be only a technicality. In German: "jedoch fügt sich der Nervosität über den Status der Refugees eine psychologisch leicht verständliche Depression hinzu, überhaupt, wenn auch nur technisch, unter den Begriff 'enemy' zu fallen." *Aufbau* 8 (Feb. 27, 1942)

making no exemptions for German and Italian enemy aliens.[45] This announcement came as a great shock for the refugees living in these areas. The following portion of a telegram the Jewish Club of 1933 sent to the Council for Aliens of Enemy Nationality in New York illustrates the distress of the community in Los Angeles and how it was related to their traumatic recent experiences of persecution and flight:

> thousands of antinazi refugees here are in panic and distress as no word about exemptions for victims of nazi oppression and persecution forthcoming stop doubly distressed because trusting in francis biddles [sic] assurances about protecting loyal innocent refugees they expect at least opportunity to appear before boards or tribunals similar to british example before removed from homes and jobs etc again stop spiritual strengths and power of endurance will be broken in most of them if they will have to suffer terribly after they learned to rely on the democratic refuge of the united states stop much damage is done and being caused continuously by uncertainty stop please help us to avoid the worst stop our members urge you to intervene in Washington without delay and to get clear unmistakable statement whether it is really contemplated to remove thousands of refugees from their home exactly like nazis or whether we can expect exemption stop every day counts as every day brings new harm stop thanks [46]

In response to the March 3 announcement and the desperate anxiety that it engendered among the German Jewish refugees on the West Coast, refugee organizations there intensified their efforts to have the enemy alien classification removed.

The Tolan Committee

Up to this time, the German refugee organizations in the United States had been mainly occupied with providing assistance in getting the newcomers settled by providing

---

[45] "Proklamation No. 1," *Aufbau* 8 (March 6, 1942)

[46] FGP, B107, Correspondence, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee 10f2

social, educational, and cultural activities. With the entry of the United States into the war and the subsequent developments influencing the status of the German refugees in the country, organizations on the West Coast shifted their attention to the political representation of this group and on finding a solution to the enemy alien problem.[47] The first action they engaged in was participation in the hearings of the Tolan Commmittee, a select committee of the House of Representatives that had been set up in 1940 to investigate national defense migration. When rumors regarding evacuation plans began circulating, the Committee scheduled hearings in San Francisco, Portland, Seattle and Los Angeles. Representatives of the German Jewish refugee community on the West Coast hoped that presenting their case in front of this Committee would help bring about exemption from evacuation and the enemy alien classification.[48] In the context of these hearings, the refugee organizations on the West Coast also began to communicate with each other and to coordinate their activities. The first appearance of refugees in front of the Committee was made in Seattle on March 2. Subsequent to that hearing, Elsa Winners Schwerin, a representative from Seattle, sent a letter to the Jewish Club Los Angeles, reporting about the work the refugees' had been doing in their city to fight the classification and commenting on the "wonderful public response" they had received in reaction to their efforts. Schwerin pointed out, however, that the refugees did not receive the same positive response from the American Jewish community. She reported that "[i]n fact, a man was sent from the Joint Committee in New York to try keep us away from

---

[47] See *Aufbau* 8 (March 6, 1942). Also, "Information Regarding Organizations of Recent Immigrants," Questionnaire distributed by the *Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe*, 1945, 1.

[48] The Tolan Committee was named after its chairman John H. Tolan.

being publicly heard." Schwerin reported that this man had "frighten[ed] refugee groups" in San Francisco and Portland who subsequently did not appear in front of the Committee. While more research on this is required, it appears that the larger American Jewish community generally did not show much interest and support in the enemy alien matter. Rather, they responded to the German Jewish refugees' classification similar as they subsequently did to the discriminatory treatment of the Japanese: extremely cautious, quiet, and referring to their trust in the correct behavior of the authorities.[49] A letter from the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League in Chicago (not in the areas that were most affected) to an appeal from a refugee may exemplify this attitude: "Please be assured that we are professionally concerned and stirred by the circumscriptions placed upon our brethren. We must be sufficiently objective, however, to be tolerant of some of the necessities imposed upon the government in order to guard against physical and psychological sabotage."[50] American Jewish organizations that were dedicated to directly working with the refugees, like the National Refugee Service, showed more understanding for the situation of the refugees and cooperated with them. Ellen Eisenberg has explained the silence of the Western Jewish community regarding the treatment of the Nikkei as a sort of paralysis that arose from the tension between their dedication to fight injustice and discrimination and their dedication to the war effort. The lack of outspoken support for German Jewish refugees may be seen in the same light. The German Jewish

---

[49] See the excellent study by Ellen M. Eisenberg, *The First to Cry Down Injustice? Western Jews and Japanese Removal during WWII*, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008

[50] Letter from Richard E. Gutstadt to Mr. Berges, September 18, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Enemy Alien Issues

refugees, did not get discouraged by that, however. Elsa Winners Schwerin reported from Seattle that they did not let themselves be intimidated and that the Tolan committee had been overwhelmingly sympathetic to their case.[51]

In Los Angeles, the refugees also hoped for a favorable reception. At the hearings on March 7, they were represented by Felix Guggenheim from the Jewish Club, another refugee by the name of Hans F. Schwarzer, and also by three of the famous German exiles who had found a haven in Los Angeles: Thomas Mann, Bruno Frank, and Lion Feuchtwanger; the latter of whom submitted a written statement to the Committee.[52] Thomas Mann was not classified as an enemy alien himself because he had taken on Czech citizenship and was thus exempt, but he had been a regular contributor to *Aufbau* in discussions pertaining to the refugee community as a whole. He had written to President Roosevelt prior to the March 3 declaration to make a plea to exempt the German Nazis refugees from the enemy alien classification. The topic was, as he said, "close to [his] heart."[53] His prominence in the United States and his engagement in the matter led to his invitation to speak in front of the Committee.[54] The contributions of Mann, Frank, Feuchtwanger, and Guggenheim were along similar lines, and focused on portraying the refugees as victims who first suffered wrongful treatment at the hands of the Nazis and now suffered from the enemy alien classification. As such, they openly

---

[51] Letter from Elsa Winners Schwerin to Leopold Jessner, March 2, 1942, FGP, B107, Correspondence, 1942-1943, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee 2 of 2

[52] See Erich A. Frey, "Thomas Mann and His Friends before the Tolan Committee (1942)," John M. Spalek and Robert F. Bell (eds.), *Exile: The Writer's Experience*, Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1982.

[53] From the testimony of Thomas Mann before the Tolan Committee,Ibid, 207

[54] Ibid. 204

compared the effects of Nazi and U.S. legislation, emphasizing the similar effect of suffering both had for the refugees.

Felix Guggenheim explained in his statement to the Committee that the refugees still bore the "scars" of Nazism "on their bodies or on their minds" and that it would be "the worst tragedy for them" to be treated as enemies by the country they felt was their new home.[55] Bruno Frank further confirmed the image of the distressed refugee by telling the story of a young refugee girl as an exemplar of the many ordinary refugees in the country. When the young woman emigrated, she had to leave her parents behind in Germany. Since her arrival in the U.S., she had been writing them letters about her wonderful life in America and promised that she would bring them over too. In light of the enemy alien classification, Bruno Frank asked the Committee: "Well, Sir, what should she write now, if write she could. I am no longer among friends? I am considered an enemy now just as the beasts who are torturing you. Forget all about it. It was but a dream. Go to Poland, and die."[56]

Felix Guggenheim even invoked the idea that the actions of the United States might in some way fulfill Hitler's goal and stressed that the classification and plans for

---

[55] National Defense Migration, *Hearings before the Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration*, House of Representatives, Seventy-Seventh Congress, Second Session, Pursuant to H. Res. 113, Part 31, Problems of Evacuation of Enemy Aliens and Others from Prohibited Military Zones, Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1942. Reprint Edition, (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 11736.

[56] Frey (1982): 212. When speaking about Poland, Frank references the publication of "horrid pictures in last week's LIFE magazine, showing heaps of naked, emaciated corpses, piled upon one another like so much rubbish, ready to be flung into the common pit." Mann found Frank's statement "unfortunately too emphatic and *larmoyant*, but the congressmen nevertheless seemed to enjoy the hors d'oevre very much." Ibid., 205

evacuation contradicted and hurt America and democracy. In regard to the evacuation threat, Guggenheim remarked:

> The day—may it never come—when 10,000 refugees from Nazi oppression will have to leave their homes and jobs and small businesses on the west coast of the U.S.A. and in a sad procession will look for relief and assistance with the stigma of enemy aliens as additional burden, this day would be counted by history as a first-class victory of Hitlerism against democracy. [57]

While raising this comparison of United States legislation with Nazism in order to express how severely the former hit the refugees, the speakers were quick to stress that they did not believe that the United States—"this great Nation which is fighting for freedom and human dignity"—would actually implement policies that would treat the refugees like the Nazis did.[58] They expressed their trust that the United States, with agencies like the FBI, would be able to sort out the dangerous aliens from the America-friendly refugees. They also made the suggestion to set up examination boards that could aid in this differentiation process. Such local boards had been established in England to investigate the refugees, subsequently exempting the loyal refugees from restrictions and identifying them in their registration certificates as "victims of Nazi oppression." The Jewish Club representative Felix Guggenheim had spent time in England before coming to the United States and now shared his first hand knowledge about the procedures of setting up these boards with the Tolan Committee. In England, reclassified refugees were

---

[57] National Defense Migration, *Hearings before the Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration*, House of Representatives, Seventy-Seventh Congress, Second Session, Pursuant to H. Res. 113, Part 31, Problems of Evacuation of Enemy Aliens and Others from Prohibited Military Zones, Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1942. Reprint Edition, New York: Arno Press, 1978, 11736

[58] These are Thomas Mann's words. Frey (1982), 208

subsequently allowed to contribute to England's war effort against the Nazis—which was, all speakers agreed, what the refugees longed for.[59] Emphasizing that reclassification was really in the best interest of America, its citizens and its aim of defeating the Axis powers, Bruno Frank asserted the loyalty of the refugees remarking: "No group, by its hatred of evil and its love of freedom, could be closer united in spirit to the American soldier than these very people."[60]

The speakers from the refugee community were backed by testimonies from individuals from the political arena, community and religious organizations who petitioned the Tolan Committee in person or in writing on behalf of the refugees. California Governor Olson and Los Angeles Mayor Bowron were invited to give their opinion on the enemy alien question, and both of them, while favoring the evacuation of the entire Japanese population, supported the establishment of hearing boards with respect to Italian and German aliens.[61] Carey McWilliams, outspoken civil-liberties activist, journalist, lawyer and in 1942 Director of the Division of Immigration and Housing, also spoke on behalf of the reclassification of the German Jewish refugees.

---

[59] National Defense Migration, *Hearings before the Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration*, House of Representatives, Seventy-Seventh Congress, Second Session, Pursuant to H. Res. 113, Part 31, Problems of Evacuation of Enemy Aliens and Others from Prohibited Military Zones, Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1942. Reprint Edition, New York: Arno Press, 1978, 11736f.s

[60] Frey (1982), 214

[61] See Ibid., 11629-11652. *Aufbau* points out that Fletcher Bowron's reason for not finding the Jewish refugees suspicious is based on their "race." Ralph Nunberg, "Tolan Committee für Reklassifizierung in der Alien-Frage," *Aufbau* 8 (March 6, 1942). Race was also the reason why many officials and American citizens believed that all people of Japanese ancestry should be interned. Some refugees, likewise engaged in a wholesale condemnation of the people of Japanese ancestry, saying that checking their loyalty was naturally much more difficult, considering that they "as individuals intellectually and by way of their tradition come from an entirely different culture." "Es ist nun einmal so, dass die deutschen und italienischen enemy aliens leichter zu prüfen sind als die Japaner, die schon als Individuen geistig und ihrer Tradition nach aus einem völlig anderen Kulturkreis kommen." "Zur Alienfrage," *Aufbau* 8 (Feb. 20, 1942) See also Eisenberg (2008)

Pleading similar arguments as the refugee speakers, he stated that: "If any group merits special consideration, it is this group."[62] The support of these public individuals from diverse backgrounds and political affiliations, indicates that general public opinion did not see the refugees as dangerous and liable to the same treatment that the majority population deemed necessary for people of Japanese ancestry.

Like it was in Seattle, the atmosphere at the Tolan Committee hearings in Los Angeles was very favorable and friendly toward the refugees. *Aufbau* reported extensively on the hearings, printing the statements of all the speakers from the refugee community, and emphasized numerous times that a positive outcome of the hearings was to be highly expected, not in the least because of the number of prominent and influential people who had spoken.[63]

Indeed, the plans for evacuation of all German and Italian aliens were not put into action in the end. The testimonies from influential people to German and Italian loyalty and the general public sympathy for their exemption, largely based on the absence of deep-seated racism which made the case against the Japanese, were reasons for this.[64] Further, evacuating Italian and German aliens did not seem practically feasible, as the preliminary findings of the Tolan Committee, issued on March 19, 1942, suggest:

> The numbers involved [in the Japanese evacuation] are large, but they are by no means as large, for the whole country, as those who will be involved if we generalize the current treatment to apply to all aliens and their

---

[62] Carey McWilliams, "Victims of Nazi Oppression,"*Aufbau* 8 (March 20, 1942)

[63] See for example, "Loyalty Board an der Westküste" *Aufbau* 8 (March 13, 1942), "Hoffnung für Staatenlose," *Aufbau* 8 (March 20, 1942), and "Einheitsaktion an der Westküste," Ibid.

[64] See Frey (1982) 205f

> immediate families. … Any such proposal is out of the question if we intend to win this war.[65]

However, while the refugees were spared evacuation, the Tolan Committee hearings did not result in their exemption from the enemy alien classification.

Practical Consequences of the Enemy Alien Classification

The previous sections have shown how the enemy alien classification itself, frequent amendments to the legislation and the uncertainty over what other legislations might follow, particularly the threat of evacuation, caused great fear and distress among the refugees on the west coast of the United States. On March 24, 1942, Lieutenant General De Witt, Commander of the Western Defense Command, passed restrictive regulations for German and Italian aliens that had very real material and practical everyday consequences. De Witt released regulations for the designated military zone number 1, which included a curfew from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m., during which enemy aliens were not permitted to leave their homes. It further included a restriction of travel to no more than 5 miles from a residence.[66] After the refugees' hopes had been fueled by the exceedingly optimistic picture *Aufbau* had painted following the end of the Tolan Committee hearings, these new restrictions caused great disappointment and new fears. A letter to Felix Guggenheim in Los Angeles from a San Francisco refugee who had become particularly active in fighting the enemy alien classification expressed great

---

[65] Tolan Committee, Preliminary Report, note, 2,21-22, 24 cited in Stephen Fox, *The Unknown Internment: An Oral History of the Relocation of Italian Americans during World War II*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990, 129.

[66] Anton Lourié, *Social Adjustments of German Jewish Refugees in Los Angeles*, Masters Thesis, Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1953, 148.

disapproval of *Aufbau*'s treatment of the West Coast situation. He wrote that hope-raising articles about the idea that the "central authorities" were particularly friendly toward the case of the refugees were not justifiable, since they were "certainly not based on any facts."[67] This kind of *Aufbau* reporting, he believed, rather hurt the activities of those fighting the classification at the front line in the West. *Aufbau*'s editor in chief Manfred George, however, in a letter to Guggenheim, refuted accusations of this type from the West Coast that claimed the newspaper had deliberately created an optimistic atmosphere by publishing false captions in order to increase its sales.[68] According to George, *Aufbau* reporters had been very careful in their treatment of the alien question and had worked in closest cooperation with the authorities. This small episode is a further example of the significant discrepancy that existed in how individuals and organizations on the East and West Coast perceived the enemy alien classification during this time, views which were born of the different political climates and refugee experiences. The *Aufbau* reporters in New York had more reason to trust the statements of the authorities because the situation on the East Coast did not feel nearly as threatening to the refugees there as it did to those living in the West, where, despite the positive messages by government officials, the enemy alien classification had negatively affected the lives of the refugees from the

---

[67] Letter from Richard G. Grau to Felix Guggenheim, March 25, 1942, FGP, B107, Correspondence, 1942-1943, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee 2 of 2. Grau refers to the articles on the Tolan Committee in Aufbau 8, (March 20, 1942) and particularly the front page statement "Hoffnung für Staatenlose"

[68] Letter from Manfred George to Felix Guggenheim, June 26, 1942, FGP, B25, FGP, Correspondence 1940 -1952, General A.

beginning.[69] While the tension between organizations on the East and West coasts lingered on, there was an eventual acknowledgement on the East coast that the situation in the West was different. George, in a letter to Guggenheim during September 1942, admitted that the evaluation of the overall situation from the East Coast standpoint was at times difficult and may have consequently led to misrepresentations.[70]

Aufbau's projection of trust in the authorities did indeed prove optimistic, at least as regarded the West. There, the favorable inclination and sympathy of civilian authorities and public individuals toward the German Jewish refugee community did not hold sway, and their promise that the classification would remain a mere technicality in the case of these refugees did not materialize. A central reason for this was not only that the authority over the enemy alien matter shifted between civilian and military authorities but also that there existed confusion over which department ultimately held authority to make decisions on this subject. Originally, enemy alien matters had been under the jurisdiction of the Justice Department and the Immigration and Naturalization Service under the direction of Attorney General Francis Biddle. With the President's Executive Order from February 19, 1942, he transferred authority over enemy alien issues to the War Department, which for the West Coast meant the Western Defense Command under General DeWitt. Thus, while civilian authorities remained sympathetic to the refugees, they repeatedly stated that "questions of curfew and evacuation on the West Coast" were

---

[69] Ellen Eisenberg (2008) also points to the discrepancy between East and West in reporting on enemy alien issues in other newspapers.

[70] Letter from Manfred George to Felix Guggenheim, September 19, 1942, FGC, B108, FGP, Correspondence 1942, Enemy Alien Issues

no longer within their jurisdiction.[71] This happened, for example, with a telegram the Jewish Club of 1933 sent to the local office of the Justice Department immediately after the announcement of the curfew regulations. In it, the refugees attempted to call attention to their fears about the problems they expected the curfew to cause them. They received the following reply, not from the Justice Department, but from Tom C. Clark, Chief of the Wartime Civil Control Administration of the Western Defense Command:

> It is to be regretted that war produces incidental inconveniences and even hardships among the civilian population through no fault of their own. Those in charge of this vital problem of evacuation are sincerely sympathetic with those adversely affected by it. Nonetheless, you can understand that yours is but another of the thousands of problems presented by this multi-faceted project, solutions to which are constantly being devised by the untiring efforts of all the staffs charged with some part of it. As past victims of a persecution as terrifying as that from which you have so lately escaped, the present inconveniences of remaining in your house between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. must seem insignificant by comparison.[72]

Fully acknowledging the identity of the refugees and their troubled past, Clark's answer makes clear that military necessity—or what was perceived as such—and its practical application took priority in the decision making of the defense command.[73] However, there appear to have been individuals in the War Department who held the opinion that the curfew for refugees was not in fact militarily necessary, but rather that

---

[71] Undated document, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1942-1943, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee, 1 of 2, See also Letter from Edward J. Ennis, Director Enemy Alien Control Unit, to Mr. Rosenfeld, April 4, 1942, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1944-1945, Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe

[72] Part of a letter from Tom C. Clark to the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. from March 26, 1942. FGP, B107, Correspondence, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee 20f2

[73] See also Telegram by John J. Mc Cloy, Assistant Secretary of War at that time: "Matters being worked out on the West Coast in my judgment in a very fair and considerate manner Army officers are there in touch with representatives of the heimatlos refugees and I am sure their interest will be protected just as far as is consistent with military necessity." See Ibid.

the War Department would not be able to not exempt the refugees as long as they were classified as enemy aliens.[74] Initially, there existed confusion over the question of who had the authority to reclassify the refugees. In the correspondence between authorities and the Jewish Club of 1933, war department officials frequently referred the refugees to the Justice Department and Justice Department officials in turn pointed back to the War Department.[75] The Justice Department eventually acknowledged the matter to be under its jurisdiction and began, in the summer of 1942, to consider the establishment of special hearing boards to determine the loyalty of individual refugees. These hearing boards were never implemented, however, evidently because the government considered the administrative effort too onerous.[76] Thus, it is clear that while government officials recognized how unfair the classification was to the refugees, they never felt it to be a significant enough injustice to follow through with change. Instead, it became the government's tactic to stress the necessity of the classification for reasons of internal

---

[74] Undated letter from Ralph M. Nunberg to Senator George W. Norris. It must be correspondence immediately following the announcement of the curfew on March 24. Not catalogued correctly at time of research because it is certainly not from 1944-1945, but filed in: FGP, B107, Correspondence 1944-1945, Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe

[75] See Ibid, letter from Department of Justice to Mr. Rosenfeld, April 4, 1942, in Ibid., and undated notes (most likely late March/early April) FGP, B107, Correspondence 1942-1943, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee, 1 of 2. On this matter of confusion of authority, Ashley Domm writes: "The relocation and internment programs were run by two separate branches of the United States' government. The War Relocation Authority, a civilian organization under the Office of Emergency Management, was created on March 18, 1924 to construct and maintain the relocation centers, while the Department of war was in charge of carrying out the actual exclusions. The Department of Justice oversaw the internment program. These two departments argued throughout the war over jurisdiction and authority, causing overlap in both facilities and management." Ashley A. Domm, "The Enemy Alien Program at Ellis Island during World War II: The German Experience, 1941-1948," M.A. Thesis, State University of New York College at Oneonta, 2009, 3

[76] See letter from Edward J. Ennis to Max L. Berges, August 25, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Enemy Alien Issues. See also Domm, who refers to the dissertation by John Eric Schmitz, "Enemies Among Us: The Relocation and Repatriation of German, Italian and Japanese Americans During the Second World War" (PhD Dissertation), The American University, 2007, 337-338

security not directly related to the refugees, to downplay the effects, and to praise the refugees for their forbearance and compliance. Edward J. Ennis, Director of the Department of Justice's Alien Enemy Control Unit, expressed the latter points in a letter to a Los Angeles refugee as follows:

> The actual restraint of personal liberties of non-dangerous alien enemies is relatively mild. This Department appreciates the spirit of cooperation which loyal members of the group, almost without exception, have displayed in conscientiously carrying out their part of the Government's program.[77]

The reaction by the refugees on the West Coast to their inclusion in the curfew restrictions was not one of understanding, however, but of unanimous incomprehension. For some, this translated into dejectedness, as an *Aufbau* commentary aptly summarized: "Confidence in the future —so essential for people who have lost a great deal of their past—has shrunk overnight to the vanishing point."[78] The loss of hope for a good future in the United States in the context of the refugees' recent past is a trope that appears in many of their statements in connection with the enemy alien classification. Dubiously tactful proclamations by officials about the relatively mild inconvenience that the classification caused in comparison to what the refugees had endured under the Nazis were neither convincing nor effective in calming fears. After all, the discrimination that the refugees had suffered under the Nazis had itself started in relatively small ways as well. Furthermore, after the promises about the mere technicality of their classification

---

[77] Letter from Edward J. Ennis to Max L. Berges, August 25, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Enemy Alien Issues

[78] "Sorrow Comes to the West Coast: The Curfew Regulations and Their Consequences," *Aufbau* 8 (April 3, 1942)

had proved untrue, how could one trust the authorities now? Many refuges reacted to the curfew with outrage and the following letter is one example of numerous similar appeals that individuals sent to the authorities in the weeks and months after the restrictions were passed:

> Six Jewish Refugee families from Germany, living in Long Beach, who have been in this country for almost 4 or 5 years and who are doing everything humanly possible to be loyal and useful citizens of American appeal to you at this hour urging you to change their classification as "Alien Enemies" as soon as possible because latest orders of Military Commander of the Pacific Coast are extremely endangering our businesses and jobs, causing us greatest difficulties and imposing severe hardships upon us, making it impossible to earn a livelihood. Only immediate decision can relief [sic] the situation.[79]

Despite the fact that, at other times, the refugees had declared there understanding that they were part of a nation at war—and that sacrifices must be made—they also had repeatedly stated that they did not agree that this 'great nation' should support procedures which, as they pointed out directly, were similar to those performed by the tyrannical dictatorship they had fled.

The curfew and 5 mile travel restrictions indeed carried significant consequence for their everyday life. An article in *Aufbau*'s "Westküste" section describes how different occupational groups such as salesmen, storekeepers, truck drivers, all kinds of night workers, bakers, and dairy employees were particularly hard hit by the regulations, as they were not able to perform their jobs as required, and as a consequence, many of them

---

[79] Telegram from Benjamin, Friedman, Katz, Lederer, Meyerfeld, Rosenfeld, Wolfsohn to Francis Biddle, March 29, 1942, FGP, Correspondence, 1942-1943, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee 2 of 2

had to give those jobs up.[80] Moreover, inevitably, while such discrimination was not legally allowed, employers were disinclined to hire refugees because their enemy alien status affected their "usefulness."[81] Nor did professional status grant any privilege, physicians and nurses were not exempt from the restrictions either, as their status "was not recognized by the army order."[82] Consequently they were not allowed to see their patients after 8pm, even in cases of emergency. The harshness of the restrictions is illustrated by the reciprocal side of healthcare. In cases of sickness, people were not allowed to go to the hospital if it was located further than five miles from their home and nor were pregnant women exempt, not even when labor and delivery coincided with the curfew. People were prohibited from going to services at their church or temple by the regulations.[83] Particularly hard hit, as the West Coast edition of *Aufbau* pointed out, were high school and university students. A letter one young refugee sent to Felix Guggenheim of the Jewish Club illustrates this:

> [a]s you know my parents are members of the Jewish Club and therefore I am writing to you—might be you are able to help me.
>
> I really feel ashamed in front of my fellow citizens to be called an enemy alien.
>
> In Germany I was persecuted at school, because I was a Jew, so I went to a Jewish school and after school the Nazis chased me home and knocked me down on the street.

---

[80] "Sorrow Comes to the West Coast: The Curfew Regulations and Their Consequences," *Aufbau* 8 (April 3, 1942)

[81] Letter from Richard Grau to Dean Edwin D. Dickinson, Department of Justice, July 12, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Curfew Restrictions and Richard O. Grau

[82] "Sorrow Comes to the West Coast: The Curfew Regulations and Their Consequences," *Aufbau* 8 (April 3, 1942)This also includes reprinted excerpts from the Los Angeles newspaper *Daily News.*

[83] Ralph M. Nunberg, "Wir klagen nicht an," "Die Westküste," *Aufbau* 8 (April 3, 1942)

> We went to Sweden—as I entered school there was a German fellow, a Nazi, of course, hetsing [setting] the other fellows on me, and I have to change the school again. [...]
>
> I entered the U.S.A., and I found the school like a paradise. When my parents then very soon got their first papers, I had my happiest feeling since years. I thought in this country also we will be citizens, like every human being. NO doubt, we will do our very best to show our alliance and thankfulness to this country.
>
> Now came the Enemy Aliens question, and because I was a former German citizen by birth, I was to be an enemy alien. I think this is very ridiculous. I, who hate the Nazis more than any American is called an enemy alien and the law is again pointing at me to suffer under more pressure.
>
> I am ashamed to tell my fellow, that I am not able to come to them to study or have fun in the evening. I only hope, that I also will get the opportunity to do something, I think a job against the Nazis, I can work and will.
>
> I would be very thankful for your help and I remain with kindest regards,
>
> Gerald Frank Ullman[84]

Felix Guggenheim received several such letters from refugees, pointing out the hardships the restrictions meant for them and how the restrictions inhibited their Americanization and participation in the war effort. The following letter written by the 17 year old William Schwarzer, who had been elected to a leadership position within the Eagle Scouts and could not perform his duties because of the curfew, exemplifies exceedingly well how the wrongful classification struck at the heart of all that was so significant and intrinsically entangled for them: their past experiences of oppression, their dedication to America, and their desire to contribute to the war effort:

---

[84] Letter from Gerald Frank Ullman to Felix Guggenheim, April 19, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, House Committee Investigation National Defense Migration and FBI

> Ever since we have been living here we have tried to the best of our ability and quite successfully to live as good American citizens do: our language has been American, our rule of life has been the Bill of Rights, our law has been the Constitution, our inspiration have been the stars and stripes. It has been our sincere objective to obey and respect all the rules and regulations set up by the government. The curfew order, however, will make it impossible for us to live an American way of life and prepare ourselves for citizenship. This differentiation, segregation, and prejudice had been the cause of our emigration from Europe. We came here with the hope of enjoying liberty under the law, justice and equal rights. Our part in securing the final victory in this war is not one of brooding within our homes from eight to six, sinister, sad, and grim, under the constant observation and suspicion of officers and agents. We can do more, Sir, much more, if we would only be given a chance. Let those who are loyal, cooperative and harmless go free and hold the suspicious and guilty.[85]

Schwarzer's words clearly express the misery of having escaped discrimination in one place only to encounter it in another, particularly in the face of transparently patriotic intentions and actions on the part of the refugees, and the apparently failed promise of the American dream. His equation of, as the refugees saw it, the arbitrary injustice of the oppression in Germany and the beginning of similar practice in United States betrays the depths of the disappointment and fear for the future that the singling out of German Jewish refugees as enemy aliens caused.

The Enemy Alien Classification's Effects on German Jewish Community Organizations—Conflict Around Leadership within the Jewish Club of 1933

As can be seen from these letters to Felix Guggenheim, refugee organizations on the West Coast became important institutions to which German Jewish refugees turned for help. The enemy alien classification and its perceived dangers, by its pejorative

---

[85] Letter from William W. Schwarzer to Felix Guggenheim, June 27, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Enemy Alien Issues

naming and by removing the possibility of integration at least temporarily, left the refugee community with an unreciprocated attachment to nation. It thereby created, or intensified, the feeling of a community united by oppression and fate, perhaps more united at this time than immediately after immigration, particularly among refugees on the West Coast. Nevertheless, the fraught situation inevitably fostered debates over how best to react to the classification, and there existed tensions not only between views on the East and the West Coast but even within the West coast institutions.

Cooperation between different refugee organizations on the West Coast in regard to the enemy alien classification, which had begun before the Tolan Committee hearings, were intensified with the establishment of a Coordinating Committee of Refugee Immigrants in mid-March 1942. The members of this Committee were representatives from the major cities with German Jewish populations situated in military area 1. The delegations were proportionate to the size of their respective refugee communities; there were three representatives from San Francisco, three representatives from Los Angeles—all from the Jewish Club—and one each from Portland and Seattle.[86] Committee members were convinced that individual actions by refugees—such as the letters people sent to different officials—might in fact hurt the group's cause rather than help it and that a few knowledgeable representatives of broadly representative institutions could achieve better results by establishing relationships with civilian and military authorities.[87] While

---

[86] Letter from Richard O. Grau to Alfred Jaretzki, March 17, 1942. The Los Angeles representatives were Leopold Jessner, President of the Jewish Club, Felix Guggenheim, and Harry Salinger, a friend of Guggenheim's.
FGP, B107 Correspondence, 1942-1943, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee 2 of 2

[87] See, for example, letter from Richard O. Grau to Felix Guggenheim, August 16, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Curfew Restrictions and Richard O. Grau

initially differing perspectives caused problems in cooperation between the West Coast organizations and German Jewish umbrella organizations in the East, they were subsequently able to work together. Thus, the Coordinating Committee's work aimed at the reclassification of the German Jewish refugees and the revocation of the curfew and travel restrictions in affiliation with the Federation of Jews from Central Europe, the umbrella institution for German Jewish groups in the United States that had its headquarters in New York City.

While the enemy alien classification led to greater cooperation between the refugees on a super-regional level and strengthened their group identity, the refugee organizations‘ change of focus from providing primarily social and cultural assistance to becoming political actors did not take place without conflict. An examination of this conflict exposes the refugees' varying expectations for their community and ambitions for life in the United States on the one hand, and the way they viewed their relationship to Germany on the other. While the Jewish Club had been successful in helping orient its members in American life and in offering them German cultural events, the enemy alien classification challenged the Club leadership to produce an entirely different type of advocacy and public representation to American civilian and military authorities. With so much at stake, Club members had an immediate interest in being represented properly. This was a particular cause of contention because some members had felt that there existed a discord between the general membership and the board of directors since before the enemy alien classification. Their perception was that the different backgrounds (in the broadest sense, socio-economic, political, cultural, etc.) of the members were not evenly

represented on the Club's board of directors. The enemy alien classification exacerbated this debate and became particularly heated around the time of the Tolan Committee hearings, when it resulted in the co-option of Felix Guggenheim onto the board of the organization, a step which was welcomed by many members and which temporarily quietened dissent.[88] After the curfew and travel restrictions were passed, however, the conflict worsened once more and reached its height in the summer of 1942.

The major disagreement existed over the question of how to approach, deal with, and solve the problem of the curfew and travel restrictions and took place between two main groups: On one side were members of the established board of the Club which included the chairman Leopold Jessner and some of his friends—among them people like the founding member Dr. Bernstein who did not fall under the enemy alien classification —and on the other, Club members from a circle around Felix Guggenheim, who had been the leading and officially appointed activist of the Club on the enemy alien question. Existing histories of the Jewish Club of Los Angeles depict Leopold Jessner as the primary personality who by his strong leadership kept the group united and led it through the difficult times of the enemy alien classification.[89] Internal correspondences between Club members, however, reveal that Jessner and the board around him were heavily criticized by Guggenheim and his friends for not working energetically and efficiently

---

[88] Harry D. Salinger, "Ausbau," *Aufbau* 8 (March 6, 1942)

[89] Most scholars cite Marta Mierendorff, who wrote: "Als den nicht naturalisierten Emigranten als „enemy aliens" Beschränkungen auferlegt wurden und Evakuierung als reale Gefahr drohte, erwies sich Jessner für viele Emigranten als eminent moralischer Halt." "Leopold Jessner" by Marta Mierendorff, undated, 1, 13, Marta Mierendorff Collection on Leopold and Fritz Jessner, 1910-1986, Marta Mierendorff papers, Collection no. 0214, Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

toward solving the enemy alien problem. While the Guggenheim circle sought to work for the revocation of the enemy alien classification and the curfew and travel restrictions, Jessner was pursuing what he called a "politics of 'conservatively doing nothing [konservativen Nichtstuns]."[90] This policy was grounded in the belief held by Jessner and his friends that the authorities in Washington would soon do right by the refugees and that they simply had to wait, obey the rules and avoid attracting negative attention to their group. The disagreement between these two groups eventually developed into a conflict over who should have the authority to make decisions in these matters. At the Jewish Cub's elections in August 1942, Guggenheim and his friends presented their own list of candidates—itself an act that caused much strife.

The arguments that the Guggenheim circle brought against the existing board of the Club and in support of their own candidates were framed by combining the enemy alien problem with issues of Americanization. Guggenheim's contenders believed that the enemy alien issue should be "left in the hands of people who are connected to American life, who understand this time and age, and who master the language..." insinuating that the current board holders lacked these abilities.[91] They thought that the existing board

---

[90] The German original is "Politik des 'konservativen Nichtstuns,'" which, according to other documents in this folder, is how Jessner himself named his approach to the enemy alien problem and which he believed would prove effective. ("Zur Vorstandswahl am 2. August," FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Jewish Club of 1933) An announcement addressed to Club members and signed by Jessner in late April 1942 demonstrates this rather less than proactive attitude toward the discriminating rules, cautioning the refugees to obey to the rules. It reads: "we have received word from Washington repeating the previous information that we can expect a satisfactory solution of the evacuation and curfew problem on the West Coast eventually. Therefore we are doubly anxious that in the meantime no incident regarding violation of regulations may occur in which any refugee may be involved. [...] In case anybody wants to avoid certain hardships by changing residence within the Metropolitan [area] or Los Angeles, we are gladly prepared to give information about the formalities involved." "Mitteilung an Mitglieder des Jewish Club of 1933, Inc.," April 30, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Jewish Club of 1933

[91] Excerpt from a memo to the members of the Club, undated, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Jewish Club of 1933

was dominated by men who, because they were primarily artists and of an older generation, did not understand the realities of building a life in America in the way that the majority of the Club members were trying to, and who saw the club as their personal cultural forum. Whether or not that characterization was fair, it is clear that Jessner's camp did not feel the same urgency to use the club to address the alien classification problem politically, and in this situation of threat to the community this inactivity soon became intolerable to many club members.[92] No longer could those who had been famous or held community leadership positions in Germany best represent a community that felt besieged. Instead those who were well equipped in terms of age, profession, and understanding of life in America came to the fore.[93]

The elections to the board at the general membership meeting on August 2, 1942, while somewhat of a compromise as Jessner remained as president, nevertheless brought significant change to the club leadership: several of Guggenheim's friends gained seats

---

[92] The Guggenheim circle was also concerned that the Club represented itself as a "neutral" organization, "both in regard to its Jewishness and in regard to its political stand." ("Wir glauben, dass der Club gemäss der Zusammensetzung seiner Mitglieder und im Interesse seines Ansehens bei den amerikanischen Stellen neutral sein soll—sowohl in jüdischer Beziehung als auch in parteipolitischer Beziehung." Excerpt from a memo to the members of the Club, undated, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Jewish Club of 1933) While the Club had just recently changed its name to Jewish Club, some —to become influential— members apparently did not like the Jewish identifier. It remains unclear, however, whether they disliked it because they felt that Jewishness was not their predominant identity or because they feared antisemitism. This is a particularly interesting point, as the refugees' Jewish identity became one of the main arguments they used in their fight against the enemy alien classification.

[93] The existing scholarship on the refugees in Los Angeles and particularly the Jewish Club of 1933 has depicted the group too much as being held together by individuals who had been famous in Germany. My findings show, however, that the Jewish Club in Los Angeles during these years was not simply an exile organizations, focused primarily on the refugees' past and celebrating and revering individuals who had been famous in Germany. In terms of leadership, the ability to function in America was perceived of being of utmost importance. The issue of women participating in leadership roles on the board of the Jewish Club was also brought up during the 1942 summer crisis. While Guggenheim and friends believed that there should be more women on the board, they did not have a woman on their list because they feared that this would disadvantage them in the election. After the election in August 1942, there were two women on the board.

on the board with the accompanying mandate to more actively pursue the problem of the enemy alien classification. The Club's shift from a focus on social and cultural issues to one of political goals was consolidated under the leadership of Guggenheim with the formation of a special "political" committee, "the Committee for Refugee-Immigrants of Los Angeles," which was staffed by Guggenheim's friends. To control the club's political stance, the committee wrote a memorandum to the effect that any member of the club wishing to engage in any action or communication with the media regarding the enemy alien classification was required to put it first to the committee.[94]

By naming the political committee, "the Committee for Refugee-Immigrants of Los Angeles," and by sometimes referring to it as "the Committee for Refugee Immigrants of Southern California," the Club projected itself as the representative organization of all refugees in the Southland. Yet in actuality, only a third of the refugees in the area were members of the Club, and more members were deemed necessary for it to be able to legitimately portray itself as the main representative of German Jewish refugees in the area when negotiating with government organizations. An increase in membership was also required to get the financial support of dues-paying members to cover the expenses that arose in conjunction with the enemy alien issue, and to accomplish this purpose, the Club established a membership recruitment committee.[95] However, at the same time that the Club was seeking to recruit more members, the consequences of the enemy alien classification prompted the organization to become

---

[94] Undated document, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Jewish Club of 1933

[95] See letters and statements from the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. from the Felix Guggenheim Papers, Box 107 and 108, Felix Guggenheim Collection.

more careful in monitoring who these members were. The board decided that it was important to collect certain information about the members, since the passing of the enemy alien legislation increasingly subjected refugees to inquiries by different authorities and institutions.[96] Similar concerns led to proposals for club policing of members who acted in violation of the restrictions:

We also think that a member who is apprehended in violating the present regulations and restrictions, by doing so places himself outside the club community and the Praesidium [board] should be authorized to draw the necessary consequences in such cases, for instance by suspending the membership etc. We intend to warn the members to this effect in our next circular letter...[97]

These kinds of deliberations (it is unclear whether the latter suggestion was actually implemented) demonstrate how the enemy alien classification, while creating a strengthened sense of community, also created division among the refugees. Because of the tense political situation, the refugees' awareness of their public image, which had been a central concern ever since their arrival in the United States, even developed so far as to consider the exclusion from the community of any who threatened that image. Yet this change is only one of several wrought in the club and the community by the classification. During this time, its character changed significantly in its primary mission, leadership and structure. Moreover, it became more important to a larger population, on

---

[96] "inquiries on individual club members from Authorities and other institutions increase considerably, and it is imperative that the club has some more date [sic] about its members than is the case now, as more harm may be done to a member by not giving a sufficient report if and when an inquiry comes in, than otherwise." Memorandum to all Board members of the Jewish Club of 1933, undated, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Jewish Club of 1933

[97] Report of meeting from September 9, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Jewish Club of 1933

the one hand because the community, under duress, sought representation, advocacy and leadership, and on the other because, in order to provide such representation, the club needed the mandate of its community.

Fighting the Legislation—Alleviating its Effects, Disputing its Application

The efforts regarding the enemy alien question of the refugee activists on the West Coast were targeted at immediately alleviating the direct everyday consequences of the classification while at the same time working in parallel to achieve full revocation of the classification for stateless Jewish refugees. Initially unable to attract the help of the broader American Jewish community in their protest against the classification itself, when it came to dealing with the practical consequences of the legislation, the refugees did work with local Jewish organizations, mostly those which had supported them in refugee issues since their arrival, such as the Council for Jewish Women. They also worked with local state offices and increasingly with the Federation of Jews from Central Europe in New York. The efforts to alleviate the classification's consequences took several approaches. In order to ease the hardships of the travel restrictions and the curfew, the Jewish Club assisted individual refugees to gain exceptions from the regulations. Applications for such permits were made to the Office of Civilian Defense, the city and country defense councils and to specifically designated officials who were authorized to issue permits. The regulations for the issuance of permits were complicated and the Jewish Club appealed to its members to use the organizations' resources and get advice before applying, as the Club would thus be able to "save time and work for the officers

there and for our members as well."[98] The Club also kept the refugees informed as to which cases required permits, as the regulations regularly changed.[99] While people could apply for permits "for the purpose of personal business to avoid a substantial personal or financial hardship or loss," the latter were subject to interpretation by the authorizing agent. Generally, no permits were granted to visit relatives and friends, cemeteries, and places of worship if they were outside the 5-mile restriction, but the Club worked hard to ensure that all members could join High Holiday Services in 1942 and was also able to gain exceptions so that members could attend Club meetings.[100] In their cooperation with authorities and in their appeals for changes to the rules, members of the Club's Political Committee frequently made a general case against practically nonsensical aspects of the regulations. One such argument was that it did not make sense to apply the 5-mile travel restriction equally to the "smallest village in California" and to a city as large as Los Angeles, which stretched over "12 miles from West to the East and 30 miles from North to South," and where it was not unusual to have ones place of employment, doctor, or

---

[98] "The Committee for Refugee-Immigrants of Southern California reports," Undated Document, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Jewish Club of 1933

[99] After the issuance of the first regulations, slight changes were made to enable refugees to pursue their business. In a relaxation of earlier announced regulations, from the summer of 1942 on, aliens did not need permits to travel 15 miles in any direction from their place of employment if it was "within course and scope of employment or in direct connection with [the] alien's own business or occupation." (Undated Document, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Jewish Club of 1933) Permits were still required to cross the 5-mile zone to in order to see the regular physician who practiced more than 5 miles away from the refugee's place of residence. The 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew was even more strictly enforced by the authorities, which granted exemptions only in a few cases, as for instance for night workers who would stay at their place of employment during the entire curfew from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. or who were accompanied by a policeman or similar authority during their travel from home to work. The restrictions were loosened in regard to hospital visits during curfew hours for which permits were available in the summer of 1942. Still, physicians were not allowed to visit their patients after hours even in emergency situations.

[100] See FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Jewish Club of 1933

place of worship more than five miles from home.[101] Another approach appealed to the authorities on the basis of reasonable expectations of human behavior.[102] For example, one active member of the Political Committee wondered in his correspondence with a local agency whether the refugees could reasonably be held responsible for lack of compliance in view of the unnecessary hardships of the regulation:

Just figure a healthy and young man or woman living alone, working till 7 p.m. or later from early in the morning, and being confined to his or her four walls thereafter, without any possibility of getting air or relaxation of any kind, and without any companionship for the rest of the day. It cannot but lead to situations where violations are bound to occur, and I wonder whether the person even morally could be held responsible for it.[103]

That local authorities were at times understanding in this respect was recalled by Hedy Wolf. Her husband Ernest had a position in Glendale at the time, teaching at a military academy, while she was working at a doctor's office in downtown Los Angeles:

> So at that time, we lived in different places. I took the bus to go see him. For several weeks, every Friday afternoon or Saturday morning, I had to go to the consul general and ask for permission to travel to my husband. He was a very nice young man. At first he gave a permit to me each week. Later on, since he understood the situation real well, he laughed and gave

---

[101] See, for example, letter from Felix Guggenheim to G.A. Borghese, August 19, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Enemy Alien Issues

[102] This, however, stood in opposition to the refugee organizations' consistent message toward the community of individual compliance and their routine calls to refugees to abide by the restrictions in order to not give the authorities reason for suspicion.

[103] Letter from Wm. E. Stagen to Dora Berres, Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles, September 17, 1942, FGP B108, Correspondence 1942, Enemy Alien Issues, See also Ilse Nunberg, "5 Minuten vor 8," *Aufbau* 8 (April 17, 1942)

> me a permanent permit so I would't have to come each week. I remember this very well because not so many nice things happened![104]

This still did not mean that Hedy could stay overnight with her husband, as every alien was required to be in her own home at night. Such individual and everyday effects of the legislation continually reinforced the overall unhappiness over the injustice of the designation and the inappropriateness of its name for the refugees, who, far from being enemies of the United States, desired so urgently to become Americans. To quote Hedy Wolf once again: "I wasn't German anymore. I wasn't American either. We were without a country. What bothered me was that I did not *belong*, that I had no passport."[105]

Because Americanization was now structurally blocked by the state through the enemy alien classification, the refugees channeled their motivation to become Americans into a fight for its revocation, as symbolic of their attempt to become fully fledged Americans. Paradoxically, in this fight for official permission to Americanize, the central strategy became a focus on their German Jewish identity in order to differentiate themselves from the state's enemy, Nazi Germany. We have seen in the individual letters to authorities and the desperate telegram from the Club to the Justice Department that the refugees used their stories of victimization in Nazi Germany to point out the injustice of the enemy alien classification from the beginning. The organized refugee community intensified this narrative throughout the war. In their appeal to U.S. authorities, they

---

[104] When Hedy Wolf is asked what the enemy alien classification meant to her and what constraints it put on her, she responded: "We were pretty lucky. They didn't put us behind wires like they did the Japanese. Of course it affected me because we weren't really Germans anymore. The Germans kicked us out, so how could we all of a sudden again be Germans? It was a very weird, not to be understood situation." "Hedy Wolf," Wolman (1996), 235f.

[105] This is Hedy's answer to the question of how she felt about being a German at the time. Ibid., 236

continued to stress their victimhood and always positioned their fight against the enemy alien classification within the larger context of the war.[106] In detailed support of this, the Federation of Jews from Central Europe, in a memorandum to its member organizations, proposed to collect data about refugees that would identify them specifically as stateless Jewish victims of Germany. The Federation sought evidence of "specific damage" that individual refugees had endured in Germany, such as dismissal from their profession because of Jewish origin as well as experience of arrest and imprisonment in concentration camps.[107] The data would then be used to issue affidavits guaranteeing the 'non-enemy' identity of the refugees. Although it is unclear whether these suggestions were ever systematically realized, the idea illustrates the refugees' strategic focus on their German Jewish identity in order to become Americans.

Finally, in their appeals to the various authorities against the enemy alien classification, the refugees also stressed that not only should their German Jewish background make it impossible for them to be considered the "enemy" but to the contrary, it was precisely their German Jewish background that could be a strategic advantage to the United States in the war effort. They characterized their community as having both intimate knowledge of the common German enemy and great motivation to

---

[106] See, for example an undated (probably from summer 1942) telegram from the from Coordinating Committee of Refugees on the West Coast, Jewish Club of 1933 Inc. to Hon. Henry A. Wallace, Vice President of the United States, in which it says: "The fight between a slave world and a free world is especially decisive for those who as the first victims and the first enemies of the slave world found refuge in this country [...] We would be ashamed to speak for ourselves if our treatment would bring any benefit to the American cause but we do not understand why it should be impossible to draw a demarcation line by reclassification between victim and oppressor between natural ally and real enemy" FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Enemy Alien Issues

[107] "Suggestions for Participation of Refugee Organizations in the Reclassification Program," undated, FGP, B108, House Committee Investigating National Defense Migration and FBI 1942

do something to combat them. In Los Angeles, the Jewish Club proactively offered its assistance to the local FBI office, writing that "we would be only too glad to be at your service at any time and for any information and cooperation we are able to give."[108] The FBI's reply to this letter was in character with most others from U.S. authorities that the refugees appealed to: politely grateful for the refugees' offer, but in an extremely noncommittal way, and without any reference to what the refugees might do to make themselves useful. The implication that such help would define the refugee community as allies, if not actually Americans, and certainly make the enemy alien designation absurd, was entirely ignored.

War Effort

The fact that the enemy alien classification hindered the refugees in participating to their full potential in the war effort was of utmost concern to them.[109] One of the most obvious ways to contribute for many young refugees was to become a soldier in the U.S. Army. Prior to Pearl Harbor, based on the Selective Training and Selective Service Act of 1940, refugees who had taken out their first papers were, though they could not volunteer, eligible to be drafted for military service. After Pearl Harbor, however, all enemy aliens, whether they had first papers or not, were initially excluded from military service.[110]

---

[108] Letter from the Jewish Club to Richard Hood, FBI Los Angeles, May 18, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, House Committee Investigation National Defense Migration and FBI.

[109] In a letter to J. Edgar Hoover from May 16, 1942, Guggenheim wrote that it was the refugees' "only wish ... , to contribute [their] share to the common war enemy." FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, House Committee Investigation National Defense Migration and FBI.

[110] Because there was a sizable number from this group in the military now, the government needed to address this problem. The Second War Power Bill passed on March 28 stipulated relaxed procedures of naturalization in the Army. Henry H. Metzger, "Immigrant Soldiers Fighting Abroad." *Aufbau* 8 *(*22 May 1942)

When, shortly thereafter, enemy aliens were again considered for service, it was only after having passed a screening for their trustworthiness and dependability. All male enemy aliens had been registered with their local Draft Boards since the Smith Act of 1940 and they now received special forms on which they were asked to record their personal history and political conviction. If the alien was deemed "acceptable"—a decision that was within the authority of the commanding General of the respective Army Zone that the refugee lived in, and one which could take several weeks—he would then be eligible for the draft.[111] However, even after entering the Army, the enemy alien classification still subjected the refugees to certain restrictions. The majority of the refugees who entered the army during the first year of American participation in the war were initially placed in non-combat units because the military declined to entrust them with weapons.[112] Certain positions, such as physician in the Army's Medical Corps, were also initially closed to enemy aliens, and until they were naturalized, they could not rise

---

[111]In reaction to the large number of refugees who were in the Army already, the government passed the Second War Power Bill from March 28, 1942 which relaxed naturalization procedures. In order to be naturalized in the Army, an alien was not required to have been in the country for a certain length of time,, for example, which was the main reason why the majority of refugees had not become citizens yet. The only time constraint for naturalization was a minimum of three months honorable service in the Army. However, many refugees appear to have been naturalized only before they left on their assignments to Europe or the Pacific. Joining the Army was the fastest way for a refugee to reach his or her goal of becoming an American citizen. "Reklassifizierung im Heer," *Aufbau* 8, No. 13 (March 27, 1942): 1; The information about alien physicians not being admitted into the military as doctors is taken from "They Can Aid America: A Survey of Alien Specialized Personnel," National Refugee Service, New York, 1942, 6. In a survey of the National Jewish Welfare Board on the year 1944, German Jewish refugee physicians in the Army's Medical Corps are cited. National Jewish Welfare Board, *Fighting for America: A Record of the Participation of Jewish Men and Women in the Armed Forces During 1944*, New York City, no page numbers, chapter: "Global Service"

[112] Joshua Franklin, "Victim Soldiers: German-Jewish Refugees in the American Armed Forces during World War II," B.A. Honors Thesis, Clark University, Worcester, MA, 2006, 44f. Those who had joined before Pearl Harbor were apparently not transferred to non-combat units, however, if they were still enemy aliens.

to the rank of officer.[113] Not until Spring 1943 were refugees in the Army exempted from the enemy alien classification. At that time, the government, under "congressional pressure and other requests by the general staff office," acknowledged the special qualifications the refugees possessed simply due to their background, finally accepting, at least within the military, the argument that refugee organizations had been making all along, and lifted all previous restrictions.[114] Until that time, the restricted enlistment process affected all refugees equally, irrespective of their geographic location, with only slight differences between regions due to local draft boards holding a certain sovereignty.

On the home front, however, the opportunities for refugees to participate in the war effort differed significantly depending on geographical region. While the organized refugee community strongly encouraged such activities, efforts to engage in them by refugees on the West Coast were made difficult by the curfew and travel restrictions. For example, first-aid and training courses for vital wartime occupations like welders or technicians were frequently held during curfew hours.[115] Refugees reported that they could not donate blood if the Red Cross Donor Service was not within the five mile zone. When the Los Angeles Jewish Community turned out for a mass meeting "to protest publicly against Nazi atrocities and massacres" in August 1942, the German Jewish refugees in the city could not participate because it happened after the 8 o'clock curfew. Their note to the Jewish Community Council concisely articulates the absurdity of the

---

[113] "F.D.R. unterzeichnet das Naturalisierungs-Gesetz," *Aufbau* 8 (April 3, 1942)

[114] This is based on findings and an argument by Guy Stern, cited in Franklin (2006), 47

[115] From a Memorandum on Curfew Restrictions, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942,Curfew Restrictions and Richard O. Grau

classification: “But we as the first victims of the evil forces you are protesting against will join you in spirit and hope for an outstanding success of the mass demonstration against Nazi barbarism.”[116]

Such difficulties were not always caused by the official restrictions however. A study by the National Refugee Service published in 1942 reveals that in several instances the activities of the refugees participating in the war effort were curtailed not because there were clear legal objections, but because there existed a certain level of confusion and misunderstanding on the side of either the refugees themselves or the general public as to what they were allowed to do.[117] This, for example, was the case for participation in civilian defense activities and in employment in certain sectors of industry where refugees who were engineers or chemists might have made an important contribution. Clearly, the designation alone—even when not through specific restrictions—frustrated the refugees’ ability to engage in the war effort.

While it was difficult for the refugees, especially those on the West Coast, to directly engage in the war effort, raising money for the cause remained an option and a way to participate. In the Spring of 1942, a number of private donors and several refugee organizations on the East Coast formed the “Loyalty Committee of Victims of Nazi-Fascist Oppression.” In order to demonstrate the devotion of Nazi victims who had been classified as enemy aliens by the United Stated, the Committee started a fund raising

---

[116] Jewish Club of 1933 to Los Angeles Jewish Community Council, undated, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Jewish Club of 1933

[117] “They Can Aid America: A Survey of Alien Specialized Personnel,” National Refugee Service, New York, 1942, 2

campaign to purchase a fighter airplane for the American air force.[118] Individuals from West Coast organizations started a regional satellite of the Loyalty Committee with headquarters in Los Angeles, under the chairmanship of Leopold Jessner and with the active participation of other members of the Jewish Club as well as some prominent émigrés like Lion Feuchtwanger, Max Horkheimer, and Heinrich Mann.[119] This campaign was as much inspired by the desire of the refugees to contribute to the war effort as by the desire to demonstrate their earnestness to the American public.[120] As one appeal to the refugee community for donations described it, the Loyalty Campaign was a "liberation" during this time in which the refugees were forbidden from action under the enemy alien classification and an antidote to the "lethargy" many refugees had succumbed to.[121] In addition to favorable reception in the refugee community, the Campaign received much positive attention in the American press as well as from government officials.[122] In October 1942, the Loyalty Committee was able to present a check of $48,500 to the War Department. The money was used to purchase a fighter plane for the American Air Force,

---

[118] Other participating organizations were the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, the Immigrants' Conference, the New World Club, the American Association of Former European Jurists, the Italian Jewish Club, the Netherland Jewish Society, Selfhelp of Emigres from Central Europe, Selfhelp of Emigres (Chicago), the Jacob Ehrlich Society, and the Immigrant Jewish War Veterans. *Aufbau* 8 (April 10, 1942)

[119] "'Loyalty an der Westküste," *Aufbau* 8 (April 10, 1942)

[120] *Aufbau* 8 (April 17, 1942)

[121] M.G., "Kampfflugzeug Loyalty," *Aufbau* 8 (April 10, 1942)

[122] *Aufbau* 8 (April 17, 1942)

the name of which symbolically validated the refugees' struggle for recognition in their new country—"Loyalty."[123]

More proactive war effort work for the refugees on the West Coast could really only commence after the curfew and travel restrictions were revoked. On December 23, 1942 Lieutenant General De Witt lifted these regulations for German enemy aliens, explaining that they were no longer needed since "other security measures had been provided."[124] While the refugees were naturally relieved at this ruling, the following statement by the Jewish Club in Los Angeles reiterates their ongoing dissatisfaction with the classification:

> [W]e cannot overlook that this change has nothing to do with our reclassification and that our request not to be put in the same file as the Nazis, has not been granted yet. For practical – and first of all for moral reasons we have to go on applying for reclassification granted to other groups already and—as we sincerely hope—not to be withheld from us indefinitely.[125]

---

[123] "Die Immigration überreicht ihre Spende," *Aufbau* 8 (November 6, 1942), and vol. 9 (February 26, 1943). In a letter from Ernst Fraenkel to Heinz Pinner, the former articulated that the contributions from Los Angeles to the Campaign had not been satisfactory in his eyes. He particularly criticized that well-to-do people did not donate sufficiently, pointing in particular to Franz Werfel, who he presumed, must not have known about the drive. Letter from September 24, 1942, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1942-1943, Correspondence Jewish Club of 1933. See also *Aufbau* 10 (March 26, 1943) about the official ceremony of the airplane being given to government officials.

[124] "Curfew Law ended on West Coast for German Aliens; over 1,000 forbidden Zones also abolished by De Witt," *Special Information Bulletin*, National Refugee Service, December 31, 1942. FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942-44, National Defense Migration Hearing and German Alien Curfew. It is not clear what these other security measures are at this point. I assume, however, that the authorities had collected enough information about the enemy aliens in military zone number 1 and thus had enough evidence that supported the argument (long held by different authorities) that the majority of those who were classified as German enemy aliens did not pose a threat.

[125] Undated document, most likely from the beginning of 1943, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942-1944, National Defense Migration Hearings and German Aliens. On October 12, 1942, Columbus Day, Attorney General Francis Biddle revoked the enemy alien classification for Italians. (Fox (1990), 136) In regard to the German refugees, Biddle asserted at that point, "I wish to emphasize that in thus removing the label of enemy alien from Italians we do not forget that here are other loyal persons classified as alien enemies. Their situation is now being carefully studied by the Department of Justice." (Tartakower and Grossmann (1944), 115f, cited from *The New York Times*, October 31, 1942)

Nevertheless, in spite of the continued chafing against the designation and despite the discrimination that the classification continued to cause—as in the matter of naturalization, for instance, which I will illustrate below—the refugees greatly welcomed the end of the curfew and travel restriction as an opportunity to dedicate themselves fully to the American war effort.[126] The organized community was instrumental in furthering individual refugees' participation in such efforts. In Los Angeles, the Jewish Club had been negotiating for German Jewish refugees to take part in the activities of the local Defense Council. In April 1943, the Club enthusiastically informed its members that that they were now eligible to join the U.S. Citizens Service Corps "on the same basis as citizens" and appealed to the refugees to enlist:[127]

> we are convinced that the refugees will give an <u>overwhelming demonstration not only of their loyalty and willingness to serve, but also of their understanding of their duties as future citizens of the USA</u>! [...] We are sure that not a single refugee family will want to be missing when we present our list of volunteers to the Civilian Defense. Please inform

---

[126] After the curfew and travel restrictions for Los Angeles were lifted, the Club reminded its members "to strictly follow the still existing regulations," and "quote[d] the most important ones:"
1)For occasional travel or trips and for regular business travel permits are necessary to be issued by the United States Attorney, Federal Building, Spring Street, Los Angeles. Permits issued, before the curfew came into operation, are not valid any more and have to be renewed before being used again. No permits are necessary within the Metropolitan Area (between Whittier to the East and the Ocean to the West; between San Fernando Valley to the North and Long Beach to the South) regardless of the purpose of the tripe. No travel by airplane is permitted.
2) Change of residence address or place of employment or name under legal authority: Notice has to be given to the U.S. Attorney, to the local office of the FBI and to the Alien Registration Division of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Philadelphia, Penn.
3)Without permit – obtainable in important cases – no cameras, radio transmitters, short wave receiving sets, firearms and other prohibited articles as explosives, signal devise, etc. shall be in possession of enemy German aliens."
FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942-1944, National Defense Migration Hearings and German Aliens

[127] Announcement to members and anti-Nazi refugees from Jewish Club of 1933, Inc., Committee for Refugee-Immigrants of Southern California, April 16, 1943, two versions in English and German, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1943, Immigrant Organizations

> also refugees among your friends, who are not members of the Club about this important opportunity! [128]

The Jewish Club was designated to officially register all refugees on behalf of the Citizen Defense Volunteer Office, whether they were members of the club or not, and to assure that those registered were loyal and reliable persons. The Corps had several different divisions in which the refugees could volunteer, such as the Salvage Collection Service, the Price and Ration Board, the Health and Hospital Service, Childcare Service, Nutrition Service, Agricultural Service, Transportation Service, or Block Leader Service and the Club's records include numerous applications for volunteer work.[129] One such letter to the Club by Ernst Kleinmann and his wife asked whether they could make themselves useful as volunteers, even though both of them were severely physically handicapped with arthritis and eye problems.[130] This illustrates that the enthusiasm to contribute to the war effort was even shared by some of the older refugees, whom the historiography has often depicted as less interested in becoming active participants in American organizational life.

Another way in which the lifting of the curfew and travel restriction enhanced the refugees' ability to contribute to the war effort was through the organization of social events. The restrictions had previously made it very difficult to carry out social and cultural events and, as mentioned above, under these circumstance entertainment took

---

[128] Ibid.

[129] C.C. Trillingham, and Roy M. Tuttle, Los Angeles County War Council : Civilian War Services, Functions of the Citizens Service Corps, 1943

[130] Letter from Ernst Kleinmann to Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. from April 23, 1943.FGP, B107, Correspondence 1944-45, Committee for the Study of Recent Immigrants from Europe

second place to the Club's political work. However, with the restrictions lifted, the Jewish Club now organized a great number of events surrounding the war effort. It routinely organized Blood Donation Campaigns, and, as *Aufbau* likewise did, published the names of those who repeatedly and ardently gave their blood "for the victory of the United Nations."[131] In 1943, the Club organized "Victory Campaigns," including "Victory Knitting and Sewing"—activities that refugees within the New World Club in New York had been involved in since the year before.[132] They also organized "Victory Parties" with music, entertainment, and fundraising to aid the war relief effort.[133] To encourage its members to participate in as many of these activities as possible, the Club even planned to award particularly active members with a "victory badge."[134] Even cultural events that had nothing explicitly to do with these victory campaigns were put to the service of the war effort. The following introductory words that were delivered at the opening to one of the Club's events show how much the war dominated the mindset of the refugees at that time:

We are looking forward to an evening of relaxation and amusement of laughter and entertainment [...]. Such an hour of pleasantness will not make us forget the sorrows and sacrifices or our war-torn world, the expedient use of the German language will not make us forget our hate against Nazi Germany and our progress in America, and the jokes

---

[131] See for example "Victory Volunteer Reporter," "Die Westküste," *Aufbau* 9 (January 22, 1943)

[132] See „Die Westküste," *Aufbau* 9 (February 19, 1943)

[133] See "Victory Volunteer News," "Jewish Club of 1933, Inc*.," Aufbau 9 (April 2, 1943)*

[134] "Minutes of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc.," February 16, 1943, FGP, B166, Jewish Club of 1933, Committee for Refuge Immigrants 1943

and the music will not let us forget our duties in this hour and every hour of this war for freedom and survival. I therefore consider it a special privilege to introduce to you Mr. [...] who will address you on behalf of the WAR Chest. It is my firm conviction that the majority of us already has contributed generously to this most important cause, but we will see to it, that not a single person may be overlooked...[135]

While cultural events served as fundraisers for the war, the most common financial contribution to the war effort was through the acquisition of war bonds.[136] In Los Angeles, the Jewish Club widely advertised for the purchase of war bonds and stamps, organized its own War Bond Drives, and participated in those arranged by other organizations such as the War Savings Committee.[137] That refugees were at the forefront of these efforts in Los Angeles is illustrated by the fact that the initiator and chairman of the local War Savings Committee was himself a German Jewish refugee. War bond drives

---

[135] Undated document, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1944-1945, Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe. On January 7, 1945, Thomas Mann read in front of the Club from his "Das Gesetz," which the introductory speaker then referred to as his "Moses-Book." This is an excerpt from the introduction to the event: "Der Jewish Club of 1933, die Organisation der Einwanderer, die während der letzten 10 Jahre aus Mitteleuropa hierhergekommen sind, um eine neue Heimat zu finden und Bürger dieses Landes zu werden, - diese Organisation heisst Sie alle heute Abend durch mich herzlich willkommen. [...] Niemand kann die symbolhafte Wichtigkeit dieses Ereignisses übersehen und niemand kann sich dem historischen Reiz dieser Situation entziehen. Lassen Sie mich ein paar Worte über die bedeutungsvolle Dreieinigkeit sagen unter deren Zeichen dieser Abend steht: Thomas Mann ist der grösste Repräsentant europäischer Kultur in diesem Lande und er spricht hier zu einer Hörerschaft, die in diese Kultur hineingeboren und in ihr erzogen wurde. Hier – viele 1000 Meilen entfernt von den europäischen Schlachtfeldern, auf denen das Schicksal der Welt entschieden wird. Er liest aus einem Werk, das sich mit der grössten Figur der jüdischen Tradition befasst, aus einem Werk, das er nicht Moses, sondern das Gesetz genannt hat, ein Gesetz, eine Torah, die nicht nur die Basis der Existenz des jüdischen Volkes, sondern alles dessen wurde, was wir unter westlicher Kultur und Civilisation verstehen. Er liest in einer Veranstaltung, die zu Gunsten der amerikanischen Kriegsfinanzierung und zu Gunsten des amerikanischen Roten Kreuzes stattfindet und vor Hörern die sich bewusst sind, dass dies amerikanische Kriegsanstrengung ihre eigene ist, weil in einer Riesenschlacht über die Kulturwerte westlicher Civilisation, über die Überlieferung dessen was Du sollst und was Du nicht sollst und die Zukunft der neugewonnen Heimat entschieden wird." FGP, B107, Correspondence 1944-1945, Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe

[136] See Davie, *Refugees in America*, 199.

[137] "Plans for War Effort by the Jewish Club of 1933," undated article, and "Refugees will stage pageant at Bond Rally," undated excerpt of an article, Collection of the Benefactors of the Jewish Club of 1933.

were popular and successful, featuring prominent speakers from the Hollywood and political community and drawing thousands of people.[138] In 1944, the refugees even took leadership roles in anti-Nazi activities in Los Angeles, as the Jewish Club president reported that they "in compliance with a request of the Treasury will be in charge of the Victory house on Pershing Square in order to stage an Anti Nazi War Bond Drive."[139] This was great progress, considering that in 1942 the refugees could not even attend an anti-Nazi protest because they were not permitted to leave their houses in the evening.

Ongoing Inhibition of Americanization

Once the revocation of the curfew and travel restrictions allowed the refugees on the West Coast to move on with living their 'normal' lives and to finally tangibly oppose the Nazis, as they had the opportunity to contribute more effectively to the war effort, the urgency with which they had discussed the enemy alien classification ever since its passing lessened. By the end of 1943, the frequency with which this matter was discussed in the refugee press dropped significantly. Nevertheless, though it now affected their daily lives much less, the classification continued to impede the refugees' efforts of

---

[138] Interview with William Stagen, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: Jan. 1, 1972. LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1337416. The organizers of one War Bond rally in Los Angeles in which members of the Jewish Club participated expected more than 23,000 people to attend the event. ("Refugees will stage pageant at Bond Rally," undated excerpt of an article, Collection of the Benefactors of the Jewish Club of 1933.)

[139] Undated document, probably speech manuscript, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1944, German Jewish Refugee Issues

becoming naturalized American citizens.[140] With the passing of the enemy alien classification in 1941, naturalization for all enemy aliens had been halted and a 90 day investigation period introduced, during which the Immigration and Naturalization Service checked on the loyalty of the applicant.[141] Refugees who lived on the West Coast of the United States while the curfew was enforced had faced an additional obstacle in that they were frequently unable to take advantage of programs that provided assistance in obtaining American citizenship, such as language and citizenship classes that were generally offered in the evening hours.[142]

Moreover, the investigation process frequently took much longer than the proposed 90 days, in some cases longer than half a year.[143] The delay was ascribed to a lack of personnel dealing with these matters and technical problems, rather than

---

[140] Appelius argues that the enemy alien classification sped up the refugees' Americanization because they now had to show their loyalty to the United States and get citizenship as soon as possible. The motivation to do both before this classification was enforced has been well documented as the majority of the refugees took out their first papers shortly after their arrival. While the enemy alien classification certainly made the need for American citizenship greater and may have prompted some refugees who had not done anything to engage in this process and and pursue it with greater effort, the refugees' enemy alien status in fact slowed down naturalization. See Appelius (2003), 238

[141] United States Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., "Questions and Answers on Regulations Concerning Aliens of Enemy Nationalities," Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1942, 33ff. Uncatalogued collection (as of 2004) Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

[142] Memorandum on Curfew Restrictions, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Curfew Restrictions and Richard O. Grau

[143] See, for example, letter from Klaus Schaefer to William Stagen, August 3, 1942, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942, Enemy Alien Issues, and other correspondence about this topic in B107 and B108. The problem with the delay in naturalization was a national issue and one that was also taken up by *Aufbau*.

difficulties in confirming the loyalty of the refugees.[144] However, the refugees were concerned that the public might not perceive this to be the case. The case of Harry Salinger, a refugee in Los Angeles, shows the distress connected to the delay in naturalization and the practical disadvantages that it caused for him.

Harry D. Salinger, who had been a judge in Berlin, came to the United States in 1937. Already in his mid-forties, he began to study law all over again at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. However, because admittance to the Bar was dependent on American citizenship, prior to allowing Salinger to take the exam the bar examiners confirmed with the local naturalization office that Salinger would become a citizen within a year, and thus declared him eligible. In September of 1942, Salinger took and successfully passed the bar exam, but by May 1943, he was still waiting for the naturalization process to begin. He was told that "it would take at least six months, possible [sic] even longer until our cases [his and his wife's] would come up for their final investigation." As this would extend the waiting period to a year since his passing of the bar exam, Salinger became greatly concerned, having heard from "other sources that such final investigation takes from three to four months in the average." This would extend the period since the exam far beyond the year's grace extended by the bar

---

[144] That the authorities took the loyalty screening seriously can be gleaned from a correspondence between the Jewish Club and a representative of the National Refugee Service about the case of the German Jewish writer Bruno Frank, whose naturalization had suddenly be halted in 1944. While Guggenheim argued that Frank's loyalty "hardly can be questioned," as he was a well known writer and friend of Thomas Mann's with whom he had appeared in front of the Tolan Committee, the official from the NRS suspected that the delay was caused precisely because he was well-known: "Mr. Frank is so prominent a person, that the investigations have taken longer because there are many more persons to interview." Letter from Ann Petluck, NRS to Felix Guggenheim, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1944, German Jewish Refugee Issues

association examiners and might put his career as a lawyer in jeopardy.[145] He thus petitioned Earl G. Harrison, Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, to treat his case as one of "extreme hardship" which would qualify it to be expedited. Salinger's letter to Harrison illustrates his concerns over how the American public would perceive his delay to be admitted to the bar:

> My case had become well known among many members of the local Bar as I am the only refugee lawyer from Germany who in this community has undertaken to study law and who passed the Bar examination. All those people have been under the impression that it would be a matter of a few months, until I would become a citizen and a member of the Bar. Every time I meet one of the them, I am asked whether I have been admitted in the meantime. If my answer has to be 'no' for a long time to come, my reputation as to loyalty must gradually deteriorate as it will be very difficult to give an explanation for the delay which satisfies their doubts. As a good reputation of an attorney is one of his main assets the damaging effect of an unforeseen delay in my naturalization procedure is obvious.[146]

Salinger's case illustrates once again how the enemy alien legislation and bureaucracy could undermine the refugees' goals to become successful and "valuable" Americans during this time, irrespective of the refugees' individual motivations to do so. However, Salinger's petition is also testimony to the refugees' efforts in fighting the classification and its ramifications in order to reach their goals. During the war, the Political Committee of the Jewish Club of 1933 negotiated numerous grievances with government organizations and authorities on behalf of refugees over delays in their naturalization.[147] By the end of 1944, Felix Guggenheim commented with much pride on

---

[145] Letter from Harry D. Salinger to Earl G. Harrison, May 4, 1943, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1943, Jewish Club of 1933, Committee for Refugee Immigrants

[146] Ibid.

[147] See different correspondences in FGP, B107 and B108

his organization's success in overcoming the hardships that had been laid in the way of the refugees' naturalization and Americanization:

> 3 months ago I had the opportunity to attend a meeting in New York where the question was discussed, how to help the newcomers to adjust themselves to American society and American life. From what I heard and saw, I realized for the first time how well things have developed in this respect on the West Coast. Only 2 years ago we were confronted with dangerous consequences of the enemy alien legislation; curfew, threat of evacuation and the treatment of refugees as [...] German [...] aliens seemed to stop our Americanization during the war and even to jeopardize our solidarity with American Jewry. To-day thanks to concerted action of American-Jewish organizations and refugee-organizations and thanks to the attitude of the government-agencies concerned, we have in LA the fastest-working naturalization procedure, compared with all other cities, and we see a much closer cooperation and integration of new Americans and old Americans than anywhere else in the USA.[148]

In this way, the refugees on the West Coast who were hit hardest by the enemy alien classification and its consequences were eventually able to Americanize faster than refugees in other parts of the country due to their organizing and activism. Despite the psychological and practical hardship the refugees experienced due to their classification as enemy aliens, they did not become disillusioned with the United States or become more closely attached to Germany or nostalgic about their German past. Rather, fighting a government imposed association with Germany by engaging in political activism, the refugees focussed strategically on their German Jewish identity, as it was the only one under the classification that allowed them to construct themselves as enemies of Nazi

---

[148] Speech at joint meeting of B'nai B'rith and Jewish Club of 1933, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1944-1945, Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe. The pride the refugees took in having reached their goal of obtaining American citizenship is illustrated in its public celebration. During 1943, the club started publishing the names of those members of the Club who acquired citizenship in its page in *Aufbau*. See for example "Als Bürger eingeschworen," "Jewish Club of 1933, Inc.," *Aufbau* 9 (October 15, 1943)

Germany and acceptable future Americans. The refugees ultimately drew strength out of their ability to operate effectively within the democratic structures of the United States. In order to do this, they, like many immigrants before them, transformed their communal organizations into political institutions of advocacy and, building new institutions, strengthened their intra-communal networks. Taking part in the political process in the United States, they experienced first-hand the significant flaws of the democratic structures but were not afraid to appeal for better treatment when they perceived the U.S. to be violating its own democratic ideals. The refugees remained classified as enemy aliens throughout the remainder of the war. However, as the above quote illustrates, the legislation's severely discriminating initial effects were ameliorated and the refugee community ultimately won its fight with the authorities to be legally accepted as future Americans. The next chapter will show that from 1943 to the end of the war, some refugees were occupied more directly with Germany, when they returned to Europe as soldiers of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Parts of this chapter are a reprint of my M.A. Thesis "German Jewish Refugees in Los Angeles: A Jewish Club and the Americanization Process from 1938-1943," submitted at California State University, Northridge in 2005. I have also used parts of this research in my essay "Zwischen-Orte: Dimensionen von Identität deutsch-jüdischer Migranten" published in *Makom Orte und Räume im Judentum. Real. Abstrakt. Imaginär. Essays*. Michal Kümper, Barbara Rösch, Ulrike Schneider, and Helen Thein (eds.), Haskala, vol. 35. Hildesheim: Olms, 2007, 311-320.

Chapter 4

German Jewish Refugees in the U.S. Army

After Pearl Harbor, German Jewish refugees frequently expressed their eagerness to fight in the war on the side of the United States but they were often left frustrated in that purpose. Though they were occasionally able to join the army in support roles prior to the relaxation of restrictions on enemy aliens in the U.S. Armed Forces in 1943, only afterward did a substantial number of them enter all branches of the U.S. military, and only then were any eligible to take part in combat. From that time on however, they joined up in significant numbers. The National Jewish Welfare Service conducted surveys during the war that suggest the percentage of the Jewish refugee population that fought was as high as that of the general population, if not slightly higher.[1] This participation in the war was a significant topic within the German Jewish refugee community. *Aufbau,*

---

[1] Based on case studies of different cities published in 1943, 34 % of refugees between 18 and 44 served, which equals the percentage of Americans in general. Nathan Belt, *Fighting for America: An account of Jewish men in the armed forces—from Pearl Harbor to the Italian Campaign* (New York City: American Jewish Welfare Board, 1944), 4. Another study by the National Jewish Welfare board also based on a case study of about 3,500 refugees show that 10% of them were in the service, compared to 8.9% of all Americans who were. *American Jews in World War II: The Story of 500,000 Fighters for Freedom, v*ol. 2 (National Jewish Welfare Board, 1947), 23f.
In the scholarship on German Jewish refugees who served as soldiers in the U.S. Army during WWII their number is estimated to have been between 9,500 (based on a calculation by Joshua Franklin, "Victim Soldiers: German-Jewish Refugees in the American Armed Forces during World War II" (B.A. Honors Thesis, Clark University, Worcester, MA, 2006) and the majority of 30,000. My own understanding, based on numbers of soldiers from the Los Angeles Jewish Club and the New World Club in New York is that of closer to 15,000 (Steven P. Remy, "Deutsch-Jüdische Flüchtlinge in der US-Armee," *Heimat und Exil: Emigration der Deutschen Juden nach 1933* (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2006), 201). My own estimate, based on numbers of soldiers from the Los Angeles Jewish Club and the New World Club in New York is that of closer to 15,000. 163 out of the about 2000 (mostly older) members of the Jewish Club in Los Angeles were soldiers in 1944. I expect Steven Remy, who is currently working on a book on German Jewish refugee soldiers in the American Armed Forces during WWII, will have more concrete numbers.

inevitably, was a significant voice on the topic, promulgating the notion that it was natural and imperative for the refugees to fight because they owed it to the United States on the one hand, and to themselves, their German Jewish past and Jewish friends and relatives who had remained in Europe on the other.[2] The German Jewish Clubs in New York and Los Angeles meanwhile, regularly and proudly published the latest numbers of their members who had joined the Armed Forces.

This chapter examines the motivations that led German Jewish refugees to join the fight, and their experiences as U.S. soldiers. The stories of German Jewish soldiers are an integral part of the larger relationship between the refugees and Germany that is the central theme of this work. Because of that, this chapter's emphasis is distinct from other work on the topic in paying primary attention to how German Jewish refugee soldiers experienced their encounters with Germany, German soldiers in various contexts —on and off the battlefield, during and after battles—and German civilians.[3] It is also rather different from others in the dissertation, because the influence of Germany—elsewhere understood as an imaginary or a distant political or diplomatic entity—is here a

---

[2] *Aufbau* also included a regular section "This is the Army" with reports about refugee soldiers in the Armed Forces, often written by the soldiers themselves.

[3] For existing literature on the topic, see Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," Remy, "Deutsch-Jüdische Flüchtlinge," Guy Stern, "In the Service of American Intelligence: German-Jewish Exiles in the War against Hitler," *Leo Baeck Year Book* 37 (1992): 461-477 and his article "The Jewish Exiles in the Service of US Intelligence: The Post-War Years," *The Leo Baeck Yearbook* 40 (1995), 461-477. Marita Krauss, "Eroberer oder Rückkehrer? Deutsche Emigranten in der amerikanischen Armee," *Exil* 13, no. 1 (1993): 70-85. Gerhard Jochem, "Fallbeispiel III: Kämpfer für die Ehre und Freiheit des Menschtums: Nürnberg-Fürther jüdische Emigranten in den Armeen der Alliierten 1939-1945," in Michael Berger and Gideon Römer-Hillebrecht (eds.), *Jüdische Soldaten—Jüdischer Widerstand in Deutschland und Frankreich* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2012). This is a topic that is currently receiving considerable attention by historians. I mentioned that Steven Remy is working on a book project, and Patricia Kollander has also begun research into this field. Robin Judd is working on a book which will incorporate the experiences of European Jewish refugee soldiers who met their wives in Europe—survivors of the Holocaust but also occasionally non-Jewish women. The working title of her study is *Love at the Zero Hour: European War Brides, GI Husbands, and European Strategies for Reconstruction.*

very immediate, antagonistic and dangerous presence. Nevertheless, facing a Germany still defending its position as the active tormentor of their community, and the enemy of their adopted nation, clearly contributes to German Jewish refugees' understanding of themselves as Germans, German Jews, and Americans. In this case, however, Germany plays its role of contributing to German Jewish refugee identity formation not so much abstractly as very immediately.

The findings of this chapter rely predominantly on examinations of oral history interviews with former refugee soldiers that have been conducted on this topic in recent years and refugees' memoirs.[4] As such, the chapter primarily offers insight into the personal experiences of soldiers who served in the European theatre of war.[5] Oral histories, particularly those that are recorded decades after the event, have their inherent inconsistencies. The soldiers may not in every case remember events exactly as they happened, or they may omit certain episodes and emphasize others. Furthermore, their very personal memories have almost certainly been affected by greater narratives concerning the Second World War, of which the most pervasive is that of the "Good

---

[4] See the stories of about twenty German Jewish refugees who fought in the U.S. Armed Services which were collected by Steven Karras and are based on interviews and memoirs in *The Enemy I Knew* which is based on the documentary directed by Karras: *About Face: The Story of Jewish Refugee Soldiers of World War II*, Chicago: Buddy Pictures Inc, 2006. In addition, there is the 2004 documentary *The Ritchie Boys* by Christian Bauer (Tangram Productions). Steven Remy has conducted interviews with refugees on the topic and some appear in this chapter. Also, the chapter includes some interviews I conducted with refugees.

[5] The examples I present in this chapter show a diversity of experiences among soldiers, and while not all of them had the same ones, I found that they were shared by many. Thus, when I write "the refugee soldiers" I certainly do not mean all of them but I use this phrasing to characterize the examples as representative.This chapter considers solely male refugees in the Armed Forces. While female refugees served in the U.S. Armed Forces as well, research on these women still remains to be done. The refugees that form the base of this chapter are from all parts of the United States and not particularly from the West Coast. I would argue that refugees from the West Coast did not experience the encounter with Germany distinctly different than refugees from other parts. Rather, I think experiences differed mainly depending on whether they mainly lived and socialized within a German Jewish refugee community and the extent of contacts and relationships they had with Americans.

War"—a patriotic and victorious fight against evil fascist forces.[6] Where ever possible, I have consulted contemporary sources and have used them to balance and complement the information given in the interviews.[7] However, in reading the oral history interviews, and in my analytical focus of how the refugees viewed and interacted with Germans, it became clear that the refugees had reflected on these issues. Many, for example, pointed out how their perspectives changed from before, during, and also after the war. They acknowledged how they felt at one time and that they changed their outlook later. When the refugees gave these interviews, they constructed a more or less coherent narrative of their past and present identities. I see a great value of these interviews in this construction of life stories and identities.

The chapter begins by examining the motivations of refugees for joining the military and then proceeds in subsequent sections to analyze the refugees' position within the U.S. Army and the ways in which their distinct identity as American soldiers of German Jewish refugee origin affected their actions in encounters with Germans. I argue that a significant factor that determined these encounters and the relationship between the German Jews and non-Jewish Germans is the dramatic change and frequent full reversal of the power dynamic between the two groups.[8] Most interactions between refugee

---

[6] See John E. Bodnar, *The "Good War" in American Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010). For an overview of how the perspective and portrayal of World War II has changed since it ended, and for an examination of a variety of subordinate narratives of the war. See also interviews collected in Studs Terkel, *"The Good War:" An Oral History of World War II* (New York: The New Press, 1984)

[7] Even so, one must acknowledge that those commentators were not immune from being affected by the preeminent narratives or even propaganda of that time either. As with any other source, one must balance its strengths and weaknesses. Oral histories have the advantage, for example, that the sources, the interviewees themselves, are able to communicate when they, for example, do not remember something.

[8] In this, I concur with many of the scholars who have written on the refugee soldiers and whose works are listed in footnote 3.

soldiers and Germans are characterized by this reversal of power, as the refugees faced Germans from their position of victorious soldiers, interrogators of POWs, occupiers in authority positions as part of the Allied military government, as de-Nazifiers, and finally as witnesses to the atrocities of the Holocaust.

Linked to this reversal of power, the notion of Jewish revenge on Germans and Germany has recently received popular attention and even refugee soldiers themselves have invoked the term in their interviews and memoirs, though infrequently.[9] Revenge alone, however, is entirely inadequate to explain the refugees' motivations for joining the fight, nor does it suffice in explaining their actions toward Germans, particularly once the war was won. During the fighting, an abstract desire for vengeance was certainly a spur for German Jewish refugee soldiers, but their overall reasons for fighting are complex and demonstrate the changing nature of their relationships to Germany and the United States.

Firstly, the refugees' relationship to the United States was a particularly significant motivator for them to fight. Not only did many refugees feel that they owed their service to the United States for having accepted them as immigrants, but they also

---

[9] The film Inglourious Basterds (2009) directed by Quentin Tarantino, sparked public interest in such stories, See also the 2012 production "The Real Inglorious Bastards" based upon the experiences German Jewish refugees carrying out an operation for the American Office of Strategic Services. Further, see Jonathan Freedland's novel *The Final Reckoning* (2008) (written under the pseudonym Sam Bourne), and *An Eye for an Eye: The Untold Story of Jewish Revenge Against Germans in 1945* by John Sacks and the controversy and discussions surrounding it. Also, see a Public Radio International story: "Member of a Jewish Holocaust 'Revenge Squad' Tells Story,"*May 03, 2013 · 8:30 AM CDT, http://www.pri.org/stories/2013-05-03/member-jewish-holocaust-revenge-squad-tells-story.* Hanokh Bartov's novel *The Brigade* from 1967 predates these discussions. Notions of Jewish revenge on Germans do not only exist in the context of the soldiers who were fighting the war on the ground but significantly in the context of American policy toward Germany after the war. U.S. Secretary of War Henry Stimson called the Morgenthau-Plan "semitism gone wild for vengeance," for example and such voices could also be heard within the general American public. In connection with the Nuremberg trials, this notion of Allied victor's justice driven by vengeful Jews became prominent in Germany as well. See Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 91f.

wanted to defend the country because they saw its future indelibly linked to their own. Secondly, specific actions of revenge carried out by German Jewish refugees were not prevalent. Analyses of the stories of interactions between refugee soldiers and Germans post-battle and post-war reveal that the former generally did not use their power advantage to engage in personal acts of general, indiscriminate retaliation against individual Germans. Though the refugees did engage in punitive actions against specific individuals, it tended to be against those who had wronged them personally, and even then, they most frequently did so through official channels of the Allied military government. It is certainly true that the refugees were all immensely satisfied at the overall defeat of the Nazis and the Germans who had supported them. However, as this chapter will show, rather than engaging in a general vengefulness, in many situations the refugees behaved particularly humanely when interacting with Germans with whom they had no acquaintance. For the refugees, more important than revenge was the urge to act as decent human beings, a conduct, which I argue is indelibly linked to the complexities of their intertwined American German Jewish identity.[10]

One reason for this clemency was that the refugees' familiarity with Germans, having been Germans themselves, enabled them to see them as people and not simply as 'the enemy,' thereby avoiding the dehumanization (to which they themselves had been subject in the other direction) that so often results in mistreatment. Precisely because of their own experiences of discrimination and persecution as Jews in Germany, they

---

[10] As such, the refugee's "will to maintain their dignity," which Franklin identifies as a motivating factor to fight, characterizes the actual experience of the refugee soldiers, as described in the subsequent sections of the chapter, more accurately. Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," 5

wanted to distinguish themselves and not behave in ways that the Nazis, and the majority of Germans, had. It was thus particularly important for refugee soldiers not to condemn individuals on a general basis, simply because they belonged to a certain group. The power that the refugees held through their positions within the U.S. Army allowed them to gain certain insights about individual Germans' collaboration with the Nazi regime and to make distinctions in how they treated different Germans in different situations. In their actions toward Germans then, many were guided by a moral ideal of a decent soldier and human being, which was inspired by the motivation to be morally superior to the Germans. In certain situations, this differentiated their actions from that of their fellow American soldiers, who lacking this special perspective, were sometimes less clement with the German enemy.[11] Yet, as this idea of decency was inspired one the one hand by the refugee soldiers' motivation to be morally superior to the Germans, it was simultaneously inspired on the other by the refugees' desire to act according to certain values, such as respect for human dignity, which, as they repeatedly made clear, they associated with the United States.[12]

Although the refugee soldiers gained great satisfaction from having participated in the defeat of Nazi Germany and facing Germans from a position of power, they had soon

---

[11] I am not suggesting here that American soldiers did not want to be or were generally not decent. My research revealed instances though which showed that some American soldiers seemed to have perceived the German enemy differently than the refugees. Atrocities committed by U.S. soldiers were rare and seemed to have happened overwhelmingly in the Pacific Theatre, except for an incident when greater numbers of unarmed Italian and German prisoners were killed in Sicily in 1943. See Bodnar, *The "Good War,"* 29 and especially fn. 36.

[12] In her book on American Jewish GIs, Deborah Dash Moore makes the point that for many of the Jewish GIs dignity and humanity were strong aspects of their Jewish identity, which came out particularly during their military service. See Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed A Generation* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 11.

to realize that this power had its clear limits. While the refugees could make sure that some Germans who had been Nazis would be punished, they could not make Germans take on responsibility for their role in the war and the atrocities committed by Germans and in the German name. For this reason, the refugees' contacts and relationships with Germans were characterized by great frustration. This frustration, taken together with the gradual revelations concerning the Holocaust, which came to light in 1945, and the overwhelmingly positive experience of inclusion in the American Army ultimately cemented the refugees' belonging to the United States.[13]

Motivations for Joining the Army

When John Stern, a refugee from Marburg, was drafted into the U.S. Army in November 1943, he remembered that he "was quite pleased because it offered me a chance to do something for the country that adopted me. Naturally, what I had experienced in Germany made a serious impact on me and gave me the extra incentive to be a good soldier."[14] Stern's twofold sentiments about joining the Army—reflecting his stance as emanating from his relationship with the United States and Germany—are representative for many refugees. While different individuals certainly weighed their personal motivations and reasons differently, in public representations of the refugee community the refugees' special relationship with the United States was emphasized as a

---

[13] Of course the term Holocaust was not used at the time.

[14] "John Stern," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 125. See for example Harold Baum, who put it very similarly: "My goal was to be treated as an American, and when I had an opportunity to demonstrate my loyalty, I did. I hoped that I would have the opportunity to get a certain amount of revenge and I was privileged that I had that experience." Ibid, 165

particularly strong reason for their participation in the Armed Forces. Here, joining the Army was declared the best way for the refugees to express their gratefulness to the United States for having accepted them in, and such service ultimate proof of loyalty to the new country. While the understanding was that the refugees' service in the Army would clear the past debt, fighting for the United States was simultaneously understood as an investment in the future, as a further step to establishing the refugees as good (future) citizens of their new country. In fact, several *Aufbau* articles overtly promulgated the message that the Army offered a way for the refugees to further their Americanization, which, as we have seen in previous chapters, the they did not only view as essential for their success and acceptance in the United States but also as their duty. In this spirit, one young refugee wrote in a letter to *Aufbau* that "[j]oining the Army [was] surely the best and quickest way to become Americanized."[15] Especially for refugees who had lived and worked in areas with strong refugee communities, like in New York City's Washington Heights, the Army was indeed one of the first places where they came in close and steady contact with Americans.[16]

Besides fulfilling their patriotic duty to the United States, the enemy in this particular war was naturally instrumental in determining the refugees' stance toward it. Having escaped the Nazis, the refugees knew firsthand the extent of the adversaries'

---

[15] Fred Forscher, "A Soldier on Americanization," *Aufbau* 8 (January 30, 1942): 8. Forscher was a refugee from Austria. However, his outlook did not differ from that refugees from Germany.

[16] See for example interviews with Henry Kissinger, Walter Reed, and Jerry Bechhofer in Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*

aspirations and the ruthlessness with which they put them into action. Explaining 'what he was fighting for,' one young refugee wrote:

> We don't want to be afraid to open the door of our house when the bell rings because the Gestapo might be waiting outside. … This war is entirely different: it is not a war of conquering territories only, but our enemies want to rule the whole world physically as well as mentally. We are fighting to prevent the enemy from seizing our minds and our souls. We want to live our own lives.[17]

The refugees' German Jewish background affected their outlook on participating in the war not only in relation to their new home but also with a view toward Europe. Besides wanting to defend their new country, for the majority of the refugees, the predominant feeling of motivation was the desire to actively fight the German regime that was responsible for their and their families' suffering and to stop the intensifying terror against Jews in Europe.[18] Siegmund Spiegel, originally from Thuringia, expressed: "I became obsessed with joining the American army once war broke out in Europe in September [1939] because it was important for me to fight against Nazi Germany, the country of my birth."[19] Many of the refugees had suffered from a feeling of helplessness in the face of the atrocities that were worsening in Europe and joining the army offered

---

[17] This is an excerpt from an essay contest of the National Jewish Welfare Board where this essay won a prize. "Jews in Uniform," *Aufbau* 9 (August 27, 1943)

[18] See contributions in Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*. One letter by a refugees from Austria who was a member of the Jewish Club in Los Angeles expressed his feelings about having been sworn in:"This was my greatest ambition since I came to this country and I am determined to really put all I have into this business of being a soldier. This is what I have been waiting for, hoping for all these months in Vienna under the Nazis and all the years in America. I shall live and breathe by the words of my oath as [a] soldier and until I die or take off the uniform I shall have only one thought, to fight right and fight." Letter from Fred Prager to Felix Guggenheim, November 17, 1942. At this time there still existed restrictions for enemy aliens and Prager added in his letter "I might not have a chance to [be] in active combat units [,] but everything I'll do will be some contribution."

[19] "Siegmund Spiegel," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 19

an escape from this, as Kurt Klein's words exemplify: "Being in the army came as a tremendous relief to me because I appreciated that America had given me the opportunity to serve as a soldier and possibly defeat evil. It was the first time that I felt good that I could help."[20] In order to make a difference, it was particularly important for some refugees to fight in the European theatre and not in the Pacific. Edmund Schloss, a refugee from Hesse, remembered: "My biggest fear was being sent to the Pacific, as many of the [refugee] soldiers I trained with were. ... I kept reminding the first sergeant of my training company that I had the special training in interrogation and could be more effective in the European Theater."[21]

The opportunity to fight the Germans who had inflicted so much hardship on the refugees appealed to many of them. Bernard Fridberg, for example, explained "I had first-hand experiences with the Germans, so I was anxious to get even with them a little bit..."[22] Other refugees explained this appeal in stronger terms, like William Katzenstein,

---

[20] "Kurt Klein," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 274

[21] Edmund Schloss was from Jesberg, a small town in Germany and came to the United States as a boy in 1938. It should be noted here that the fear of being sent to the Pacific theatre could also have been the fear of the brutal warfare in the Pacific, rather than a determined desire to face a German enemy. The context of the interview suggests the latter, however. "Edmund Schloss," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 170. Also, see interview with Erich Hamberg who said: "I was hoping and praying that I would be sent to the European theatre and not the other one." Ibid, 53. While there were, as we will see later in the chapter, special military training camps at which German Jewish refugees were trained for intelligence work in Europe, I have not come across any indication that German Jewish refugees were primarily sent to the European theatre.

[22] "Bernard Fridberg," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 62, Fridberg was born in Hanover in 1922 and left Germany when he was 13 years old.

who wrote in his memoir: "I wanted my revenge, so I volunteered for the draft board."[23] While many refugees named revenge as a motivating factor for joining the U.S. Army in interviews and memoirs many years after the war, the stories they told about the war and their interactions with Germans during that time rarely exhibit incidents of personal acts of vengeance. Rather, while thoughts of revenge or getting back at the Germans may have fueled the refugees' urge to fight in the U.S. Army, these thoughts materialized first and foremost in their participation in Germany's defeat as Allied soldiers, and not through indiscriminate acts of retaliation.

While for most refugees their experiences in Germany were motivating factors to fight in the Army, some refugees were rather unenthusiastic about going to war precisely because of their recent experiences. While these refugees did not feel like they had no reason to fight, they—after years of discrimination, persecution, flight, loss, and great efforts to establish a new existence in the United States—were hesitant to leave their often still unstable existence. Going to war would mean another interruption to their newly found 'normal' lives. John Brunswick (formerly Braunschweig), a refugee from the North-West of Germany for example, received his draft notice with "very mixed feelings":

On one hand, I felt that I should have volunteered to fight Hitler and his Stormtroopers who had caused such unbelievable suffering to so many people and had

---

[23] "William Katzenstein," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 98. The information in the chapter on Katzenstein are taken from his unpublished memoir. Other refugees clearly stated that revenge was not part of their motivation. Walter Reed, for example, said: "Frankly for me, it was never about 'getting back at Hitler,' or worrying about killing my former countrymen.[...] It was mostly 'these Krauts are going to kill my buddies,' 'let's get them *first*' or 'they killed our buddies, let's go get even.' I do not recall anything about revenge or retribution from the point of a Jew." Ibid, 188.

ruined their lives. If not stopped soon, they would probably be unstoppable and cause more trouble throughout the world. On the other hand, I hated to leave my wife. At the age of thirty-two, having already been in the United States for six years, I was making a little money and I was able to support my parents.[24]

> Even some refugees who were younger when the U.S. entered the war and who did not have their own families yet, were sometimes very reluctant to leave their civilian lives. Walter Reed, who also believed that America could make a real difference in stopping the Nazi terror, wanted to avoid the draft until he had finished high school: "I was now eighteen years old and that was more important to me at that time than going to war."[25]

His draft was indeed deferred once or twice during 1942 so that he could finish high school.[26] Reed had come to the United States alone, having had to leave his entire immediate family behind in Germany. While one might think that for Reed joining the Army was particularly appealing for reasons of revenge or to rescue his family, the fact that he was in the United States all by himself left pragmatic concerns about establishing security in America foremost in his mind.

Also, while the themes of revenge and loyalty to the United States are predominant in the discourse about the refugees' motivation to join the Army, Tom Tugend, a refugee from Berlin, reminds us that pragmatic reasons were often as instrumental as ideological ones. For him a "whole bunch of mixed emotions" was

---

[24] He continued: "While I had no choice, deep down I knew that by serving my new adopted country, like everybody else, I was doing the right thing and would have felt guilty if I had not done so." "John Brunswick," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 248

[25] "Walter Reed," Ibid.,186.

[26] Ibid.,187. See also Ludwig Mühlfelder, *Weil ich übriggeblieben bin: Ein jüdisches Überlebensschicksal aus Suhl in Thüringen und Amerika, 1924-1994*, Eberhard Roy Wiehn (ed.) (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre Verlag, 1995). Mühlfelder also deferred his entrance into the Army because he wanted to finish high school.

involved in the decision. While not denying that it was important for him to be part of this particular war, he remembered that: "First of all, I wanted to get away from home as quickly as I could," adding that perhaps, "in other times I would have run away and joined the circus."[27] Tugend's example shows that while there were distinct reasons for German Jewish refugees to join the Army and participation in this war was a very personal endeavor for them—distinct from the great mass of American soldiers—at least some refugees were not that different from other young Americans.

The Refugee Soldiers' Position within the U.S. Army

Before proceeding to the analysis of how the German Jewish refugee soldiers experienced their encounter with Germany during the war, it is helpful to sketch their position within the United States Armed Forces, particularly because of their enthusiastic response to joining and because the majority have recalled their time there as an exceedingly positive experience. The refugees particularly cherished the camaraderie among the soldiers and the opportunity to be part of the greater project. Still, particularly in the beginning of their time in the Army, some refugees "sensed [their] 'otherness'": as newcomers to the US, as Jews, and also because of their more immediate connection to the country the USA was at war with.[28]

Depending on the length of time refugees had been in the U.S. and on their place of residence, they had become more or less Americanized in their behavior. However, in

---

[27] Interview with Tom Tugend, conducted by the author, Los Angeles: April 28, 2012

[28] "Walter Reed," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 188. Fritz Weinschenk, on the other hand, said: "I loved the army right away. I fit right in with all the guys..." Ibid, 66f.

the army most of them were for the first time exposed to great numbers of Americans from diverse ethnic, regional, and socio-economic backgrounds. While this was initially a "daunting" experience for some, the refugees generally appreciated the diversity and felt that belonging to this group was part of becoming real Americans.[29] One refugee reported in *Aufbau* that "it [was] a pleasure to watch the boys of all nationalities, that is Puerto Ricans, Philippinos [sic], Chinese, Italians, Germans, Norwegians, Danish and what not work together and try to profit from each other's experience and knowledge."[30] This characterization of the military experience—as team work of men from multiethnic backgrounds—fits a major theme that the Office of War Information propagated to the American public and which became an important image of the war experience as represented in American popular culture.[31] Whether this central message had resonated with this soldier who wrote these words to *Aufbau* or whether he came to this position on his own is not clear. Be that as it may, the multicultural composition of the Armed Forces made 'fitting in' certainly much easier for the refugees, not least because it was also the first time that many native born American citizens were surrounded by people from outside of their own, often homogenous, communities.[32]

---

[29] "Walter Reed," Ibid,188

[30] From the regular section "Our Boy's Club" *Aufbau* 9 (January 22, 1943)

[31] Benjamin L. Alpers, "This is the Army: Imagining a Democratic Military in World War II," *Journal of American History* 85.1 (June, 1998): 143

[32] Even if other Americans came from all kinds of diverse backgrounds, many shared similar cultural preferences that were distinct from that of the refugees. This was particularly strong in the realm of sports. While baseball and football were important to most Americans, many refugees had not taken a great liking to them. They often preferred soccer or were not interested in sports at all. Thus, one refugee recalled, for example, how heated arguments would erupt between him and his fellow American soldiers over such ostensibly minor things as what to listen to on the radio, because he preferred Brahms and his fellow soldiers football and Sammy Kay. Fred Forscher, "A Soldier on Americanization," *Aufbau* 8 (January 30, 1942): 8

However, the fact that Americans from all parts of the country and different backgrounds joined together in the army occasionally also led to clashes between the soldiers. Thus, some refugees had the experience that it was not their non-American background but their Jewish identity that sometimes set them apart.[33] Tom Tugend recounted how some of the American soldiers in his unit, "mostly Southern boys, farm boys," held strong stereotypes about Jews. When, during a conversation about religion, Tugend mentioned that he was Jewish, the reactions were: "No you're not, no it's impossible, there are no horns growing out of your forehead and you haven't tried to gib me and tried to get money from me, so you can't be a Jew."[34] For Tugend, this reaction, and various other experiences of antisemitism he been subjected to after arriving in the United States, led him to conclude that he "was better off identified as a German than as a Jew," even in an Army fighting the Germans.[35] Antisemitism in the Army was not unusual, but even though many refugees encountered it in one way or another, these episodes did not come to define their experience in the Army.[36] They often blamed anti-

---

[33] For a study of American Jews who fought as soldiers in World War II, see Moore, *G.I. Jews*

[34] Interview with Tom Tugend, conducted by the author, Los Angeles: April 28, 2012

[35] Ibid. This episode could have happened to an American born Jew as well and shows how, to a certain degree, the Army was also an 'Americanization' experience for Americans from parts of the country where they had rarely or never encountered Americans of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. For antisemitism in the U.S. Army, see, for example, Joseph W. Bendersky, *The "Jewish Threat:" Anti-Semitic Politics of the U.S. Army* (New York: Basic Books, 2000)

[36] Some refugees did not experience any antisemitism, as Bernard Fridberg remembered, for example, that in his unit "[e]verybody knew where I had come from and that I was Jewish, but I never experienced any antisemitism at all. We all would become very close knit." "Bernard Friedberg," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 62

Jewish sentiments on individual ignorance and it was most important for them to see that there was no structural discrimination against Jews by the state and the military.[37]

Earlier in the war, German Jewish refugees, of whom there were only a limited number in the army at the time, and who were restricted by the enemy alien classification, occasionally encountered skepticism from other soldiers because of their specific background. Siegmund Spiegel, for example, remembered a master sergeant who "distrusted me, not only because I was Jewish, but also because I was German and spoke with an accent."[38] Also, in early 1942, one refugee soldier advised others in *Aufbau* to abstain from emphasizing their special background in the army and from "representing themselves as well fitted fighters against fascism."[39] He wrote: "When you enter camp you should not show your emotions, you don't have to tell anybody how much you hate the Nazis and how much you have suffered in concentration camps. Soon you will find out that emotions don't get you anywhere."[40] The refugee community had, since the beginning of the war, and in connection with the enemy alien classification, stressed

---

[37] See, for example, Karl Goldsmith's experience with antisemitism in the Army and how he was extremely pleased that a captain who had insulted him with an anti-Jewish slur apologized to him. Goldsmith added " I thanked him and left the room. I stepped out in the Camp Wheeler sunshine, head held high and deeply grateful that my belief in the justice of the American system had again been confirmed." Ibid, 108. See also Moore, *G.I. Jews*, Bendersky, *The "Jewish Threat"*
In the interviews I used, segregation in the army was not a topic that was discussed and it interestingly did not come up in relation to discussions on antisemitism. Moore writes: "Many Jewish GIs ignored the fact that both the Army and civil society in the South were segregated, but some northern Jews did remark on Jim Crow. Segregation taught Jews forcibly that despite whatever animosity they might meet, they were still white." Moore *G.I. Jews*, 71, see also 119, 151

[38] This was in 1942. "Siegmund Spiegel," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 20

[39] Walter Schoenstedt, "Our Army, Too: Immigrant Etiquette for Military Life," *Aufbau* 8 (January 2, 1942): 3.

[40] Ibid. Although the author of the article did not specifically point it out, this kind of advice hinted at the fact that most American soldiers did not have the same urge and reason to fight in the war as the great majority of German Jewish refugees. Moreover, such advice may have also served to circumvent sentiments that existed among some Americans who blamed 'the Jews' for the war.

through their publications that their special knowledge of the enemy and the enemy country could be of tremendous assistance to the American war effort. However, it was not until 1943 that the United States government and military officially recognized this potential. Then, they began to regularly recruit German émigrés, and particularly Jewish refugees.[41] Also, after the lifting of the limitations that the refugees had faced because of their classification as enemy aliens, as described in the previous chapter, many refugees were assigned to do Intelligence work in special units within the Army, at a very small number in the Navy, and also at the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Besides recruiting such prominent German émigrés as Herbert Marcuse, Franz Neumann, and Otto Kirchheimer, the OSS's Research and Analysis Branch also employed lesser known refugees, some of whom worked at OSS into the early postwar years.[42]

The majority of refugees who were recruited for intelligence work served in the Army, however. After basic training, many German Jewish refugees and other foreigners with special knowledge deemed useful for the American war effort began special training at the United States Military Intelligence Training Center that had been established at Camp Ritchie in Maryland, and starting in 1944 also at Camp Sharp in Pennsylvania.[43] Not all refugees were recruited to these special training camps. Some regular Army

---

[41] It is not entirely clear why this happened so late, as Guy Stern points out in "The Jewish Exiles in the Service of US Intelligence: The Post-War Years," *The Leo Baeck Yearbook* 40 (1995): 51

[42] See Barry M. Katz, "The Frankfurt School Goes to War," *The Journal of Modern History* 59, No. 3 (Sept., 1987): 439-478, also for interesting fact of the U.S. government employing Marxist thinkers. See also Tim B. Müller, *Krieger und Gelehrte. Herbert Marcuse und die Denksysteme im Kalten Krieg* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, HIS Verlag, 2010)

[43] Franklin points out that most of the official documents on Camp Ritchie were destroyed in a fire at the National Archive in St. Louis in 1973. Therefore, scholars have so far drawn mostly on individual testimonies to reconstruct the history of the camp. Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," 53, fn. 34

camps also had battalions in which refugee G.I.s were trained in interrogation techniques, while other refugees never received any special training at all, even though they would later carry out intelligence work.[44] Camp Ritchie was the largest specifically designated training facility, however, and between 1942 and 1945, 19,000 soldiers went through it, 3,000 of them German Jewish refugees.[45] Hans Habe, a refugee from Austria-Hungary wrote in his autobiography about Camp Ritchie that "[a]bout 80 per cent. of the Intelligence recruits were not yet American citizens; about half of them were refugees from Hitler, and less than 5 per cent. had been born in America."[46]

In Camp Ritchie, the soldiers learned how to transform their civilian knowledge of the enemy and the enemy country into militarily useful information and tactics. The German speaking refugees were trained in all kinds of intelligence activities with a main focus on interrogation tactics for German prisoners of war as well as German civilians. They also became experts in analyzing aerial photographs, on the size and structure of the German *Wehrmacht* and German military equipment, and beginning in 1944 they were trained in counterintelligence and spy work.[47] Some refugees received instruction in psychological warfare and subsequently worked for the Office of War Information

---

[44] See, for example, "Edmund Schloss," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 171

[45] Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," 54

[46] See Hans Habe, *All my Sins. An Autobiography* (London: G.G. Harrap, 1957), 324. According to Hanus Burger, the soldiers who were stationed at Camp Ritchie frequently remembered the place as bustling with interesting people from various places and manifold skills, some of them seemingly oddly out of place—like a university professor whose special field of expertise was the medieval poet Walther von der Vogelweide. From *Der Frühling war es wert.* Cited in Stern (1992), 463

[47] Jochem, "Fallbeispiel III," 437. For a more detailed account on the experiences of the Ritchie Boys, see Franklin's thesis or Guy Stern's account, "In the Service of American Intelligence: German-Jewish Exiles in the War against Hitler," *Leo Baeck Year Book* 37 (1992): 461-477.

composing leaflets to be dropped behind enemy lines and loudspeaker messages addressed to German soldiers and civilians.[48] Many refugees were very fond of their experience at Camp Ritchie and felt good and proud, not only because they could finally do something for the fight against the Nazis but also because they had acheived recognition in their new country. Kurt Klein, recalling a successful exercise at the Camp prior to the end of his training stated, for example: "I had assumed a certain authority through my training and often thought it was the fulfillment of a dream to find myself in that position. Certainly it was a position in the army that I never expected to have, so I was very happy I could be in that place in that capacity."[49] At the end of their time in Maryland, the Ritchie Boys, as they came to be called, were shipped to Europe, making their first landing usually in Ireland and the United Kingdom. There, they gave lectures to other American G.I.s about Germany, the German army, and the German people the soldiers would be facing.[50] As such, their special knowledge as German Jews, gave them distinct recognition and unique status within the Army.

The refugees did not see themselves as separate from the larger military, however. In fact, in battle the refugees did not fight separately from the other soldiers. While the intelligence units composed of Ritchie Boys (usually six men) played a special role within the American military and were in this way distinct from other American soldiers,

---

[48] Stern, "In the Service of American Intelligence," 471

[49] "Kurt Klein," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 276

[50] See, for example, Interview with Kurt Herrmann, conducted by the author, Los Angeles: November 16, 2005

their units were attached to larger army divisions.[51] Many Ritchie Boys and particularly graduates of Camp Sharp took part in the invasion of Normandy on and after D-Day in June 1944 and were often involved in operations behind enemy lines.[52] Even while performing special intelligence tasks, the refugees understood their job to be part of the larger united effort of all American soldiers, because, as Walter Reed pointed out, in battle the refugees and other Americans were "all in the same boat."[53] Many refugees felt like Reed, who emphasized the significance being part of the great American force held for him and remembered that "[h]aving been in Europe and 'knowing' the Nazis soon faded into the background and was replaced by the danger we all equally felt and were determined to fight against."[54] Interviews with former refugee soldiers reveal how immersed the refugees became in the culture of the American military. Fritz Weinschenk remembered that he was not "immune to the general tenor of American propaganda of that period" and that he started calling the Germans 'Krauts,' for example.[55] The animosity toward the Germans—even though it resulted from widely different

---

[51] Ibid.

[52] Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," 56, See also Habe, *All my Sins*, 341. In Europe, the refugee soldiers were asked to translate documents or interrogate German POWs or civilians. Sometimes, when the demand arose, even refugees who were not especially trained performed these tasks. Tom B. remembered, for example: "I was in the regular 314th regiment, and when we got into Alsace Lorraine, I was pulled out of my regular unit and Colonel Robinson, who was the commanding officer of the 79th, wanted to talk to me and had me translate something from German to English, from English to German, and said I would be his aide from then on . . . . As we took prisoners, he wanted to get information before [they] went back and were interviewed by professional people . . . he wanted to find out what troops had come and what they knew. And that was my main job . . . and I was very effective."

[53] "Walter Reed," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 186

[54] Ibid.

[55] "Fritz Weinschenk," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 68, Karl Goldsmith also frequently said 'Krauts' when he referred to Germans

experiences—was shared by both German Jewish refugees and the American soldiers and contributed to a strong bond among the men.[56]

The fact that most German Jewish refugees became American citizens before they were shipped overseas reinforced their feeling of being part of a greater project.[57] As previous chapters illustrated, becoming American citizens had been one of the main goals for the refugees after their arrival. As soldiers in the Army, many refugees reached this goal sooner than they would have if they had been civilians. For the refugees, the ceremony itself was an important event, since swearing the oath to the United States, and having it acknowledged, finally validated and made official all their previous assertions of loyalty. At the same time, becoming naturalized was also an important practical consideration to protect the refugees should they get captured as prisoners of war by the Germans. While this situation would not have been unusually dangerous to immigrant soldiers with other backgrounds, many refugees worried that if they were captured and found to be of German origin, they would be charged by German authorities with treason and executed.[58]

For that reason and in another attempt to fit in with the mainstream of American citizens, many refugees changed their names when they were naturalized. Sometimes the

---

[56] Ibid.

[57] Some refugees became citizens after they had been shipped overseas. See, for example, "Eric Hamberg," Ibid, 54. Hamberg had already taken part in the invasion of Sicily, when he was finally naturalized in Algeria. There, the U.S. official asked him, according to Hamberg: "'Now comes the most important question I have to ask in order for you to become a citizen, and think very carefully about this: Do you mind fighting against the country of your birth?'" Hamberger remembered: "When I heard that, I laughed. I told him, 'You're a little late.'"

[58] Davie also points out that this was a justified concern. Davie, *Refugees in America*, 191, "Victim Soldiers," 47, fn. 20

name change was also suggested by military superiors or naturalization officials. Wolfgang Bloch remembered that when he was to be sworn in as an American citizen, an official came by and shouted: "Wolfgang?" When Bloch answered in the affirmative, the man replied: "Do you want to get shot as a spy? Change your name, you can do it here, I'm a judge, doesn't cost you a dime." Then, Bloch remembered: "The only 'W' I could think of was Walter, so that's how I became Walter."[59] Another refugee, Walter Reed, who was born as Werner Rindsberg, also wanted to change his name because he felt that it stereotyped him as a foreigner and as a Jew. This was not easy for him, however, as his name also connected him with his parents, who had remained in Germany and about whose whereabouts and well-being he did not know anything at that point: "I vividly recall that I had qualms about changing the name my parents had given me, so I intentionally kept the initials 'W.R.' and also selected my original first name of 'Werner' to be my new middle name."[60]

From the time the refugees first entered the American military to their deployment in Europe, they became connected to the United States in new and intense ways. They returned to Europe different individuals than they had been previously; aside from their very own personal developments after having left Germany, they came as American citizens and some even with new names. While these new identity traits came with a great boost of empowerment for many, they did not constitute a break with the past. For the refugee soldiers, the encounter with Europe and Germans was constituted by their

---

[59] Interview with Walter Bloch, conducted by the author, Los Angeles: February 27, 2012

[60] "Walter Reed," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 189. Reed had left his parents behind in Germany and was not added to this sentence "I didn't know then that my parents would not survive to find out."

experiences as German Jewish refugee Americans, and the negotiations between these identities.

Experiences in Battle and Encounters with German Soldiers

Returning to Europe with the American military was an empowering experience for the refugees. They came as part of a strong military force of which they felt to be an integral part and were eager to prove themselves as good G.I.s. At the same time, the refugees were not like other American soldiers because they had a special history with the enemy country. Different refugees held different perspectives on the role they played in this war and especially about their position vis-a-vis the Germans. Edmund Schloss, for example, remembered: "While I felt a great deal of gratification that I was there with the American troops, I never felt that, 'Here I am, back to fight you guys for what you did to me,' because I became one of the GIs. I never gave revenge a second thought."[61] As such, fighting the Germans was in the first place necessary to protect ones fellow soldiers. For Walter Reed this was the predominant motivation to fight: "it was never about 'getting back at Hitler,' or worrying about killing my former countrymen. ... It was mostly 'these Krauts are going to kill my buddies,' 'let's get them *first*' or 'they killed our buddies, let's go get even.'"[62]

However, in battle, other refugee soldiers drew much drive from their personal experiences with Germans from before the war. Bernard Fridberg, who flew bombing missions on German cities, explained, for example:

---

[61] "Edmund Schloss," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 173

[62] "Walter Reed," Karras, Ibid, 188

I felt a great deal of hate toward the Germans at that time when I was twenty-one; what I did know was that my family had lived in Hanover for centuries, and then all of the sudden I wasn't a German anymore. I wasn't allowed to swim in public pools or go into parks or enjoy things that non-Jewish children did. Essentially, they took our country away from us. So, I felt good about what I was doing in the air force.[63]

Reflecting about the relationship between his personal background and the actions he engaged in as an American soldier, Fridberg's comment reveals not only that he felt that his actions were justified by the painful experiences he had endured at the hand of the Germans but also that they gave him a certain degree of satisfaction. In addition, his words illustrate how significant the loss of his and his family's homeland had been even for a young refugee.[64] This attachment that the majority of German Jews had felt to Germany could surface in certain situations, as the story of another refugee soldier elucidates:

> This refugee soldier, gunner on a Flying Fortress, had the thrilling experience of shelling his own home town. Sad and unsettling emotions ravaged in him when he looked from the window of his airplane down on the streets he had known so well. One moment, he said, he was gripped by homesickness, but then he remembered his mother, his father, and his two

---

[63] "Bernard Fridberg," Ibid, 63

[64] Karl Goldsmith also articulated his pain over the Germans having "stolen my country away from me." Ibid, 12

> sisters who had been slain by the Nazis, and his brother, who was a prisoner of the Gestapo. And he did his duty.[65]

As in Fridberg's case, the realities of the pain that the Nazis had inflicted upon this young man spurred his motivation to engage in combat. While one of the main concerns of the U.S. military in regard to enlisting aliens from Axis countries had been that these men might be hesitant to fight their former countrymen. These two examples, however, illustrate why most of the refugees did not have problems in this respect. However, these examples also illustrate that the refugees reflected upon the meaning of encountering their former home from the perspective of the enemy and, as in the case of the two men who flew bombing missions, being so directly involved in its physical destruction.

Similarly, refugee soldiers also reflected upon engaging Germans in battle. They frequently remembered their first encounter and notable situations in the field involving enemy soldiers. William Katzenstein, for example, described in detail an eye-to-eye knife fight with a German soldier whom he eventually killed, saying that he often thought about this particular encounter.[66] Eric Hamberg's description of his first deadly

---

[65] The refugee was a 23 year old man who had been in the U.S. five years before returning to Europe as a soldier. The article is in German: Dieser Refugee-Soldat, Schütze einer Fliegenden Festung, hatte das aufregende Erlebnis der Beschiessung seiner eigenen Heimatstadt. Traurige und aufregende Empfindungen wühlten in ihm, als er aus dem Fenster seines Flugzeugs auf die Strassen, die er so gut gekannt hatte, hinunterblickte. Einen Augenblick, sagte er, habe ihn Heimweg gepackt, aber dann erinnerte er sich an seine Mutter, seinen Vater, und seine beiden Schwestern, die von den Nazis erschlagen worden waren und an seinen Bruder, den Gefangenenen der Gestapo. Und er tat seine Pflicht. Dieser Soldat war auf seinen eigenen Wunsch in den Kampf gegen Deutschland eingesetzt worden. Er überzeugte seinen vorgesetzten Offizier, dass er wegen seines persönlichen Hasses gegen die Nazis, die Chance, zurückzukommen und gegen sie zu kämpfen verdient habe." The language of this short piece is also a good reflection of the *Aufbau* journalist's understanding of the refugees in this war."Gestern Refugees—Heute Soldaten: Ruhmestaten von Immigranten in der amerikanischen Armee,"*Aufbau* 10 (December 22, 1944)

[66] "William Katzenstein," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 99f.

confrontation with Germans on a battlefield in Anzio, Italy shows the conflicting emotions that this had held for him:

> The first mortar shell I ever fired, when I came to Anzio, was a white phosphorus shell that landed in a ditch with five German soldiers in it. When some troops came back from the field, they said 'Hey, you fired the shell down there? Nice shooting buddy, you got five of 'em.' I felt a little queasy in a way, but then I figured that I am fighting a war and I am here because I wanted to be. Also, I felt that this was my job, and this was my way of coming back at the Germans for what they did to me. I didn't know at that time if my parents were still alive or not, because they were trapped still in Germany and living in a hell under the Nazis. [...] I had vivid memories of Kristallnacht a few year earlier in 1938 and the pleasure most Germans got out of burning synagogues and businesses, dragging Jews through the streets. Fighting the Germans went very deep for me; I wasn't going to give in an inch.[67]

Again, like the other two soldiers, Hamberg connected his personal past experience with Germans to the situation on the battlefield. While his words suggest that killing people was not easy for him, he felt justified in his actions because of what the Nazis had done to him and his family. Also, like the other two men, he drew encouragement from the fact that he was doing his 'duty' as part of the American army.

The refugee soldiers could be conscious about their particular identity in the battlefield in other situations as well. Language and accent, inevitably, were particularly strong identifiers. During the German counter-offensive at the Battle of the Bulge, the German military had dressed some of its units as American soldiers. Kurt Herrmann remembered that this was a dangerous situation for German Jewish refugees like him, who, often still having German accents, could be easily mistaken for the English-

---

[67] "Erich Hamberg," Ibid, 55

speaking German *Wehrmacht* soldiers in American uniforms.[68] The concern over German soldiers infiltrating their ranks lingered among American troops and refugee soldiers worried about a possible mix-up. This fear, as it turned out, was not unfounded. In one case, a German-Jewish refugee was killed at night on his way to the latrine, after having responded to the password call with a German accent.[69] However, one refugee soldier, Walter Eichelbaum, used this similarity and potential for confusion to the advantage of the U.S. Army. When he discovered a unit of Germans in disguise, Eichelbaum pretended to be part of another one of these units and, pretending he thought they were Americans, asked them to surrender. Surrender they did, thinking that they had nothing to fear from one of their own, only to subsequently "receive[...] the shock of their lives when their captors turned out to be Americans."[70] Here, Eichelbaum strategically used his 'Germanness' to be an effective American soldier, demonstrating that refugees could be particularly adept fighters against the Germans in this war, as many refugees had argued for so long that they would be.[71]

Off the Battlefield: Full Reversal of Power

For the refugees, facing German soldiers on the battle field was different than facing them after they had surrendered or had been captured and when they did not pose

---

[68] Interview with Kurt Herrmann, conducted by the author, Los Angeles: November 16, 2005

[69] See Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," 71

[70] Stern, "In the Service of American Intelligence," 466f.

[71] In their testimonies about the war, many refugees recalled situations during which their special knowledge and skills worked to the advantage of the American military. *Aufbau* also reported about the "heroic deeds" of refugee soldiers. See, for example, "Gestern Refugees—Heute Soldaten: Ruhmestaten von Immigranten in der amerikanischen Armee,"*Aufbau* 10 (December 22, 1944)

an imminent threat to their lives or that of their fellow comrades. While many refugees articulated that fighting Germany was tied to notions of revenge—and we can see how such emotions provided an incentive in battle—the testimonies of refugee soldiers rarely reveal acts of personal vengeance against German soldiers off the battlefield. Then, the relationships between the German Jewish refugee GIs and German soldiers were primarily characterized by the fact that the refugees were members of the victorious army and that the Germans were on the losing side. One German Jewish refugee recalled the impression this significant reversal of power between the two groups had on himself and on a German officer whom he captured:

> Without undue delay I told him, 'Hände hoch,' [hands up] pointed my rifle at the son of a bitch, and he turned ashen white. Then I told him, 'Ich bin ein deutscher Jude' (I'm a German Jew), and this man was in an absolute state of terror. He could not believe that one little *yid* should get him out of five million GIs. A rifle pointed at an arrogant officer becomes a powerful persuader. It was a good feeling.[72]

The power reversal of Germans and Jews, and the effects such demonstrations of it caused in Germans, was most satisfying to the refugees and may have constituted a sort of revenge for some. However, besides these psychological tactics, personal acts of revenge in form of physical violence taken out on soldiers who had surrendered or been captured are largely absent from the refugees' stories.[73] On the contrary, many refugees were cautious to not behave in vindictive ways and were especially sensitive when

---

[72] "Harold Baum," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 163f.

[73] It is certainly possible that more refugee soldiers engaged in such acts but did not talk about them in their interviews because they wanted to appear decent and humane.

Germans were killed in situations that did not constitute self-defense.[74] Even refugee soldiers like Eric Hamberg, who articulated that he "wanted to get back at the Germans," remembered that it upset him when American GIs killed two German soldiers who had surrendered.[75] Otto Stern recalls another moment of surrender that ended in a way that he disliked:

> When we moved into a gulley far from there, a German came out of nowhere with his hands up saying he wanted to surrender. Just as I was going to question him, the soldier next to me shot and killed him—a bullet right through the heart. I just hated that, and in fact, it is still on my mind. The last word the German said was, "*Mutter*" (Mother).[76]

Karl Goldschmith also remembered a similar incident, when a few young American soldiers killed fifteen POWs whom they had been ordered to guard. Goldsmith was deeply disturbed by this. He said: "In the pocket of one of the dead men, I found a letter to his wife about how happy he was that this mess was over and soon he would be home. My God, what horror that was. That was not war, it was murder."[77]

As can be glanced from these examples, it appears that American soldiers were in many situations quicker to kill Germans when they did not pose direct threats to them than the German Jewish refugees themselves. The testimonies suggest that the motivations for the refugees to abstain from killing Germans once they had surrendered or been taken prisoners derived from a certain sympathy for the German soldiers as well as the ideal they held of how one ought to act as a soldier.

---

[74] "Eric Boehm," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 226

[75] "Eric Hamberg," Ibid, 56

[76] "Otto Stern," Ibid, 265

[77] "Karl Goldsmith," Ibid, 114

First, the refugees' familiarity with Germans outside of the context of war affected the way the refugees acted toward German soldiers off the battlefield. They were able, perhaps more than many other American soldiers who had never met Germans without a *Wehrmacht* uniform and outside of the context of war, to more easily relate to the German soldiers as individual human beings rather than ubiquitous and anonymous enemies. Otto Stern's testimony, recalling that the last word of the German soldier was 'mother' and his remark that he was just about to question him when he was shot, also points to the significance of the refugees being able to understand the enemy's language, which clearly affected their relationship to the German soldiers.[78] Also, without forgetting the negative experiences they suffered in Germany, many refugees recalled that not all Germans had been Nazis and that not all soldiers were ideologically driven and fervent fighter's for Hitler's Reich.[79] The words the German soldier had written to his wife in the letter Goldsmith found in his pocket attest to this. In addition, the refugees, being in the position of power that the American military had granted them, were able to talk to the German soldiers once they had surrendered and been taken prisoners and to thus find out more about the soldiers' involvement with the regime. This ability to make distinctions between different Germans was an important incentive for the refugees to not engage in random vengeful acts. Also, because of their past, the refugees were sensitive to these

---

[78] Tom Tugend also pointed that it made difference that the refugees were able to talk to the German soldiers.

[79] "Fritz Weinschenk," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 66. Similary, Tom Tugend cited his experiences from Berlin where "it was much more livable for Jews than in a small town," and one would not be identified readily as a Jew when walking in the street. Further, he added that "there were many Germans, Aryans, who behaved very decently to us." Interview with Tom Tugend, conducted by the author, Los Angeles: April 28, 2012.

kinds of killings. They had seen the Nazis perform acts of violence targeted at people for no other reason than that they belonged to a certain group. Thus, as Karl Goldsmith commented on the indiscriminate killing of POWs without the chance of interrogating them, the refugee soldiers were sensitive to not cross the line between killing people in a war and murder.

This sensitivity on the side of the refugees can also be seen in a story Fritz Weinschenk related. Weinschenk described how an American soldier friend was sympathetic to his German Jewish background and assumed that he, desiring revenge, wanted any Germans dead. Weinschenk recalled what happened after their unit had confronted a number of *Wehrmacht* soldiers:

> About thirty Germans came out with their hands up. They were scared shitless. Their faces were white from all of the reverberations from the shelling of the cement in the bunker. We were terribly excited. My buddy, Wroblewski, a coal miner from Pennsylvania, was standing there with an M1 and a bayonet; he looked at me and said, "Fritz, just tell me, and I'll kill them."
> I said, "Don't kill them."[80]

Weinschenk then marched the Germans to the nearby beach. When he got there, "there was an infantryman from the 116th in a rage, cocking his M1 rifle and saying 'These sons of bitches killed all my buddies, and I'm going to shoot them.'" At that, Weinschenk shouted at the Germans to run away and told the GI to not shoot them. Weinschenk recalled: "I prevented a war crime. I didn't want to see that happen."[81]

---

[80] "Fritz Weinschenk," Karras (2006), 71

[81] Ibid, 72

Weinschenk's reference to having prevented a war crime demonstrates that it was important for him to act with human decency and according to certain rules of war. Having experienced a dictatorial system which had stripped people of basic human rights, many refugees were particularly eager to act according to the principles of the Geneva Convention that they had sworn an oath to.[82] Respecting human dignity was important to the refugees because they viewed it as setting themselves apart from the Nazis, with whom they most directly identified inhumanity, and because it simultaneously bound them closer to the U.S., with which they identified these principles most closely. Shooting German soldiers who had surrendered or been taken prisoners did not fit any of the categories that the refugees identified with. For them, it was more important to be better than the Nazis, to be decent and good American soldiers, than to indiscriminately engage in vengeful acts.

All these aspects came particularly to the fore in the refugees' treatment of German prisoners of war, with whom they had frequent and direct contact as they were in charge of overseeing POW camps and were mainly responsible for interrogating them. Even though the power reversal was paramount and most direct in this relationship, the interactions between refugee soldiers and German POWs were not characterized by acts of indiscriminate revenge either.[83] Rather, for the majority of the refugee soldiers, their

---

[82] Remy, "Deutsch-Jüdische Flüchtlinge," 201. Reports about how the Germans did not treat their POWs according to the Geneva Convention circulated in the American army. See an article "Die Nichteinhaltung der Genfer-Konvention durch die Deutschen ist heute eine notorische Tatsache" from after the VE-Day in *Aufbau* 11 (May 18, 1945)

[83] Fred Field's words show how this power reversal could take on different dimensions. Not only were the refugee soldiers interrogating German POWs, but they had weapons and sometimes even those that had formerly belonged to the POWs: "It felt damn good to interrogate Nazis, especially when we had a pistol (usually one of their Lugers) in a holster on us." "Fred Fields," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 233

position of power as American victors in relation to German prisoners of war created strong feelings of satisfaction, justice served, and gratitude. Kurt Klein put it this way:

> I enjoyed seeing Germans as prisoners because now the shoe was on the other foot. To see them bedraggled and kind of desperate to get out of the war felt very good. When I lived in Germany, they had the decision of life or death over us, and we could only stand with our hands tied. Now to see them in that state felt very good.[84]

The relationships that developed from this reversal of power depended on various factors, not least on the personalities and personal histories of both the refugees and the POWs. The prisoners came from different backgrounds and Kurt Shuler remembered that in his experience:

> There were two kinds of German prisoners of war, in Italy, most of them were drafted Bavarian farmers who just wanted to get back to their farm, they were, you know, not necessarily convinced Nazis but they, you know, they were drafted. And then they were the German paratroopers, which were an entirely different class of people, you didn't even want to get close to them, they wanted to kill you.[85]

The individual stance of the prisoners toward Hitler and the Nazi ideology revealed itself frequently during interrogations. The goal of the interrogations was to extract any information that could aid the Allied war effort, such as details about strategies, tactics and the state of the *Wehrmacht*, in terms of military might as well as morale. In addition, the interrogators also sought to get a better understanding of the state of morale of the civilian population in the Reich. Toward the end of the war, when knowledge about the Nazis' atrocities against European Jews and other 'enemies' was

---

[84] "Kurt Klein," Ibid, 279. See all others interviews collected in this volume as well.

[85] Interview with Kurt Shuler, conducted by the author, San Diego: February 25, 2013, Kurt Shuler did not change his name until after the war and served in the Army as Kurt Schulherr.

being confirmed, the interrogators also increasingly wanted to retrieve information that could lead to the identification and capturing of war criminals.[86] The treatment of the POWs during the interrogations differed, depending on their rank in the *Wehrmacht*, whether they belonged to the SS or other special units, and on how cooperative they were. Fred Fields recalled that when dealing with SS and higher ranking officers, for example, they "had to be rough with them, psychologically (and sometimes physically) and threatened them with everything under the sun."[87] While one of the most effective threats was the prospect of transferring a POW to the Soviet Army, some refugees were conscious that their German Jewish identity, coupled with their position of power as American soldiers, had a potentially terrifying effect on the POWs.[88] Thus, some refugees scared German soldiers by revealing that their interrogator, the 'American captor,' was a German Jewish refugee. Martin Selling played on his German Jewish identity when he told the POW he was interrogating why he spoke such good German: "I learned to speak such good German while I was in Germany, and I learned how to interrogate prisoners while I was an inmate at Dachau."[89] Upon hearing this, the POW not only lost control of his bowels but suddenly had answers to all of Selling's questions.[90] The results of these psychological intimidations were most satisfying to the refugee soldiers who utilized them and to some, may well have constituted a form of revenge. Only rarely did

---

[86] See Stern, "In the Service of American Intelligence," 464

[87] "Fred Fields," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 233

[88] Stern, "In the Service of American Intelligence," 465

[89] *The Ritchie Boys*. Cited in Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," 58f.

[90] Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," 59

intimidations and threats seem to have turned physical, however. Fred Fields recalled one such incident during an interrogation when he "let [his] anger fly ... [and] knocked a Sturmhauptführer's teeth out."[91]

In other situations and with other POWs, the relationship could be different. When Kurt Shuler interrogated those *Wehrmacht* soldiers who he identified as not very ideologically inclined Bavarian farmers, they were surprised that Shuler also spoke with a Bavarian accent and wondered what he was doing 'on the other side.' When he revealed that he was a Jew from Nuremberg, their response was: "lucky you, you got away from here."[92] Sometimes, refugees even recounted having had friendly relations with German POWs. Fritz Weinschenk, for example, who was in charge of overlooking POWs who worked for the American military, remembered rather fondly that the German POWs worked hard and that he had cordial interactions and interesting conversations with one particular German staff sergeant.[93]

Besides these stories about both friendly and hateful interactions, some refugee soldiers remembered how they were baffled by the submissiveness and even "meekness" they observed in many of the German POWs, even some of those who had formerly held powerful positions in the Reich.[94] John Brunswick who interrogated Julius Streicher, a virulent anti-Semite and publisher of the Nazi propaganda newspaper *Der Stürmer*, reported, for example, that Streicher "sounded so ridiculous and pathetic that I could not

---

[91] "Fred Fields," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 233

[92] Interview with Kurt Shuler, conducted by the author, San Diego: February 25, 2013

[93] "Fritz Weinschenk," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 72

[94] "John Brunswick," Ibid, 259.

even hate him."[95] According to *Aufbau* reporter Wilfred Hülse, who was a captain in the U.S. Army and had much contact with POWs through his position as a physician in a POW camp, this was a common character trait of the German soldiers.[96] In his experience, they displayed absolutely no sense of courage, lacked political judgment, were neither "capable nor willing to personally take on responsibility" for the future of Germany and were only motivated to please authority—regardless of its nature.[97] Hülse wrote that while the average soldier was not a fanatic Nazi, he did not object to the principles he had lived by over the past twelve years nor was he conscious of any crimes he had committed. Noting that he was surprised about "how little these people have learned," Hülse's words do not communicate feelings of hatred for the German POWs or calls for punishment or revenge. Rather, they elucidate a clear sense of this refugee soldier's feeling of moral superiority over them, and a good portion of contempt.[98]

The German Jewish Refugees as Occupiers: Encountering German Civilians

---

[95] Ibid. See also letter from Werner T. Angress to Curt Bondy, April 22, 1945. He wrote about Germans in general, POWs and civilians: "Their attitude towards us is unique. No dignity, no pride, but doggish civility and creeping recognition of the victor. You can't trust anybody. We had wonderful cases of deception and hypocracy [sic]. I told you already of people who suddenly bring out jewish [sic] ancestors, anti Nazi feeling (Nevertheless they were partymembers [sic] from 1934-1945) and pro American enthusiasm. (After we had come.)" *Heimat und Exil*, 207

[96] See also Kurt Shuler's description of German soldiers' bafflement in the face of their defeat (after the armistice): "I did encounter German soldiers, they were very strange, a very strange group of people, they couldn't believe they lost the war, they were standing in their uniform with all their medals on, by their tanks and everything, and they looked at us as, their attitude was, how did this ragtag group of Americans manage to beat us, they couldn't, they really couldn't understand it." Interview with Kurt Shuler, conducted by the author, San Diego: February 25, 2013

[97] Wilfred C. Hulse "Erfahrungen mit deutschen Kriegsgefangenen," *Aufbau* 11 (April 13, 1945)

[98] Ibid. This article appeared on the third page in *Aufbau* and thus presumably reached a considerable audience.

The refugees' first contact with Germans frequently happened outside of the territory of the 1933 borders of the German Reich. Entering German territory for the first time was an experience that held much symbolic meaning for many refugees. Otto Stern recalled for example: "I had a feeling of elation the first time I stepped on German soil when we crossed the Rhine to Mannheim and Ludwigshafen. I was not a victim but a captor and the feeling was unbelievable."[99] The destruction Allied bombs had wrought on German cities caused a variety of reactions from the refugees. Edmund Schloss said that for him, "[i]t was a revelation to see what we had done to Germany; I was elated when I saw the German cities destroyed, because I thought that was justice and that they got what they deserved."[100] Other refugees, especially when they found their former home town destroyed, had more mixed feelings, often ruminating on the destruction and the brutality Hitler and his regime had brought upon so many different people. Still, the refugees put the destruction into the broader context of the war and German atrocities, something most Germans did not do.[101] It was particularly this realization—that many Germans could not see beyond their own suffering and did not accept responsibility—that characterized the refugees' relationship with German civilians. While the refugees experienced satisfaction over their position of power as victorious American soldiers and employees of the military government, and in these positions were able to identify and

---

[99] "Otto Stern," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 128

[100] "Edmund Schloss," Ibid, 175

[101] See, Walter Reed, for example: "Now I must say that I deplore the destruction in all of those places—of the private citizens' homes, assets, and the factories—and the displacement of the people in them. On the other hand, I can mentally separate my regret of that from my realization that if the Nazis hadn't set out to destroy other places—such as Stalingrad, Soviet Union, or Coventry, England—their places wouldn't have been burned. They started it." Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 191f.

oust certain Nazis, they also were forced to realize that they were limited in their capacity to make the German people acknowledge their wrongdoings. This caused great frustration on the side of the refugees, which, rather than express itself in indiscriminate acts of revenge on German civilians, overwhelmingly translated into feelings of contempt for the Germans.

Toward the end of the war and in its immediate aftermath, the American military often assigned German Jewish refugees to positions in which they had a lot of interaction with German civilians. Such positions could involve taking over administrative or organizational tasks in a German town or community, for which the refugees were well-equipped due to their knowledge of the language and familiarity with general structures in German society. Ludwig Mühlfelder, for example, a refugee soldier originally from Thuringia, was assigned to organize accommodations for American troops.[102] In this position, he ordered Germans to leave their homes to make them available for American soldiers who stayed there temporarily before moving farther East. When carrying out this task, it was important to Mühlfelder to not act toward the Germans in ways that could have been compared to actions of the Nazis. Thus, he always told German civilians to not leave valuables behind in their homes, so they would not get stolen. While Mühlfelder received criticism from his fellow soldiers for treating the German people too humanely, he insisted that American soldiers ought to act honorably and decently. Again, in his case, Mühlfelder's own experience with the Nazis did not lead to acts of revenge but made him want to act morally superior to them. While holding up these standards for his own

---

[102] Mühlfelder, *Weil ich übriggeblieben bin*, 69

behavior in his interactions with Germans, however, Mühlfelder did have a strong interest in finding out which Germans had been Nazis.[103]

Identifying Nazis in local governments was one of the major tasks German Jewish refugees were assigned to in Germany. Henry Kissinger described this role:

> After that combat phase was over, I was assigned to regional Germany, a county in the American zone of occupation near Frankfurt with a population of about two thousand. My job was to maintain the security of that area and arrest all Nazis above a certain level. I had the right to arrest anybody I wanted for security reasons, which was a strange reversal of roles. Of course, no German ever claimed to have been a Nazi.[104]

This was a problem that the majority of refugees encountered. Tom Tugend, for instance, recalled going from village to village as part of a counter-intelligence unit searching for Nazis. In every place people denied having been Nazis, while pointing their finger at their neighbors. Then, Tugend said:

> Finally, I went into a small town in Bavaria and everybody said, 'well, there is one Nazi, he is a 80 year old blind poet and he is a *vergrämter* [antagonized] Nazi.' So I went to the guy, and he was blind, and said: 'your neighbors maintain you...,' and he said: 'yes I'm *Nationalsozialist* and I am proud of it and I believe in Hitler' and so on. So I went back to my Headquarters and said, 'I think I deserve to get a medal because I've discovered the only Nazi in all of Germany.'[105]

Many years later Tugend told this story with a kind of amusement. At the time, however, this was an exceedingly frustrating experience. Klaus Mann captured this sentiment in an article he wrote for the Army newspaper *Stars and Stripes* in 1945:

---

[103] Mühlfelder, *Weil ich übriggeblieben bin*, 69

[104] "Henry Kissinger," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 120

[105] Interview with Tom Tugend, conducted by the author, Los Angeles: April 28, 2012. See also interview with Kurt Shuler, who said: "They were all lying through their teeth. That bothered me more than anything because I could tell they were lying and I told them they were lying." Interview with Kurt Shuler, conducted by the author, San Diego: February 25, 2013

> The German people realize that they have lost the war, but they seem incapable of grasping the moral implications of their present debacle. Allied observers, both correspondents and soldiers, are struck and irritated by the German's [sic]complacency, self-pity and ignorance. They don't seem to regret anything, except their own unpleasant plight. They don't see why they, of all people, should have to suffer so much. What have we done to deserve this?' they will ask you—all wide-eyed naiveté and bland innocence.[106]

Thus, the power position the refugees found themselves in had its clear limits, as they were frequently unable to make Germans acknowledge their responsibility and wrongdoings. However, in certain cases, refugees used their own knowledge to circumvent this kind of German denial and some German Jewish refugee soldiers returned to their former hometowns "to look for the Nazis [they] remembered."[107] Karl Goldsmith said that: "As the war finished, I immediately put in a request to be involved with the Denazification of my hometown. I wanted to do that so badly. They kicked the shit out of me so much as a kid."[108] Goldsmith was successful in receiving this transfer to his hometown Eschwege and was indeed able to put the main Nazi perpetrators from the town in jail. In this way, Goldsmith got back at specific Germans who he had had personal experiences with but he did so within the framework of the Allied occupation program of denazification and through its official channels. During his time as military governor of the city, the relationship between him and the local population appears to

---

[106] Cited by Krauss, "Eroberer oder Rückkehrer?" 72. On Germans' exclusive focus on their own suffering in the early postwar, see, for example: Robert Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Fede*ral Republic of Germany (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), Elizabeth Heineman, "The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," *American Historical Review* 101.2 (April, 1996): 354-395

[107] See "Fred Fields," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 234

[108] "Karl Goldsmith," Ibid, 114.

have been fairly tense. While Goldsmith described himself as a pragmatist in this position, he also said that he lived very well while there. His neighbor calling him the "uncrowned king" of the town suggests that Goldsmith may have made extensive use of the authority invested in him.[109] Also, Goldsmith's mother, after returning from a trip to Eschwege years later, told her son: "Karl, you can never go back to Eschwege; they'll kill you."[110] Goldsmith himself explained about his time in Eschwege: " I doubt if my father would have approved, but I did not compromise or bring dishonor to my adopted country or family."[111] Clear is that Goldsmith was highly frustrated with the local's denial as to their own role in the situation they found themselves in. He recounted being approached by many people who had known him from before the war, asking him for special favors for their families. Goldsmith said that his answers to such requests were always: "'I'm sorry, I cannot do anything about it.'"[112] He then added:

> What was I supposed to do, inconvenience one miserable German for another miserable German? I was flabbergasted that these people had the temerity to face me and say these things to me, when they knew what they themselves had done to me and my family. Forget about all the other people who burnt up in concentration camps.[113]

Karl Goldsmith was not the only refugee soldier who held an authority position over his former fellow towns people. Kurt Shuler, who was born in Nuremberg, returned to the city as an American soldier to look for his relatives. He was lucky to find his

---

[109] Ibid, 115

[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid.

cousin alive who had survived the war in a "privileged marriage" to a non-Jewish German man.[114] When he arrived in Nuremberg on the day of the armistice, Shuler was "essentially the only American representative" in the city. He had not intended to take on any authority, however, he recalled that because he was the only American there at the time and because he had local knowledge and trustworthy connections, until the Allied Military Government arrived, "for several weeks I really ran the city. So waiting for the real people to come and because of my cousin who knew everybody, who knew who was who, I was able to get rid of the main Nazis." As such, Shuler, who emphasized that this was not about revenge for him, coincidentally ended up executing positions of power over the German population, using his local connections to help in the denazification process.[115]

Like Kurt Shuler, many refugee soldiers asked for permission to return to their former hometowns in order to find relatives.[116] Walter Reed was one of those who hoped to find out something about the whereabouts of his family in his town of Mainstockheim. There, however, "[l]ocal residents knew only that the Jews had been 'sent to a labor camp in the East' several years before."[117] While there were a few refugee soldiers who were reunited with family members that had survived the war in hiding, the majority did not

---

[114] Interview with Kurt Shuler, conducted by the author, San Diego: February 25, 2013

[115] When I presented parts of this chapter at a colloquium at UCSD, one reader pointed out that revenge may have been on the mind of Shuler's relatives.

[116] Shuler recounted in his interview with me that: "... right after the war, in the days after the armistice, I met a number of people like myself, refugees from Nürnberg with whom I went to school, who came, who are in the Army, who came to Nürnberg to look for their relatives, if any left. And the one thing I do remember about talking to them, the question of revenge never came up. They were looking for survivors to see whether they could bring them back to America ..."

[117] "Walter Reed," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 192

find any relatives alive.[118] Even refugees who did not have family members left in Germany frequently went back to their former home towns, driven by a certain nostalgia for the place they had grown up in and to see their former home. Most refugees recalled going back as a very emotional experience, depending on the individual's particular histories with the place. Guy Stern remembered, for example:

> When I arrived in the town, the town had been terribly destroyed. I was so nervous ... . It was a very moving moment. I knew every street. I was very much emotionally connected with the city ... . And the childhood memories, memories of my youth, I began to re-live it all. It made me sad that I was coming back home this way.[119]

Confronted with the physical sites of his past life, for Guy Stern, the pain of having lost his home could not be erased by the fact that he was coming back as a victor. For another refugee soldier returning home evoked negative feelings of a different kind:

> I was to drive back to Weinheim, a place which I left in disgust and which I never expected to see again in all my life. Fate wanted it differently. ... I looked around and although everything looked familiar, it looked strange, cold and repulsive to me. The spirit, the sentiment, the atmosphere of former years removed.[120]

The confrontation with the familiar places evoked memories and emotions tied to a range of positive and negative experiences. What came to the fore and what emotions took precedence depended on a variety of factors, including the personal histories of the refugees and the interactions with the people in their former home towns.

---

[118] See two stories in *Aufbau* about soldiers reuniting with family members. One young man found his mother in Brussels: "Die Mutter wiedergefunden" *Aufbau* 11 (January 19, 1945). Another soldier found his parents, who had been hidden by a friend, in Cologne: "Die Eltern in Köln wiedergefunden" *Aufbau* 11 (March 16, 1945),

[119] *The Ritchie Boys*. Dir. Christian Bauer. Tangram Productions, 2004. Cited in Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," 74

[120] "Wiedersehen mit der Vaterstadt," report quoting Ernst Braun, *Aufbau* 11 (May 11, 1945)

Whether the refugee soldiers and the inhabitants of their hometowns had friendly interactions depended not only upon their past histories but also on the specific context of the postwar situation in which they met. As such, while there could be agreement and friendly exchange over one issue, there might be dispute over another.[121] Studies on early postwar Jewish and non-Jewish German encounters have emphasized that Germans avoided being drawn into conversations about Jewish persecution and annihilation and demonstrated ignorance and innocence, while focusing on their own suffering.[122] This was particularly true when Jews returned to live in Germany but the refugee soldiers faced such German reactions as well. Most interactions between the refugee soldiers and the locals seemed to have been dominated by the latter's consciousness that the refugees held a position of power—even if they were not officially in charge of the town. This realization could express itself in different ways. John Stern recalled that he found it interesting that "quite a few people welcomed" him.[123] However, he also recounted that this welcoming could take on quite ingratiating ways, likely because many Germans, while not openly acknowledging guilt, had a sense of the injustice that had been done and feared retribution. Stern recalled that a prevalent fear was that he had come back to take

---

[121] There are two current dissertation projects that analyze the relationships between Jews and non-Jews in Germany after the war. Froukje Demant's dissertation is on the relationships of Jews and non-Jews in rural German-Dutch border regions after WWII and Anna Koch's research highlights interactions between Jews and non-Jews in Germany and Italy.

[122] Cordula Lissner, *Den Fluchtweg zurückgehen. Remigration nach Nordrhein und Westfalen 1945-1955* (Essen: Klartext, 2006), Moses Moskowitz, "The Germans and the Jews: Postwar Report; The Enigma of German Irresponsibility," *Commentary* 2 (July-December 1946), cited in Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 7. Irmela von der Lühe , Axel Schildt, and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *"Auch in Deutschland waren wir nicht wirklich zu Hause:" Jüdische Remigration nach 1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008)

[123] "John Stern," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 129. See also the report of refugee soldier Walter Hellendall "Als amerikanischer Soldat in der deutschen Vaterstadt...Erlebnis in München-Gladbach" *Aufbau* 11 (April 6, 1945)

away people's property. Thus, one woman remarked to him: "You never looked like a Jew. You were always so nice," hinting at that sentiment and also illustrating an astonishing lack of comprehension that existed among many Germans at the time. Another refugee soldier who was stationed in Berlin in the summer of 1945 described, with repulsion, the "bootlicking ways" in which the German people were trying to make friendly contacts with the Allied soldiers.[124] He wrote: "Girls are everywhere. They practically offer themselves to us." This was disconcerting to him, not only because he was surprised about their good looks, "impeccable" dress and make-up (he wrote "Are we in liberated Paris or in conquered Berlin?") but also because this all happened in the immediate context of the Holocaust: "and we try to look stern and to remember Buchenwald and Dachau. ..."[125]

Other refugee soldiers observed that there were some Germans who would suddenly come up with Jewish ancestors or would tell stories to the returning refugee about how they had helped out different Jews in their hometown during the Third Reich.[126] Kurt Shuler recalled about his interactions with Germans: "What bothered me more than anything else was that everybody was lying. You know, when Hitler had these plebiscites, 99.4% voted '*ja.*' After the war, 99.4 % voted '*nein.*' They were all lying through their teeth."[127]

---

[124] M/Sgt. Charles Gregor, "Fahrt durch Berlin," (based on letter from July 14) *Aufbau* 11 (August 17, 1945)

[125] Ibid. Atina Grossmann also uses this example to speak about fraternization, see *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 75

[126] See letter from Werner T. Angress to Curt Bondy *Heimat und Exil* (2006), 207 and Ibid.

[127] Interview with Kurt Shuler, conducted by the author, San Diego: February 25, 2013

Yet, among all the denial that was prevalent in these early postwar encounters between refugee soldiers and non-Jewish Germans, some refugees were able—empowered by their position as American soldiers, their familiarity with the people, and knowing that they did not have to stay to live there—to make Germans engage with their own anti-Jewish actions. When Otto Stern returned to his former hometown, he found that the Jewish cemetery had partly been turned into a corn field. Angered about the destruction, he confronted the mayor, whom he had known before the war, to rectify this issue. When the mayor insisted that it was difficult to find people who could do the job, essentially trying to evade the situation, Stern told him: "'If it's not done by the time I come back, you'll do it personally while I point a rifle at you.' Needless to say," Stern goes on, "by the time I did eventually return, the cemetery was in good shape...."[128] While such incidents might have given the refugees momentary personal satisfaction, the fact that such rectifying actions as in the case of the mayor had to be forced on the Germans demonstrated to the majority of the refugees that they did not belong there. Learning about the full extent of the atrocities against European Jews reinforced this feeling.

Holocaust

Throughout the Allies' invasion, the German Jewish refugee soldiers were very sensitive to the situation of the Jews in Europe. Recounting their war experiences, refugee soldiers often made particular mentioning of when they encountered Jews in

---

[128] Ibid. The state of the Jewish cemeteries in their hometowns or towns where they had family were a major concern for almost all the refugees.

territories that had been under German occupation, mostly Jews who had survived the war in hiding. The refugee soldiers frequently tried to provide them with food or other items that could be useful to them.[129] During their time in the army, refugees were not aware of the full extent of the crimes against European Jews. News of deportations and ghettos had been in the American papers since late 1939/40 when the Nazis started to deport Jews from cities in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Austria. Massacres of Jews were also reported on, and *Aufbau* in particular paid great attention to what was happening to Europe's Jews. Depending on when they joined the army, refugees may have had some idea about atrocities and may have given those more or less credence.[130] However, while in Europe, some refugee soldiers caught glimpses of the bigger picture during interrogations of German POWs. Harry Lorch recalled that he got some soldiers to admit to him that "there were things happening to Jews in Russia that were unimaginable."[131] Toward the end, and in the immediate aftermath of the war, refugee soldiers also found out about the atrocities by coming across survivors. Jerry Bechhofer, for example, met a woman and her daughter during a Shabbat service in Augsburg, who told him that they had escaped the gas chambers; an incident which Lorch recalled as "the first eye-opener" for him.[132] Refugees were also part of units that liberated concentration camps or that entered them shortly thereafter. While the encounter with the horrors were shocking and

---

[129] See multiple interviews in Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, which contain references to meeting Jews in different places in Europe. Some refugees recalled celebrating holidays and shabbat with Jewish residents.

[130] The next chapter provides some more detail on how the American press covered what was happening to European Jewry.

[131] "Harry Lorch," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 290

[132] "Jerry Bechhofer," Ibid, 42

unfathomable for all, the refugees had to fear to find family members or people they knew among the dead.[133] The realization of the extent and extremeness of the atrocities against the European Jews made some refugee soldiers question Germany's future. In late April of 1945, Werner Angress, who had witnessed the liberation of some concentration camps, wrote in a letter to a friend:

> I am quite objective in my judgment; I am more than ever convinced that the German nation stinks, that they are a rotten bunch. Granted that not all of them are criminals, but their majority is below all standards. ... Bo, if they erase Germany's boundaries off the map, nobody would be sorry here. This state, this nation has forfeited their right to exist.[134]

Similarly, another refugee soldier remembered that upon seeing Buchenwald concentration camp in April 1945: "I made a recommendation to the War Department. To dig a big hole from Elbe to the Rhine, plow it over, and forget about Germany. I know this sounds horrible, but that's the way I felt."[135] While not all refugee soldiers felt this strongly about Germany, when witnessing the reality of the atrocities against Europe's Jews and the behavior of the German population in the face of it, the majority of them saw no future for themselves in their former home country. As they held sentiments of contempt toward Germany, their appreciation of the United States intensified and reconfirmed in most refugees the feeling of belonging to America.[136] Their proclamations of loyalty and the gratitude that they had felt and demonstrated ever after they had come

---

[133] See Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," 77

[134] Letter from Werner T. Angress to Curt Bondy, April 22, 1945, *Heimat und Exil* (2006), 207

[135] Hans Spear in *The Ritchie Boys*, cited by Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," 77.

[136] See also Krauss, "Eroberer oder Rückkehrer? and Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," who come to the same conclusion.

to the United States took on another dimension of meaning when they learned about the fate of Europe's Jews.[137]

At the same time, they were also grateful that the United States had given them the chance to take part in the fight to end Nazism. The testimonies of German Jewish refugees reveal an overwhelming feeling of pride of having been part of the American military and of having contributed to the defeat of the enemy and ending the Nazi terror. To individually differing degrees, the refugees also felt personal satisfaction at having gotten back at the Germans (taken at large) for what they had done to them. William Katzenstein wrote in his memoir: "I was more than overjoyed, if not totally ecstatic, that I had been a conquering soldier. I felt that I got my revenge for my second cousin, Rosel Faist, many cousins more removed, and murdered friends."[138] Katzenstein's war memories, like those of most other refugee soldiers, did not include stories about him carrying out acts of personal vengeance against Germans. It becomes clear that for him, revenge meant returning and defeating the Germans as an American soldier. Calling it "justice served" or in one case "my way of *Wiedergutmachung* (repayment)," many other refugees shared this satisfaction.[139]

For many refugees, any nostalgia they may have still held for the old country faded after they experienced the destruction that the Nazis and war had brought upon it. In a letter to his parents—who like many of the older generation may have mourned the

---

[137] While one could also imagine that some refugees felt anger and rage that the Americans had not taken in more refugees or joined the war earlier, there are no references to this in the testimonies used for this chapter.

[138] "William Katzenstein," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 100

[139] See, for example "Eric Hamberg," Ibid, 59f

loss of the old country more intensively and had greater difficulties adjusting to a new life in the United States—Walter Spiegel wrote: "You have to have been through the ruins of Europe to appreciate America, and I realize more than ever the value of belonging there, at least I have a lot to look forward to—a wholesome security and a nice way of life."[140] In contrast to Germany, the United States offered them a future. Reminiscing the end of the war and his return to America, Karl Goldsmith said:

> Saying I wanted to kiss the ground is putting it mildly, because it was only at the time when we really did know how lucky we were that we went through that war and survived. We returned as vets and were a different breed. Our innocence was gone. We were all better students because we had a greater sense of purpose. I was an ex-GI, had the GI Bill money in my pocket, and I bought a 1930 Chevy for $125. I had wheels and returned to Cornell University to finish my studies.
>
> I really think I tried very hard to do what I consider as fulfilling the debt. I think I paid back a little bit to the good old country, and what I was given was a new life and future. My reward for going to war was a free country.[141]

Having fought in the United States Army solidified the refugees' position in the United States. Like Goldsmith, many of the young men were able to go take advantage of the G.I. Bill and thus received an education many of them would not have been able to afford otherwise.[142]

---

[140] Letter from Walter Spiegel to Julian and Kathe Spiegel, December 17, 1945, Personal Files of Joshua Franklin, New York, cited by Franklin, "Victim Soldiers," 77-78

[141] Karl Goldsmith, Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 116

[142]See, for example, Harold Baum: "I was, and still am, eternally grateful to America. After the war, I was able to receive help under the GI Bill of Rights. I went to college, medical school, and made the grade." Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 165. This is not to say that returning from war and adjusting to civilian life was easy. See an article in Aufbau which discusses the difficulties this entailed for many returning soldiers: Hans M. Salzmann, "Vom Soldaten zum Zivilisten," *Aufbau* 11 (July 6, 1945) and Hans M. Salzmann, "Die Sorge um den Arbeitsplatz," *Aufbau* 11 (July 13, 1945)

While most refugees returned to the U.S. after the end of their service, a small number of refugees stayed in Germany to work for the American military government.[143] Fritz Weinschenk, for example, stayed because he had "an intense (though not necessarily favorable) interest in the Germans and what was happening to them."[144] Assigned mainly to work on legal and denazification matters—most well known is their participation in the Nuremberg trials—refugees were also employed in civil administration, finance, economy, manpower, and plans and operations divisions.[145] In addition, some refugees were entrusted with rebuilding German culture institutions, such as the German press and German libraries.[146] In general, only very few émigrés appeared to have been employed in high ranking positions, likely resulting from the fact that American authorities were concerned that they would either be too friendly with the Germans or too hostile.[147] The relationships between the refugees working for the American occupation government and Germans during this immediate aftermath of open hostilities was complex. Weinschenk, without emphasizing his special position, recalled that "[a]t first ... we of the occupation

---

[143] In the early summer of 1945, *Aufbau* received numerous letters from readers who were interested to "put their experience in Germany in the service of the Allied military governments." The American authorities in Germany were disinclined to put people in charge who had been born in Germany—Jewish or not—amongst other things because they felt they were too emotionally involved and might become targets in Germany. Reporting on this matter, an *Aufbau* journalist did not only name some refugees who were already employed in important positions in Germany but also wrote that this desire to want to serve in Germany was legitimate, as it meant serving the United States. "Fachleute bei der Okkupation: Die Verwendung von deutschsprachigen US Bürgern," *Aufbau* 11 (June 22, 1945)

[144] "Fritz Weinschenk," Karras, *The Enemy I Knew*, 74

[145] This example is based on research on the military government in Bavaria. Krauss, "Eroberer oder Rückkehrer?" 75. For the participation in the Nuremberg trials, see for example, Ernst C. Stiefel and Frank Mecklenburg, *Deutsche Juristen im amerikanischen Exil. 1933-1950* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991)

[146] See Guy Stern, The Jewish Exiles in the Service of US Intelligence: The Post-War Years." *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 40 (1995) for specific examples of Jewish refugees working in U.S. Intelligence after the war.

[147] Krauss "Eroberer oder Rückkehrer?" 74, see also Habe, *All my Sins*, 365

looked down on them [the Germans] for what they had done."[148] Nevertheless, there also existed a belief in some refugees that certain Germans could be entrusted with re-building Germany and that they should have some freedom to do so.[149] At the same time, many Germans continued to operate in a mode of ignorance about their own role in the realities of the war and its aftermath and harbored resentment against the occupiers and, as Hans Habe pointed out, seemed to have particularly disliked taking instructions from former country men in American uniforms.[150] In general, the refugees' time spent in Germany working for the military government and sometimes in closer cooperation with German civilians did not propel them to want to stay and live in Germany again.[151] Also, the positions they were employed in did not guarantee a future in Germany. In 1947, the vast majority of refugees were dismissed from service in the American occupation government, apparently because they were viewed as "insufficiently 'impartial and objective'" in their actions toward German civilians.[152] Even though there are no reports of any acts that could have been described as such, notions of Jewish vengeance carried on, in American and German circles, in the early years after the end of the war.

---

[148] Ibid.

[149] See Hans Habe, for example, who was angry about the "Morgenthau spirit" he felt existed in Washington. Habe also criticized the double-standard of the American victors in dealing with the Germans, who, for example "condemn[ed] soldiers and re-employ[ed] Gestapo agents." Habe, *All my Sins,* 354, 366

[150] Hans Habe, *Im Jahre Null*, 138, cited by Krauss, "Eroberer oder Rückkehrer?" 73

[151] See Krauss, "Eroberer oder Rückkehrer?" 80f.

[152] Novick, *Holocaust in American Life*, 91, fn 21. See also Stern, "The Jewish Exiles in the Service of US Intelligence," 61 for more information on General Lucius Clay's instructions on not to renew contracts and not hire "anyone who has been naturalized since 1933," which essentially targeted German Jewish refugees.

Conclusion

Only a few years after they had left Germany, some German Jewish refugees returned to the continent as American soldiers. Germany continued to affect their lives, this time in particular because they were immigrants to the United States and as such subject to the draft. As we have seen, many refugees embraced the opportunity to join the fight against the Nazis and also saw it as a great opportunity to show their loyalty to the new country. Coming back to Europe and Germany as American soldiers and victors gave most of them great satisfaction which was particularly meaningful in direct interactions with Germans. Abstract notions of revenge that spurred many refugees to fight did not translate into individual acts of vengeance, however. Encountering German and Germany, they were faced with complex realities of their past, that of a good life before the Nazis and one of persecution after they had come to power. In their interactions with Germans, they were guided by both, these experiences of the past and their present status as American soldiers. It was particularly their desire to distinguish themselves from the Nazis and act as honorable soldiers–something they perceived to be a core of the democratic world they were fighting for—that led to the absence of vengeful acts toward Germans. Further, the Germans they encountered were frequently people who, instead of invoking feelings of anger, invoked feelings of contempt. In this way, the soldiers' military superiority was matched by feelings of moral superiority. The refugees' interactions with Germans thus affected the way they wanted to see themselves. In this way, their soldier experience solidified them in America, not only because of the bond they experienced with other Americans, but also because their interactions with Germans

and the destruction they encountered did not offer very much for them to long for or identify with.

Chapter 5

German Jewish Refugees and the Discourse on Postwar Germany, 1942-1945

Introduction

While German Jews who fought as soldiers in the American Armed Forces during the Second World War frequently came into personal contact with Germans, the great majority of those refugees who remained behind in the U.S. (those who were too old or young to take part in active military duty as well as the majority of women) also engaged with Germany during this time. Though naturally more indirect, this engagement occurred, as it did with the soldiers, at the same time as the refugees became more Americanized. In the years from late 1942 to the end of the war, many refugees, particularly those who were young enough to join the workforce, became naturalized and increasingly more integrated into American life through their war effort activities and participation in American Jewish organizational life. At the same time, because of the ongoing war, the refugees' attention was continually directed toward the European continent and Germany. While the majority of the refugees saw their future in the United States, the events and outcome of the war had a more immediate significance for them than for the majority of Americans. First, most of the refugees still had family members and friends in Europe and they were thus sensitive to the situation of the Jews still there.

Further, discussions about whether and how the refugees' future was connected to Germany arose within the community.

This chapter shows that during the last three years of the war, the refugees' relationship with Germany was formed by the news about the atrocities against European Jews that reached the United States, the refugees' own experiences within Germany before emigration, and the larger discussions about Germany's future that took place in the United States and abroad. By analyzing how German Jewish refugees, and particularly leaders within the organized community, participated and positioned themselves in discussions about Germany's future after the anticipated victory of the Allies, I demonstrate that the refugees' relationship to Germany was also always intrinsically connected to their position in the United States, or their perception thereof. This chapter draws heavily on the discourse about punishment, restitution, and postwar Germany in *Aufbau*. Besides reporting about these topics as they were being discussed by Allied government institutions, the U.N., and American journalists and intellectuals, the newspaper—with a circulation of almost 30,000 copies during this time—was the major public forum in which refugees and émigrés exchanged their opinions on these matters.[1] The discussion in *Aufbau* is complemented by archival materials from the Jewish Club of 1933 in Los Angeles which show how these issues were addressed on the local community level. Together, these sources represent some of the most prominent and strong voices from the refugee community.

---

[1] Elke-Vera Kotowski (ed.), *Aufbau: Sprachrohr, Heimat, Mythos: Geschichte(n) einer deutsch-jüdischen Zeitung aus New York 1934 bis heute* (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2011), 66

On the American Home Front

As the third chapter has shown in greater detail, the organized refugee community put tremendous emphasis on rallying refugees to participate in activities—from civilian defense to the purchasing of war bonds—that contributed to the war effort. As with the soldiers' efforts, these activities were important for the refugees because they allowed them simultaneously to defend their newfound home, project their loyalty to America at large, and to contribute to the defeat of the common German enemy. Local groups such as the New York New World Club and the Los Angeles Jewish Club of 1933 organized activities to support the well-being of refugee soldiers, such as letter writing campaigns, and sent them issues of *Aufbau* and packages containing cigarettes, sweets, and "home made cookies."[2] Besides the local efforts, *Aufbau*, the American Federation Federation of Jews from Central Europe—the umbrella organization of German Jewish refugees in the U.S.—and the Immigrants' Conference joined forces to centrally organize and coordinate the community's war effort. Under the motto "We know the Enemy—America's War is Our War," they formed the Immigrants' Victory Council that worked to intensify the cooperation between the immigrants and American agencies, particularly the U.S. Citizens Service Corps, in which many refugees served home front needs.

Furthermore, refugees on the home front put their special knowledge about the German enemy in the service of the Allied war effort, as did refugee soldiers. For example, in late 1942, the editorial staff of *Aufbau* initiated a "Map Drive" and called on its readers to send maps, photographs and any information that might be useful to the

---

[2] See for example *Aufbau* 9 (August 20, 1943)

Allied military in its operations against Germany.[3] This gave older refugees in particular an opportunity to contribute to the war effort by supplying information where they were unable to join the fighting. Ludwig Schulherr, for example, who was in his sixties during the war, had specific knowledge concerning the location and construction of hydraulic dams in Germany, because he had worked in this area before emigration. He presented his intelligence to the Navy and the Office of Naval Research. For older people like Schulherr—who had great troubles adjusting to life in the United States, having come from a prestigious position in Nuremberg to being a "nobody" in his new city of Atlanta, without a social circle, let alone friends—this was a positive experience, one of purpose and belonging.[4]

While many refugees individually became more involved in American organizational life through war effort activities during this time, refugee organizations also became increasingly represented in American Jewish institutions. On the national level, the largest organization of German Jewish refugees, the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe (AMFED), became a member organization of the American Jewish Conference in 1943. One AMFED official recalled the importance of this development:

> Our joining the American Jewish Conference was so important for us, because at that time we were still only an almost unknown

---

[3] See collection of articles in "Aktion Landkarte," Will Schaber (ed.), *Aufbau Reconstruction: Dokumente einer Kultur im Exil* (New York: Overlook Press, 1972), 57ff

[4] Interview with Kurt Shuler, conducted by the author, San Diego: February 25, 2013

> Landsmannschaft and this brought us at once into personal contacts with the large existing American organizations and their leading figures.[5]

In Los Angeles, meanwhile, members of the city's Jewish Community Council voted a representative of the (German) Jewish Club of 1933 onto their Board of Directors for the first time. Though the club had worked with different Los Angeles Jewish organizations since its establishment, it had been on an ad hoc basis regarding issues that concerned refugees specifically. Now, however, the refugees were officially represented in the Los Angeles Jewish community and participated in decision-making processes about L.A. Jewish life at large. This institutional acknowledgement was considered highly satisfactory by the community.[6] Being part of the larger organizations connected the refugees, granted them greater access and influence and thus established them more firmly in the United States.

Concern about Europe's Jews

At the same time as the refugees became more integrated into American life, their attention was constantly drawn to the European theatre of war and particularly the situation of European Jews. Refugees in the United States were able to follow the events of the war closely through the American press. *Aufbau* was a particularly important news

---

[5] The original statement was made by Herman Muller in German in a report from May 24, 1965: "Dieser Beitritt zur American Jewish Conference war für uns, die wir damals noch eine fast unbekannte Landsmannschaft waren, deshalb so wichtig, weil sie uns mit einem Mal in einen persönlichen Kontakte mit den bestehendend großen amerikanischen Organisationen und ihren führenden Persönlichkeiten brachte." Susanne Feld, "'American Federation of Jews from Central Europe.' Von der Landsmannschaft deutsch-jüdischer Einwanderer zur amerikanischen Organisation," *Menora: Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte* 7 (1996): 134

[6] Dr. Siegried Bernstein became part of board of directors of Los Angeles Jewish Community Council in early 1944. "Dawn of Liberation," *Aufbau* 10 (May 12, 1944) In Los Angeles, Club members also founded a working group for American-Jewish history.

source, dedicating a large portion of its coverage to what was happening in the European theatre, and paying particular attention to the situation of the Jews in German occupied territories. From the beginning of the war, *Aufbau*'s reporting about the situation of the Jews in Europe was extensive, and its journalists wrote about deportations, ghettos, concentration camps, and mass killings of Jews. While the general American press also reported on the situation of the Jews, it did not do so as regularly, and not usually as a matter for the front pages, as increasingly was the case for *Aufbau. Aufbau* journalists also generally gave more credence, or at least more immediate credence, to reports of atrocities than many other papers did. This was the case, for example, with the news about the implementation of the 'final solution' that reached the United States during the fall and winter of 1942. In November 1942, *Aufbau* published an article concerning the public statement Reform Rabbi Steven S. Wise, then President of the World Jewish Congress, had made about the Nazis carrying out an "extermination campaign" to entirely liquidate" the Jews in Nazi occupied Europe.[7] Wise emphasized that this information had been confirmed by the State Department.[8] Yet despite this confirmation, most major American newspapers "treated this as a story released by a Jewish source and an interested party."[9] Their reporting—the language of the articles as well as their

---

[7] "Himmler's Ausrottungsplan: State Department bestätigt alle Nachrichten," *Aufbau* 8 (November 27, 1942) Interesting is that this news item appears only on the fifth page of the issue. One may speculate that this had something to do with the fact that some readers were fed up with reading such awful news. See, for example, Manfred George in *Aufbau* 8 (October 23, 1942). The next issue from December 4, 1943 gave more prominent attention to the topic, however.

[8] For more detail on this and how the State Department tried to distance itself from Wise, see Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 180ff.

[9] Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*,181. See her chapter 8 on this larger issue.

placements in papers—conveyed a sense of doubt about the accurateness of Wise's statement. General skepticism in the United States toward stories about atrocities committed by the Nazi resulted in no small part from the fact that press reports during World War I had reported about German atrocities, which in the postwar had become discredited as "grossly exaggerated by Allied propaganda."[10] *Aufbau* journalists on the other hand declared that: "This finally officially confirms in its entire tragic extent all the information which 'Aufbau,' based on its various sources, has been reporting."[11] *Aufbau* editors deemed the publication of this sort of news significant to its refugee readership but not all refugees liked to be presented with ongoing news about the atrocities. One rabbi explained in a letter to the editor: "Again and again I hear fellow refugees rail and curse, not at Hitler, but at *Aufbau*, as if your paper and not this bandit produced the horrors, as if it is your reporting and not the Nazi barbarity which steals our sleep."[12] A skepticism as to whether these reports were not exaggerations evidently existed among

---

[10] John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial (*New Have: Yale University Press, 2001), 410. While journalists did occasionally embellish their stories about German atrocities during World War I (Ibid, 206), the German Army did in fact commit great atrocities. However, postwar pacifists in France, Britain, and the United States came to denote these stories wholesale as exaggerated propaganda (paralleling German revisionist accounts!). This view became a dominant narrative and resulted in initial skepticism on the part of Allied governments to believe reports of German atrocities and reluctance on the side of the press to publicize them. See Ibid

[11] "Himmler's Ausrottungsplan: State Department bestätigt alle Nachrichten," *Aufbau* 8 (November 27, 1942) "Damit sind alle Berichte, die der 'Aufbau' aus den verschiedensten ihm zur Verfügung stehenden Quellen brachte, endlich von offizieller Seite in ihrem ganzen tragischen Umfang bestätigt."

[12] Rabbiner Dr. Manfred Swarsensky, "Sollen wir schweigen?" *Aufbau* 9 (December 4,1942) Translation mine, "fellow refugees" is actually "Schicksalsgenossen" in the original text. See also Karl Kluge of the organization Friends of German Democracy, "Wir dürfen nicht schweigen, " *Aufbau* 10 (December 11, 1942): 10. There were different reasons for being unwilling to believe the news and wanting to hear them. See, for example, Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief,* 140f. and Michaela Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 193f

some refugees as it did among other Americans—common people, journalists, and government officials.[13]

While the American Jewish community was rife with division, the organized refugee community, along with the big American Jewish organizations, repeatedly publicized their deep concern about the desperate situation of European Jewry. Several of the large organizations joined together on this issue in an attempt to raise attention to the atrocities being committed against the Jews in Europe.[14] The American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Labor Committee, and B'nai B'rith organized a mass rally in New York City in July 1942, which drew an audience of more than 20,000 people.[15] Then, in December of the same year, after the news of mass extermination had reached the U.S., delegates from different American Jewish organizations presented a memorandum to President Roosevelt, asking him to bring

---

[13] Here, German Jewish refugees may have been subject to the same sort of skepticism resulting from WWI stories as mentioned above or. Or, did they feel disconnected from other European Jews because they wanted to leave their past behind? Perhaps this skepticism was borne of a fear, of not wanting to be presented with horrible occurrences they could not change.

[14] Some historians have argued that the disunity and strife among the American Jewish community led to insufficient and inefficient actions to save Europe's Jews. Others have suggested that while perhaps more could have been done by American Jews, the forces that dominated the American government as well as American public opinion—who largely shared an anti-Jewish or disinterested attitude—were so strong that it is questionable whether a united American Jewry could have changed much. See, for example, Henry L. Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust (*Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995). Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000* (Berkeley: Univesity of California Press, 2000), 220f.

[15] Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 218

attention to the killings of Jews in Europe and to do everything to stop them.[16] As is well known, such attempts were in vain.[17]

However, it was largely through the actions of their institutions that German Jewish refugees were at all able to engage in efforts on behalf of Jews in Europe. At such distance, the opportunities for individual refugees who were unable to join the military to do something that could effectively aid the timely rescue of Jews in Europe were few, and group action was required to be at all effective. Even so, while they expressed outrage in their communities at the lack of activity and engagement of the U.S. and the United Nations to come to the rescue of European Jews, the refugees were largely limited to symbolic actions to raise awareness and fundraisers, which they hoped could benefit them.[18] In this regard then, the activities of American Jewish organizations both national and local were particularly important for the refugees in providing a (relatively) united voice to the world at large as well as avenues of symbolic and economic action. When, in a further example of the former, the Synagogue Council of America initiated a six week "Mourning and Intercession" period for the "victims of Axis brutality" in the spring of 1943, *Aufbau* editors supported these activities with a campaign asking United Nations leaders "to send a message of compassion and encouragement to the Jewish people in the

---

[16] Monty Noam Penkower, "American Jewry and the Holocaust: From Biltmore to the American Jewish Conference," in *American Jewish History*, vol. 7, Jeffrey S. Gurock (ed.), New York: Routledge, 1998, 99

[17] Henry L. Feingold, *Bearing Witness*, Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945* (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press), 1970; See also David S. Wyman,*The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984) and this: Gulie N. Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000) for a counter argument.

[18] See, for example "Der grosse Appell," *Aufbau* 9, (March 5, 1943): 1 and the *Aufbau* campaign "Messages to the Jewish People" May 7, 1943 and following issues.

world."[19] The campaign was successful, and replies from various leaders were printed in subsequent issues.

In a small but common example of the symbolic on the local level, meanwhile, thousands of miles away from the European atrocities, in Los Angeles, members of the board of directors of the Jewish Club of 1933 opened a meeting in the summer of 1943 by observing a minute of silence "in honor of the Jewish victims in Europe murdered by Hitler."[20] Beyond such minor symbolic acts demonstrating concern for Europe's Jews, the Los Angeles community also regularly organized various sorts of social events centering around the issue which incorporated the symbolic and political, and often also fundraising. One, for example, was a lecture entitled "Our Duty towards European Jewry" put on in July 1943 by the Society for Jewish Culture-Fairfax Temple, with which the city's refugee community was closely affiliated. That event was partly intended to further draw attention to another, the show "We Will Never Die," which had been staged in Madison Square Garden in New York earlier that year and was to play at the Hollywood Bowl. This "Memorial Pageant" was a dramatic piece created by Ben Hecht and Kurt Weill with the help of other European Jewish refugees, in order to raise awareness for the plight of Europe's Jews and to call for more Jewish activism.[21] The organizers in Los Angeles appealed to the refugees to attend both events:

---

[19] Ibid.

[20] Minutes of the fourteenth meeting of the board of directors of the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. on Thursday, June 3, 1943, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1942-1943, Correspondence Jewish Club of 1933

[21] March 1943 editions of *Aufbau* contain critiques of the show. Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 219, who writes that the pageant carried "the message that Jews had to take their destiny in their own hands"

> We feel certain, that many among us will gladly follow this invitation. Thinking of our friends and relatives in Europe—where but for the grace of God we would be today—we wholeheartedly welcome every step which will make American Jews and Gentiles understand more and more all the aspects of the refugee-problems and which will bring them to a closer contact with what is happening to European Jewry.[22]

The show was a success in Los Angeles, and raised money to benefit European Jewry.[23] Beyond such single event fundraisers, within the Jewish Club of 1933, Felix Guggenheim also proposed a longer term effort to start a separate fund that would help "our unhappy brothers and sisters in Europe" after the war.[24] He believed that the efforts of the newly founded United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the United Welfare Fund would not be sufficient to help all the Jews that he hoped would survive in Europe and proposed that Jewish immigrants gather their forces not only within the U.S. but also by cooperating with those who had found a refuge in Central and South America and Great Britain. While the proposal for the fund, to which Guggenheim suggested everybody should donate "at least one week's salary" per year, received much positive reaction in "spirit," it failed to attract great numbers of people who were ready to make the contribution.[25] Consequently, the idea was abandoned and the United Jewish

---

[22] Announcement from the Jewish Club of 1933 to its members, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1943, Refugees and Civilian Defense

[23] See "We Shall Never Die," *Aufbau* 9 (August 6, 1943) I have no information at this time how the money from this event was actually used.

[24] Letter Dec. 15, 1943, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1943, Refugees and Civilian Defense

[25] Ibid. and undated document, probably early 1944, referring to the former. FGP, B107, Correspondence 1943, Refugees and Civilian Defense. The absence of other documentation on this project suggests that it did not develop far beyond the idea phase. One may speculate that it became apparent to Guggenheim that not many refugees would be able or want to give money to such a fund. It is possible that for many refugees, still in the process of becoming economically established, the financial contribution was too high. Just as likely is that many thought that larger organizations like the United Jewish Appeal would be more capable in dealing with their financial contributions, or that donations were not forthcoming precisely because the project was never fully realized and launched.

Appeal remained the major campaign to collect money for the cause of Europe's Jews.[26] While the German Jewish refugee community leadership stressed their group's special responsibility toward Jews in Europe in public announcements, then, they did not launch any ongoing activities that set them apart from the larger American Jewish community in this respect. Rather, most of their efforts—often of a symbolic kind or isolated fundraisers—happened in the context of those organized by larger American Jewish organizations. All in all, it seems that the community felt that there were enough available and acceptable avenues for contributing their economic support for Europe's Jews.

Punishment and Restitution

Punishment

As the refugees were occupied with the fate and future of the European Jews, they were also determined that those people responsible for the crimes against Jews would not escape punishment. The community's discussion of this topic happened in the context of the same debate taking place in the country at large. In November of 1942, *Aufbau*'s front page featured the headline "Plans for the Punishment of the Nazi Perpetrators."[27] The accompanying article explained to the readers that it was not too early to think about how to deal with the Nazi perpetrators after the end of the war. It stated that both President Roosevelt and a high government official of Great Britain had publicly raised the issue of

---

[26] See, for example another appeal to the Los Angeles refugee community in *Aufbau*'s supplement of the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc.: "Weil es ja keine Gemeindesteuern gibt, ist das der einzige Weg um Gelder für die verschiedensten örtlichen und nationalen Wohlfahrtseinrichtungen aufzubringen. Der allergösste Teil dieser Mittel wird für die Rettung und Unterstützung der durch Hitler beraubten und vertriebenen Juden Europas benötigt." *Aufbau* 9 (April 16, 1945):16

[27] "Pläne für die Bestrafung der Nazi Verbrecher,"*Aufbau* 8 (November 6, 1942)

prosecuting German war criminals and that the two men believed that such punishment would only affect a small number of people in comparison to the larger German population. The *Aufbau* journalist pointed out that each had drawn a distinction between Nazis and the German people—suggesting that the Germans had been "misled" by the Nazis—but he did not comment on whether this claim about the limited complicity and responsibility of the German people was legitimate. While the newspaper featured this kind of 'neutral reporting,' it also included opinion pieces by *Aufbau* journalists and outside contributors, true to its mission to present a broad picture of events *and* opinions.[28] The topic of German responsibility would in subsequent months receive more heated attention in the newspaper. Following the November announcement of plans for punishing German war criminals, an article appeared in December 1942 approving of a Declaration by the U.N. that it would launch a special commission to investigate the crimes against Jews in Europe. When by February 1943 there were no further developments in this regard, however, a critical article appeared with the title "What will happen with the war criminals? The negotiations are not yielding results."[29] This discussion concerning the legal punishment of individual Nazi criminals changed over the course of the following months, subsumed by a more general debate about the responsibility of the German people at large and the repercussions they should collectively face. In engaging in this debate, the German Jewish refugee community was not alone in America. Besides politicians, various Americans in influential positions of

---

[28] See, for example, "Einheit oder Aufteilung" *Aufbau* 9 (April 23, 1943)

[29] *Aufbau* 8 (December 25, 142) and "Was wird mit den Kriegsverbrechern? Die Verhandlungen kommen nicht weiter," *Aufbau* 9 (February 19, 1943)

public opinion making—film makers, novelists, journalists, business leaders etc.—engaged in this as well and represented different opinions and images on the nature of the dictatorship in Germany.[30] While the refugees may have followed this discourse to differing degrees through these other channels, *Aufbau* was once again the major community forum. It did not only pick up strands of the general American discussion, but was where a variety of representatives of the larger German emigration, both Jewish and non-Jewish, voiced their opinions on the matter, and how the refugee community projected its voice into the wider discussion.[31]

Superficially, and conceptually speaking, the refugee point of view was perhaps not so very different from those in the broader public discussion, however, it displayed and was informed by a deeply personal understanding and connection to events. This, inevitably, caused refugees to be far less likely to overlook their treatment under the Nazis or absolve the general German populace, and to take issue with those who did. However, it frequently also brought an immediacy to their arguments and urgency to their conclusions unmatched by most voices outside the community.

One particularly heated exchange of letters began when a German Jewish refugee from Washington, Charles Weisz, asked *Aufbau* to publish his response to an article by

---

[30] See Benjamin L. Alpers, *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture: Envisioning the Totalitarian enemy*, 1920s-1950s (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 2f. and particularly chapter 7. Alpers writes that over the course the war, general American public opinion changed from one that makes a distinction between Germans and Nazis to one that puts the responsibility for Nazism on the German nation. Ibid, 208

[31] Discussions about the responsibility of the Germans had been led in the public, often in *Aufbau*, by prominent representatives of German exiles—Thomas Mann was a leading voice—since they arrived in the United States. For more detail on this, see Middell, *Exil in den USA,* 169-194, for the period under discussion.

Gerhart H. Seger, Social Democrat and editor of the New York based *Neue Volkszeitung*, a newspaper that was close to the labor movement and became associated with the German Social Democrats in exile.[32] In his article, Seger had made it a point to differentiate between Nazis and the German people.[33] In his letter, Weisz, after expressing that he had once been proud to be German and had loved Germany "above all else in the world," questioned whether this differentiation could legitimately be made. He wrote that in discussions among the refugees, he noticed that they frequently only considered those Germans Nazis who wore an SA or SS uniform. Weisz questioned this assumption on the basis of his own experience in Germany, where, as he wrote, it was "these non-Nazis who on October 10, 1938 took my two brothers, two nephews, an uncle and me out of our apartment, it was such 'Non-Nazis' who slapped me all the way down four stories, just because I am Jewish."[34] He further related how a man who had been his friend for 21 years and whose life he had once saved, called him a "stinking, dirty Sowjew" just two days after Hitler had come two power. Addressing Seger, Weisz wrote: "What do you understand to be the German people, I have to ever ask you? Maybe 200 or 2000 people who did not take part in the brutalities, do you call these 200 or 2000 people the 'German

---

[32] Gerhart H. Seger had been active in the labor movement and social democratic party from early on. He was a member of the Reichstag for the SPD from 1930 to 1933 and was incarcerated in the concentration in Oranienburg. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1934.

[33] "Wer ist eigentlich das 'deutsche Volk'?" *Aufbau* 9 (November 5, 1943)

[34] "Wir, die wir im 'Hitlerdeutschland gelebt haben, nennen alles, was nicht SA- oder SS-Uniform ist, das Deutsche Volk, die sogenannten '*Nichtnazis'*. Aber eben solche Nichtnazis waren es, die am 10. Oktober 1938 meine zwei Brüder, zwei Neffen, einen Onkel und mich aus unserer Wohnung holten, solche 'Nichtnazis' waren es, die mich von vier Stockwerken 'heruntergeohrfeigt' haben, nur weil ich Jude bin." Ibid.

Volk' amongst the 80 million others?"[35] Seger's answer was condescending in both tone and content, downplaying Weisz' painful experiences by saying that he and other political emigrants had in some cases suffered far worse at the hand of the Nazis long before Jews ever concerned themselves over Hitler very much.[36] For Seger, the German *Volk* were the German workers as well as all those who had behaved decently to Jews and fought the Nazis before they themselves were incarcerated in concentration camps.[37] He added that judging from the number of people interned in camps, this group was considerably larger than 2,000.

This exchange over the nature and responsibility of the German people clearly struck a nerve in the refugee community, as the discussion in subsequent issues of *Aufbau* shows. It continued with contributions from outspoken non-Jewish anti-Nazi intellectual Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster, a rebuttal by social democratic philosopher Siegfried Marck who backed Seger, and another reply from *Aufbau* editor- in-chief, Manfred George. Both Foerster and George disagreed with Seger's characterization of the German people and presented evidence for their large-scale involvement in Nazi ideology and crimes. They referred to reports by American war correspondents about crimes committed by members of the German army as well as to interviews with German prisoners of war, in which 85%

---

[35] Ibid. "Was verstehen Sie unter dem deutschen Volke, muss ich Sie immer fragen? Vielleicht 200 - oder 2000 Menschen, die sich nicht an Brutalitäten beteiligten, nennen Sie diese 200 oder 2000 Menschen das 'deutsche Volk' zwischen 80 Millionen anderen?"

[36] Ibid. See also Marjorie Lamberti, "German Antifascist Refugees in America and the Public Debate on 'What Should be Done with Germany after Hitler,' 1941 – 1945," *Central European History* 40 (2007): 292 and the rest of the article, in which she argues that the political emigrants in the United States willfully neglected the crimes against the Jews in their argumentation about what should be done with Germany after the war.

[37] Toni Sender made a similar argument about the German workers in her contribution "Gibt es ein 'anderes Deutschland'? Der Widerstand der Gewerkschaften wurde nie gebrochen" in *Aufbau* 9 (July 30, 1943)

of them were identified as having been and continuing to be Nazis. Moreover, they pointed to the absence of large-scale resistance and acts of sabotage within the German Reich.[38] These facts, Foerster opined, demanded that not only should acknowledged Nazis be punished, but that the majority of the German people, who had made themselves guilty by participating in the Nazi regime, should also be made to pay. He suggested that their punishment should consist of the revocation of their right to political participation in the foreseeable future. Siegfried Marck, in an response to Foerster, acceded that this kind of punishment might be justified if one looked at it from the standpoint of pure ethics. He wondered, however, whether enduring the consequences of having lost the war would not already be punishment enough.[39]

Marck and Foerster were representatives of two camps that formed during the war years which held opposing views on whether the end of the war should bring a 'hard' or 'soft' peace to the Germans.[40] In this lengthy debate, the degree of complicity of the German people became an important criterion in discussing what should be done with Germany after the Allied victory, a point to which I will return. Yet the debate, whose stakes were clearly important to the community, may nevertheless have had little practical effect on decision makers, at least directly. While the opinions of Foerster, Marck and their backers shaped views within the refugee community and even in the general American public, several historians have noted that German émigré intellectuals

---

[38] See "Zum Streit über das Deutsche Volk" *Aufbau* 9 (November 12, 1943) and Manfred George "Die Frage deutscher Exilpolitik in U.S.A.," *Aufbau* 10 (January 14, 1944)

[39] "Um das deutsche Volk," *Aufbau* 9 (December 24, 1943)

[40] See Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy* for a recent account on this debate in the USA.

did not hold any official position of recognition or influence upon the U.S. government circles that actually made decisions about how to deal with Germany after the war.[41] While officials in State Department followed the debates among these groups, they were more interested in gaining information that would help their war aims in Germany than in developing government policy in one way or another with regard to the postwar.

To this end, however, the refugees' views were of significant interest to the U.S. government as it sought to obtain information that could help the U.S. forces on the ground to identify individual Nazis. In May 1943 an *Aufbau* article called on the refugees to document their experiences with particular Nazi officials—mayors, police officials, judges etc.—and to send this information to Robert M.W. Kempner.[42] Kempner had been a former official in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior and had been serving as special consultant to the U.S. Justice Department, the War Department, and the OSS since 1941. Once again, through their inside knowledge of the German enemy, the refugees were able to make a special contribution to the war effort. While, as we have noted for other contexts, such contributions were a source of great satisfaction for the refugees in a general sense, because they supported the success of their adopted country and the defeat

---

[41] See Lamberti, "German Antifascist Refugees," 279 and fn. 1 for scholarly works that come to that conclusion, e.g. Walter F. Petersen, "Das Umfeld: Die Vereinigten Staaten und die deutschen Emigranten," in *Was soll aus Deutschland werden? Der Council for a Democratic Germany in New York 1944-1945, Aufsätze und Dokumente*, Ursula Langkau-Alex and Thomas Ruprecht (eds) (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1995), 70f.
There seemed to have been one notable exception to this trend. The German born writer Emil Ludwig (formerly Cohn) published in the *Aufbau* debate and also enjoyed personal access to President Roosevelt, though he had taken on Swiss citizenship and made great attempts to disassociate himself from the larger German speaking emigre and refugee community. While Roosevelt entertained Ludwig's Vansitartist inclined ideas for postwar Germany, the U.S. government was otherwise not specifically interested in the views of various larger groups of German emigres, many of whom were of a political background, in its deliberations over how to proceed with post-war Germany. See the section on Emil Ludwig in Hoenicke, *Know Your Enemy*, 256-258

[42] "Die Alliierten brauchen Ihre Kenntnisse über die Nazis," *Aufbau* 9 (May 14, 1943)

of Germany, here, their part in the identification of particular Nazis carried an additional, personal satisfaction, intertwined as it was with individual retribution. The issue of retribution was important to the refugees—and we have already seen how it resonated with refugee soldiers—and it required their particular attention because, at this time, the larger discussion being carried on by the Allies concerning the punishment of Nazis focussed on wartime and on occupied territories. Nazi crimes against Jews in Germany and Austria before the official declaration of war were not considered, and the refugees took issue with this shortcoming. In early 1944, Felix Guggenheim, president of the Jewish Club of 1933 in Los Angeles, articulated his thoughts on this subject at a membership meeting:

> We read so much about prosecution of war-criminals and restitution and restoration when the crimes have been committed on United Nations soil occupied by Germany, that we start thinking about similar acts committed in Germany and Austria partly during the war, but to a great extent before the war. It is too early to discuss these questions at length, but it is not too early for a committee of the club to study these questions, to contact other groups and to prepare what ever can be done in this respect in order to safeguard our interests.[43]

Always conscious not to represent his group of refugees as interested in purely German Jewish affairs—the community wanted to be seen as civic minded, good future Americans and there was much desire to represent this not only to the outside but also within the community—Guggenheim went on to say: "I don't want to be misunderstood. This is not a question of refugees thinking of their claims at a time when the world is on fire and when the American boys—and our friends among—have to fight for a better

---

[43] Speech manuscript, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1944, German Jewish Refugee Issues

world." However, he explained that the Club's board members and the Political Committee considered this issue more significantly a moral matter, namely a matter of justice:

> This is a question of justice in more than one respect, because it is not only intolerable, that the chief of the concentration camp in Dachau may have the chance to get away with it, when the chiefs of the concentration camps in occupied countries will face the firing squad. It is equally intolerable—not from a materialistic point of view—that the Nazi who stole a house, a factory, an object d'art in Prag[ue] or Paris will be chased out if he is lucky and will be buried there if he has tough luck—when his collegue [sic] in Berlin or Frankfurt will stay in the stolen house and run the stolen factury [sic], because it has been fixed up legally and because it is done in a time of semi-war and within the boundaries of Germany.[44]

In order to make sure that, as Guggenheim put it, the "criminal acts committed against European refugees, against their life, their freedom, their property between 1933 and the beginning of the 2nd World War" would not be ignored after Allied victory, Jewish Club members decided to seek cooperation with other organizations of its kind in the United States and Great Britain.[45] In doing so, the formulated very group specific interests, while simultaneously successfully pursuing the groups' Americanization and integration into American Jewish organizational life. For the first time since arriving in the United States the community reached out to similar groups internationally in order to pursue their own proactive interests related to experiences in their former homeland.

The concern over the acknowledgement of crimes against German Jews before the war was subsequently assuaged when the Allies revised their concepts for postwar justice to include them. Then, as the war in Europe was coming to its end, refugees in the

---

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

U.S. gained the opportunity to immediately contribute to bringing Nazi perpetrators to justice.[46] Four days before VE-Day, *Aufbau* editors published a call asking refugees to "Help with the Punishment of War Criminals."[47] The call requested the readers to record information about Nazi crimes—such as murders, abuse in concentration camps, the torching of synagogues, and theft—as well as the names of the perpetrators based on "their OWN knowledge—something they experienced themselves or saw with their own eyes."[48] Most important was the addition that they should report only what they would be able and willing to "testify to under oath."[49] Once more, Robert M.W. Kempner served as the liason receiving such testimony. Responses from refugees reached him from all over the world and he was able to use this information in legal proceedings against Nazi criminals after the end of the war.[50] However, whether their information eventually led to the actual incrimination of Nazis or not, the mere fact that the refugees were able to voice their experiences of oppression to an institution that actively wanted to hear them and which intended to use their testimony, placed them, at least symbolically, in a position of power over their former oppressors. As with the refugee soldiers who helped in the arrest of German Nazi criminals through their interrogations of POWS, the refugees on the

---

[46] See Manfred George's article "None Shall Escape," *Aufbau* 10 (June 16, 1944)

[47] "Helft mit bei der Bestrafung der Kriegsverbrecher" *Aufbau* 11 (May 4, 1945) It is not clear who initiated this call.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid. The original German says: "was sie aus EIGENER Kenntnis—Selbsterlebtes oder mit eigenen Augen Gesehenes —über Naziverbrechen unter Eid aussagen könnten"

[50] Kempner was assistant U.S. chief counsel at the Nuremberg trials. For more on how the information provided by refugees through *Aufbau* aided Kempner in his prosecution of Nazi criminals, see Schaber, *Aufbau Reconstruction*, 72f.

home front in the U.S. were able to some degree settle, or at least feel that they had settled, personal scores with Germans and Nazis. Once again it was their specific German Jewish background that lent credence to their claims about these Germans, while their position in the United States provided them structures and opportunities that allowed them to adopt this empowered stance toward Germany. Thus, the refugees' interest in these matters regarding Germany's future were motivated by past experience while, paradoxically, such interest facilitated an embrace of their Americanness.

Restitution

Discussions about the punishment of Nazi criminals frequently went hand in hand with debates on matters of indemnification and restitution of a material sort. When Felix Guggenheim in his previously cited speech to the Jewish Club pointed out that it was a matter of justice to hold Germans responsible for stealing Jewish property, he also declared that certainly "in all these instances justice can be done in respect to the transgressor without necessarily thinking of the former owners."[51] However, he went on to say that "during the foreign property registration we were shoked [sic] to see how many among us who are bitterly poor here, have been tricked and burglared [sic] in Germany too much to just let go of it."

The Consideration of material compensation for Jewish property that had been forcefully taken by Germans was raised by some German Jews as early as 1939.[52] Then,

---

[51] Speech manuscript, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1944, German Jewish Refugee Issues

[52] Nana Sagi, *German Reparations: A History of Negotiations* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 14.

Shalom Adler-Rudel, a former leader in the Jewish community in Berlin, wrote a memorandum presenting suggestions on how to record information about these acts of theft that could serve as a basis for subsequently making specific claims on Germany. At that point, his memorandum met with little interest from Jewish leaders in the United States and Great Britain, but by the end of the war, there was a great deal more interest in this idea.[53] While individual Jewish emigrants and different American organizations gradually engaged with the topic of restitution, the German Jewish refugee community at large did not pay much attention to it until 1943 and then increasingly in 1944.[54] The fact that many German Jewish refugees initially decided that they never again wanted anything to do with Germany was one reason for the hesitant interest. Felix Guggenheim remembered that many refugees said at first that they "don't even want to register anything. We don't want to have anything to do with it."[55] However, some of the leaders within the Los Angeles community, who Guggenheim identified as "our practical group,"

---

[53] *Aufbau*, which published two articles on the general topic of restitution in 1939 did not report about Adler-Rudel's memo. See Susanne Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau und die Wiedergutmachung* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1994), 43 and fn. 14 and 15

[54] American Jewish organizations—the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Conference and the American Joint Distribution Committee— began launching coordinated activities in 1940 and 1941. In 1940, the American Jewish Committee set up a special Committee for Peace Studies that concerned itself with questions of postwar compensation and reinstitution of rights for European Jews. In November 1941, the World Jewish Congress organized a conference in Baltimore dedicated to the subject. Then, Nahum Goldmann, who would become a central figure in restitution, stated to the participants of the conference: "Who can doubt that we Jews have a right to international help for European Jewry after the war? If reparations are to be paid, we are the first who have a claim to them." In Palestine, first organized activities to engage with matters of restitution were launched in 1943, headed by *Nir* Company which had handled Ha'avara transfers prior to the war. Nagi (1986), 16. When the World Jewish Congress organized a conference in Baltimore in late 1941 at which questions of the postwar compensation for European Jews were a principal point on the agenda, the event did not receive coverage in *Aufbau*. Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau*, 44. For more details on the beginning of restitution, and different approaches to the idea, see also Constantin Goschler, *Wiedergutmachung: Westdeutschland und die Verfolgten des Nationalsozialismus, 1945-1954* (München: Oldenbourg, 1992)

[55] Interview with Felix Guggenheim, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles: January 6, 1972. LBI, AR 25385, Digibaeck, http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1328082

believed that "it would be foolish to reward the Germans by benign neglect, and leaving the spoils in their hands." These members of the board of the Jewish Club of 1933 decided in February 1943 that "the time has come to initiate the establishment of a unified front of all refugees from Central Europe in the United States."[56] Being aware of activities of American Jewish organizations and considerations of the United States government in this regard, they wanted to make sure that "the voices of these early victims of Hitler would be most assertively heard at future hearings where decisions about expatiation [Sühne] and restitution [Wiedergutmachung] for committed injustices will be made."[57] In their discussions about restitution, the members of the Jewish Club's political committee emphasized legal and practical questions in order to secure the rights of the German Jewish refugees both as a collective and as individuals. They communicated and cooperated with various individuals and organizations from the refugee community in the United States, such as the Federation of Jews from Central Europe, the American Association of European Lawyers, the Axis Victims League, and former German judge Hugo Marx, who was writing on German Jewish restitution issues at this time.[58] For example, one of the first activities in preparation for making actual demands was the constitution of a special committee within the American Federation of

---

[56] "Vorstandsbeschluss," *Aufbau* 9 (March 5, 1943)

[57] Ibid. "Es soll damit erreicht werden, das auch die Stimmer dieser frühen Opfer Hitlers bei solchen Verhandlungen der Zukunft nachdrücklichst zu Gehör kommen, in denen über Sühne und Wiedergutmachung begangenen Unrechts entschieden wird."

[58] Different documents in FGP, B108, Correspondence 1944, German Jewish Refugee Issues

Jews from Central Europe to start collecting data about property and assets formerly held by Jewish communities in Germany that were destroyed or stolen.[59]

Cooperation among German Jewish refugees in matters of restitution also went beyond national borders. In 1944, members of the Los Angeles Club began exchanging concrete ideas for postwar "rehabilitation and reconstruction" of European Jews with the Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain.[60] While refugees thus strengthened their German Jewish refugee networks nationally and abroad, those in the United States also deemed it crucially important to represent their particular interests in restitution through the large American organizations. In addition to their membership in the American Jewish Conference, German Jewish refugees formed a German Jewish Representative Committee within the World Jewish Congress (WJC).[61] The refugees believed that their presence in these organizations was important because they felt that their situation differed from that of the great mass of the European Jews in the countries occupied by the German army in several ways.[62] In the first place, they wanted to ensure through that

---

[59] See "Wiedergutmachunsgansprüche der Juden aus Deutschland," *Aufbau* 10 (October 27, 1944)

[60] Demands included: "After cessation of hostilities Jews on the Continent shall be given the option for either returning to their countries or origin in possession of all their former rights as subjects of those countries, or of final establishment in their countries of residence, unless they choose to emigrate to Palestine or elsewhere. 3) Economic restitution has to be carried out regarding all properties in whatever shape of form towards Jews from Germany taken from them under legal forms or pretexts or by open robbery after the 30th January 1933. The same applies to rights of pension, special taxes levied on Jews, including flight tax, losses sustained through forced sales of property or businesses and the like. 4) Pensions have to be paid to widows or orphans of Jews murdered by the Nazis.
5) Communal property has to be restored respectively the indemnities paid to be used for the resettlement of Jews abroad. 6) Indemnity has to be paid on property belonging to persons who have died in Nazi Germany or after deportation to the rightful heir or, if none, to a resettlement fund." Memorandum of the Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain, London, FGC, B108, FGP, Correspondence 1944, German Jewish Refugee Issue

[61] See, for example, "Wiedergutmachunsgansprüche der Juden aus Deutschland," *Aufbau* 10 (October 27, 1944).

[62] See, for example, "Future of the Jews from Germany," *Aufbau* 10 (December 8, 1944)

committee that crimes committed against them during peace-time and under legal pretexts were considered valid for indemnification claims. In addition, participation in these American organizations was crucial for them because they were also *their* organizations—organizations of American Jews, a category within which they now placed themselves. As such, representing their voice within American Jewish organizations was also important for the refugees for reasons of Americanization. They viewed their German Jewish position in these organizations not as a sign of their outsider status but rather a placement of their voice as one among many within greater American Jewry.

In engaging in this sort of collective action, then, joining various organizations together to project a concerted voice towards Germany on behalf of their community, the refugees strengthened their German Jewish community identity in the United States in light of a renewed (if troubling) connection to Germany through restitution. At the same time, however, making connections with other American Jewish organizations situated them within the greater American Jewish community, advancing their Americanization.

Tensions Between the Connection to Germany and Americanization

This renewed connection to their former country nevertheless also brought tensions with their connection to the new, and despite this increased integration in American (Jewish) life, the refugees were still concerned with their status in the United States. This is revealed in the continuing efforts by community leaders to emphasize the group's belonging to the U.S., particularly during this time and in the context of their

pursuit of restitution and interest in the future of Germany. To this end, during these early years of discussions about restitution, refugee leaders frequently delivered their demands of Germany, which might have suggested to the American public or officials an interest in returning to their former home, in combination with balancing assurances to the U.S. that their loyalty and future was in America and that they had no such intentions. In one instance, the board members of the Jewish Club in Los Angeles supplemented their statement demanding restitution from Germany (quoted above) with the following declaration:

> The board of the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. finds it misleading and dangerous, however, when an impression is created in the American public that the refugees want to play a part in the political shaping and organization of the future Germany. The board holds the position that the crimes of the past ten years have cut the bonds between us and Germany and that our present and future belongs to the country which, in the hour of plight offered us refuge, and wants to make us citizens.[63]

The need to emphasize this issue shows that German Jewish refugees still perceived a notion in the American public sphere that they were outsiders or temporary visitors, even though the organized refugee community had for years continuously stressed in their public statements that their group of people had come to the U.S. to stay for good, and even though the refugees' engagement in American life, the American war effort, and their insistence on timely naturalization supported these claims.[64]

---

[63] "Vorstandsbeschluss," *Aufbau* 9 (March 5, 1943) "Der Vorstand des Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. hält es aber für irreführend und schädlich, wenn in der amerikanischen Öffentlichkeit der Eindruck erweckt wird, dass die Refugees an der künftigen Gestaltung Duetschlands mitwirken wollen. Er steht auf dem Standpunkt, dass die Verbrechen der letzten zehn Jahr die Verbindungen mit Deutschland und uns zerschnitten haben, und dass unsere Gegenwart und Zukunft dem Lande gehören, das uns in der Stunde der Bedrängnis Zuflucht geboten hat, und das uns zu seinen Bürgern machen will."

[64] See chapters 1, 2, and 3 for a more in-depth discussion.

In an article from November 1944, Manfred George addressed the problem of the refugees' image as a temporary population. He explained that the term refugee had: "assumed a somewhat unfavorable meaning during the last few years. First it was shrouded by clouds of pity and sympathy, then gradually the emotional fog lifted" and "the word slowly assumed a bitter taste. It came to be synonymous with 'alien,' 'foreigner.'"[65] He continued: "One of the commonest accusation brought against those who came to the United States during the last eleven years is the implication that they can't wait to go back." This image, of the refugee who wished to return to Germany after the end of the war and as soon as it was safe to do so, carried even greater negative connotations than that of the foreigner. Firstly, it cast them as taking unfair advantage of benefits. The notions that surfaced in this context were reminiscent of those made by anti-immigration agitators in the 1930s about the refugees taking up jobs and receiving financial support at a time when the United States was struggling economically. The sort of refugee who might want to return to Germany all along, meanwhile enjoying all sorts of material benefits in the United States, would be regarded as an exploiter. Secondly, this perception surrounding return connected the refugees directly to the enemy. A desire to go back to Germany, the country for whose defeat thousands of Americans were putting their lives on the line, suggested betrayal. Furthermore, refugee stereotypes—the arrogant German, who knows everything better, is nostalgic for the homeland, and critical of how

---

[65] Manfred George, "Do Refugees Want to Return?" *Congress Weekly*, November 10, 1944, as of 2006, uncatalogued materials related to the Jewish Club of 1933, Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

things were done in America—were persistent and made the refugees‘ imagined wish to return appear more plausible.[66]

Moreover, the matter of return became particularly pertinent again in connection with rising demands for restitution from Germany on practical grounds. Demands for indemnification of lost property potentially carried the implication that there was an economic interest to go back to Germany after the war, to, for example, take back and run one's former factory, or live in the old family home. An article in the Los Angeles *B'nai B'rith Messenger/Jewish Community Press* shows that this sentiment actually did exist among some refugees. In the article, its writer told the story of one anonymous refugee friend who, with regard to his reparation demands, had stated: "Yes, the Nazis must be made to pay back. Where the property could be found in its original form there must be restitution. Where the property has been liquidated there must be compensation."[67] He went on: "I hope to get back to [my] house and live in it again." The author further stated: "Of course, those who preferred not to return to Germany could not expect restoration of their property; but exiles who resumed [sic] their lives in Germany should be paid in full for that of which they were robbed."

---

[66] In the case of Southern California, Felix Guggenheim's correspondence from September 1943 with a newspaper editor in Santa Barbara illustrates that there were certain individual refugees who behaved obnoxiously and that this behavior was noted and criticized publicly. "Another Open Letter To The Refugees Who Are Our Guests" in the *Santa Barbara News-Press,* FGP, B107, Correspondence 1942-1943, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee, 1 of 2. Discussions about the behavior of individual refugees as being the cause for this negative image of the group also appear in *Aufbau.* See also Anita Kassof, Avi Y. Decter, and Deborah R. Weiner. *Lives Lost, Lives Found: Baltimore's German Jewish Refugees, 1933-1945* (Baltimore, Md: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2004), 20ff. See also Hannah Arendt's 1943 essay "We Refugees" which was then published in the *Menorah Journal* (Jan. 1943): 69-77. Here *The Jewish Writings: Hannah Arendt*, Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman (eds.) (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 264-274.

[67] Al Segal, "A Man's House," *B'nai B'rith Messenger, combined with the Jewish Community Press*, August 27, 1943

Such cases of individual refugees who expressed the desire to return to Germany and linked restitution with that return, did not receive favorable reactions from the organized refugee community. As an organization which had always promoted Americanization of the refugees, the Los Angeles Club, for example, advocated for indemnification irrespective of the postwar place of residence of the claimants. Representatives of the community also sought to characterize cases of desire to return as individual and unusual. On behalf of the Jewish Club, one of its board members used the occasion of a meeting at the B'nai B'rith Lodge to make a public announcement with regard to this issue:

> 99 % of the refugees organized in the Jewish Club of 1933 have no other aim and intention than to be or become American citizens, fulfilling the duties and exercising the right this privilege involves. It would be a great mistake to assume – or to conclude from an exceptional single case – that the Jewish refugees from Germany would ever think of returning there... the fact itself cannot be stated clearly enough.[68]

It is clear that these negative implications that the question of return held for the public image of the refugees, and their own understanding of themselves as Americans, made them very sensitive to the issue. Thus, efforts to refute the perception that the community at large was intending to return to Germany after the war grew. The fact that the Jewish Club member felt the need to convince his fellow B'nai B'rith members of the good intentions of the refugees, shows that this perception was not one held exclusively in anti-Jewish circles but that even the larger American Jewish community seemed to have sometimes shared it. Manfred George's article "Do Refugees Want to Return?" in

---

[68] FGP, B107, Correspondence 1944-1945, Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe

Congress Weekly, the organ of the American Jewish Congress, for example, was another strong attempt to clarify the situation to American Jews. In his article, George blamed the perception of a majority wish to return to Germany on the vivid discussion about the future of Germany that particularly politically active refugees were leading in 1943 and 1944. He wrote: "It is *their* arguments and activities, their postwar plans and letters-to-the editor which create the impression that all German-Jewish refugees want to go back—because the 99% who don't meddle in German affairs or American foreign policy keep quiet." [emphasis mine][69] George's phrasing clearly reveals the antipathy that he felt at the time toward those who partook in discussion about Germany's political postwar future, of which a more detailed account follows in the next section.

Those German Jews who were members of the German Jewish Representative Committee of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) also clearly characterized the community's position vis à vis postwar Germany as one of non-continuation and non-involvement. They passed a statement declaring that because of the atrocities that the German state and Germans had committed on their own Jewish citizens, German Jews—as opposed to surviving Jews from other European countries who might want to return or continue to live there after the war—had "severed all connections with their former homeland and will not return to it."[70] In terms of restitution and restoration of rights to Jews in Europe, the Representative Committee made clear that the WJC's proposal for

---

[69] Manfred George, "Do Refugees Want to Return?" *Congress Weekly*, November 10, 1944, as of 2006, uncatalogued materials related to the Jewish Club of 1933, Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

[70] "Juden und deutsche Bürgerrechte," *Aufbau* 10 (November 17, 1944)

automatic restoration of citizenship for Jews who had not become or were in the process of becoming citizens of another country, was not desired by German Jews.[71] They explained that they did not "contemplate to rebuild a Jewish community in Germany" and demanded that Jews in Germany should be able to renounce German citizenship, as it would constitute a "burden" for them. Nevertheless, they noted that some individuals who had left might have reasons to go back and that those people might "specifically and formally request" citizenship for themselves.[72] Supporting this idea, Manfred George reiterated in a subsequent commentary in *Aufbau* that for most German Jewish refugees it was for "moral reasons that they do not want to be 'Germans' anymore."[73] Imagining a difficult postwar reality for Germany, George further added that "... from a merely practical perspective, possession of a German passport is probably not something that either today or in the next few years will make its bearer particularly happy."[74] While not completely excluding the idea that some Jews might live in Germany after the war, George's message to his readership was that a future in Germany was neither desirable nor desired.

---

[71] Ibid.

[72] "Future of the Jews from Germany," *Aufbau* 10 (December 8, 1944) Interestingly, Manfred George, who in other places expressed his strong disapproval for Jews living in Germany or wanting to have anything to do with Germany, endorsed the option of German citizenship upon request, see Manfred George, "Staatsangehörigkeit 'Deutsch'?" *Aufbau* 10 (November 24, 1944)

[73] Manfred George, "Staatsangehörigkeit 'Deutsch'?" *Aufbau* 10 (November 24, 1944) "... aber auch aus moralischen Gründen wollen sie keine 'Deutschen' mehr sein. Auch rein praktisch ist der Besitz eines deutschen Passes weder heute noch in den nächsten Jahren irgend ein Dokument, das den Träger besonders glücklich machen dürfte."

[74] Ibid.

Overall, the public discourse about restitution and retribution that occurred in the last two to three years of the war within the organized German Jewish refugee community focused on emphasizing this group's special situation as German Jews while simultaneously stressing that they did not want anything to do with Germany beyond indemnification. In April 1945, the three major refugee organizations in the United States (the Federation), Great Britain (the Association of Jewish Refugees) and Palestine (Irgun Oley Merkaz Europa) formed the Council for the Protection of Rights and Interests of Jews from Germany, primarily to deal with postwar restitution for all Jews from Germany.[75] By doing this, they stressed their German Jewish identity in opposition to Germany and as citizens (to-be) of new homelands. Their position on the side of the winners of the war enabled them to formulate demands for retribution not as supplicants, but from a certain position of influence and potential power. While discussions over these demands touched on the question of Germany's future, broader debates in the U.S. at the time concerned plans for that future in a more general way, and the next section illustrates the organized community's participation in that conversation.

What Should Be Done With Germany After the War?

In 1943-1944, public discussions about what should be done with Germany after the end of the war were widely held in America. The government had begun to discuss this question shortly after Pearl Harbor, when President Roosevelt set up an Advisory

---

[75] Over the next year, other refugee organizations from South America, France, Belgium, and Australia joined the Council. *A.J.R. Information* 1 (January 1946)

Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy under Cordell Hull.[76] At the same time, American intellectuals ruminated on this question and how the treatment of Germany after the end of the war would influence the future of Europe and the entire world.[77] Naturally, these discussions did not pass by the refugee community unnoticed. As we have seen, articles about the postwar treatment of Germany appeared in *Aufbau* pertaining particularly to questions of punishment and retribution for German crimes against Jews and others. When the American discussion began to delve into more concrete plans for Germany—whether it should be split up into different zones, occupied, demilitarized, etc.—Manfred George, as editor of *Aufbau*, felt the need to publish a statement, delineating how he believed German Jews should partake in this discussion.[78] He deemed it important "that formerly German speaking Jews look at this issue as Jews and not as Germans."[79] George wrote that as Jewish refugees, they were becoming Americans and therefore ought to look at Germany only with an American eye. He pointed out that there were, however, some German Jews who fancied themselves experts on the German people. In George's eyes, these Jews were misguided, and their opinions on the subject suspect, as they themselves had not been able to foresee the German peoples' actions against their fellow Jewish citizens.

---

[76] Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy*, 281f

[77] Ibid, 178.

[78] See also the discussion about the proposal by the American political journalist Kingsbury Smith about the partition of Germany in *Aufbau* 9 (April 9, 1943) and following issues

[79]"... dass die ehemaligen Juden deutscher Zunge dieses Problem als Juden und nicht als Deutsche betrachten." "Diskussionen über Deutschland," Manfred George, *Aufbau* 9 (January 8, 1943)

In spite of George's skeptical opinion, *Aufbau* took part in the larger discussion and published all kinds of opinions on the future of Germany written by both American and German-born contributors, and by Jews and non-Jews alike. The editors justified this by arguing that while neither the paper itself nor its editors had a stake in what would happen to Germany after the war, it had to serve its journalistic function as one among many American newspapers that engaged in the discussion, and cater to its audience of emigres *and* immigrants. As a main news source for the German Jewish community, it understood itself as a "kind of 'Clearing House of Opinions.'"[80] The discussion about what should happen to Germany after the war became the "most intense and longest" single debate that had appeared in *Aufbau* up to that point.[81]

Throughout it, Manfred George repeatedly described—in a prescriptive as well as in a proscriptive way—the place the German Jewish immigrant ought to have in it. His most important point, as he made clear all along, was that the refugees were immigrants who had severed their ties with their former home and did not want to return. As such, they must carefully consider to what degree they ought even to maintain interest in discussions about the future of Germany, let alone take part in them.[82] As new Americans,

---

[80] "Einheit oder Aufteilung," *Aufbau* 9 (April 23, 1943). See April 1943 issues on "Einheit oder Auflösung Deutschlands" in which Aufbau editors asked prominent emigres to answer the following questions: "Halten Sie eine Dezentralisierung Deutschlands im Interesse eines dauerhaften Friedens für richtig und notwendig? Sind Sie für Aufrechterhaltung der Einheit des Reiches oder für einen Föderativstaat? Würden autonome Einzelstaaten innerhalb des Reichsgebietes konstkruktive Kräfte für ein demokratisches Europa wecken? Soll, dass die Reichseinheit bestehen bleibt, das heutige Preussen Veränderungen seiner Gebiete erfahren? Soll die Atlantic Charter auf ein besiegtes Deutschland Anwendung haben?"

[81] See Schaber, *Aufbau Reconstruction*, 212 and the following pages for a collection of articles on the topic. Schaber added that, in a way, the discussion about Germany had actually not ended by the time he published the book.

[82] As such, this discussion is reminiscent of the debates that were carried out in *Aufbau* in the late 1930s about the degree of Americanization and retaining of Germanness among the refugees.

their interest in Germany should be limited to that of Americans who are concerned about postwar peace in Europe, but who hold no personal political ambitions for Germany.[83] Here, George made a strong distinction between political refugees, whose keen interest in Germany and their public suggestions on what should be done with Germany could be tied to the fact that they felt they could, and perhaps wanted to, return there, and Jewish refugee-immigrants to the United States, who generally did not feel that way. Like most of the Jewish organizations at the time, George argued that being Jewish would automatically explain the decision not to return.

George's insistence on rationality and principle is worth considering further here. For George, emotions in relation to Germany were only acceptable for refugees if they related to private memories, to the German language and culture. Political considerations about the future of Germany, on the other hand, should not make any emotional impression on the German Jewish immigrant to America. Thus, he wrote "we do not faint, when somewhere someone suggests that parts of Eastern Prussia be ceded" from Germany.[84] In his statements, George most frequently used "we" to insinuate that he was the spokesmen for all refugees and represented their natural opinions and perspectives to the world. However, the didactic tone of his statements is also one that suggests that there were people who might not have shared these perspectives and that he found this unacceptable. In fact, George called those Jews who were too interested in what would

---

[83] See, for example, Manfred George, "To Repeat It Again and Again," *Aufbau* 9 (May 28, 1943) and Manfred George, "Deutschlandpolitik in U.S.A." *Aufbau* 10 (January 28, 1944)

[84] In reaction to a bombardment of Berlin, George wrote an article describing how the destruction did not affect him emotionally. "Das unberührte Herz," *Aufbau* 9, (September 3, 1943)

happen to postwar Germany and who contemplated return "confused minds."[85] While it can be safely said that the majority of refugees in the United States shared George's opinions on return to Germany, the division between a rational thinking detachment and an emotional attachment to Germany, and to what degree one ought to be interested in its future, were by no means as clear cut as George suggested, as the example of the debate around the Council for a Democratic Germany will show.

The Council for a Democratic Germany was one of various groups, also called Free Movements, in which German political émigrés and other interested anti-Nazis came together to discuss the future of postwar Germany.[86] Under the chairmanship of the theologian Paul Tillich, the Council was made up of a committee of nineteen members supported by sixty "signers"—all anti-Hitler emigrants from Germany who together represented a wide political spectrum ranging from Communists and Socialists to ex-German National Party democrats to former members of the German Catholic Center Party to Protestant clergy.[87] In addition, it was supported by more than 50 prominent Americans, among them many liberal spokespeople like Dorothy Thompson and Reinhold Niebuhr.[88]

---

[85] Manfred George, "Diskussionen über Deutschland," *Aufbau* 9 (January 8, 1943), "Verwirrte Gemüter," *Aufbau* 10 (June 2, 1944)

[86] George discusses the different movements in an article series in *Aufbau.*

[87] Ursula Langkau-Alex, "Vorwort," in *Was soll aus Deutschland werden? Der Council for a Democratic Germany in New York 1944-1945*, Ursula Langkau-Alex, Thomas Ruprecht (eds.) (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1995),10. For the history of the Council, see the rest of the latter book, as well as Petra Liebner, *Paul Tillich und der Council for a Democratic Germany (1933-1945)* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), and Lamberti, "German Antifascist Refugees"

[88] Lamberti, "German Antifascist Refugees," 295

Shortly after the Council first published its program in May 1944, heated debates broke out about the organization as such, the specific content of its program, and its objective to "say a word about the future of Germany [at] a time, when the German people cannot speak for themselves."[89] The critics' main point of contention was that the Council's program depicted the German people as victims of Nazism. As such, according to the Council, they could be entrusted to dismantle the structures of Nazism—which the Council identified as primarily the landowners, industrialists and the military—themselves.[90] This statement of belief in the innocence of the majority of Germans in the face of no evidence of any great resistance effort was not received well in the emigrant community, nor by many Americans.[91]

Thomas Mann was the most famous outspoken early critic of the Council. During the process of its constitution, some of the founding members had asked Mann to participate as the organization's chairman. Mann rejected this offer because he did not believe that German exiles could and should give advice on how to deal with their former country after its people had committed horrible crimes.[92] For Manfred George, meanwhile, the establishment of the Council brought him to declare that there was a clear split between German political exiles and immigrants, between those who saw Germany

---

[89] "Deklaration des Council for a Democratic Germany," Langkau-Alex and Ruprecht, *Was soll aus Deutschland werden?* 156

[90] Ibid.

[91] See, for example the reactions from the Society for the Prevention of World War III. See also the letter exchange between Erika Mann, Carl Zuckmayr and Siegfried Marck in April 1944 issues of *Aufbau*

[92] Thomas Mann had been approached to be part of the official members but declined. His brother was among the signers. See above publications on the Council and Chapter 9 in Erhard Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007)

as their main interest and others whose future lay in America.[93] This split did not fall along Jewish–non-Jewish lines. However, the Council's program said nothing explicit about the atrocities against the Jews and other victims of the Nazis, let alone punishment for those crimes. Also, while the Council's program did mention restitution, it immediately made clear that too much restitution would, hinting at the Treaty of Versailles, cause a backlash and present a great burden to "the masses of German Nazi opponents."[94] These points caused particular outrage within the Jewish community and the World Jewish Congress and German Jewish organizations as well as individual Jewish refugees spoke out against the Council.[95] In addition, refugees were critical that, despite this neglect of what should be in their interest, some Jews did support the Council.[96] German Jewish writer Emil Ludwig—who was himself an active participant in the discussion about Germany's future—expressed his lack of understanding for those Jews who still saw themselves as more German than Jewish, and who supported the Council.[97]

Among those Jews who supported the Council was the former president and then honorary president of the Jewish Club of 1933, Leopold Jessner. Jessner's embrace of the

---

[93] Manfred George, "Am Scheideweg," *Aufbau* 10, (May 12, 1944)

[94] "Deklaration des Council for a Democratic Germany," Langkau-Alex and Ruprecht, *Was soll aus Deutschland werden?* 156. See Walter Mehring, "Kleine Feststellung," *Aufbau* 10, (May 12, 1944). See also *Aufbau* 10 (May 19, 1944) for different statements from refugees about the Council, including a long letter by by radio commentator Hans Jacob, who wrote "There is no word on restitution. The crimes are forgotten." "Es gibt kein 'anderes' Deutschland," Ibid.

[95] See, for example, the letter exchange between Erika Mann and Carl Zuckmayer, *Aufbau* 10, (May 12, 1944), Lamberti, "German Antifascist Refugees," 297 on the World Jewish Congress

[96] See the discussion about the alleged endorsement of Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, "Rabbi Jonah B. Wise dementiert seine Unterschrift, *Aufbau* 10 (May 19, 1944).

[97] Emil Ludwig, "Richtigstellung," *Aufbau* 10 (June 16, 1944)

Council caused great uproar in the Los Angeles Club and the board discussed the matter of his participation not only amongst themselves, but even sought advice on how to deal with this from the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe (AMFED), based in New York. In a letter to the Federation's Executive Secretary, Herman Muller, the club's president, Felix Guggenheim wrote, "that we feel very much disturbed about some members of this Council as we feel that Jewish refugees, especially if they are consciously Jewish and are naturalized American citizens, should be reluctant to join the Council."[98] Not having had a chance to confront Jessner with this issue in person, as he was in the hospital recovering from an accident, Guggenheim asked to be informed about the Federation's position and decisions in regard to the Council.

The members of AMFED—representatives from different refugee organizations throughout the U.S.—made their decision in mid June 1944, coming to the conclusion that members of their groups should abstain from joining the Council for a Democratic Germany.[99] Delegates had different reasons for this decision, however. While one's Jewish immigrant identity was the main criterion for some, others said that "for political reasons in general the Council should not be supported by anyone, whether he is Jewish or not." The diversity of reasons was not a matter of public discussion, nor was the decision that "those of our members who signed the Aufruf [call] of the Council for a Democratic Germany should not be called to account as everyone has the right of making

---

[98] Letter from Felix Guggenheim to Herman Muller, June 15, 1944, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942-1945, American Federation of Jews from Central Europe

[99] Letter from Herman Muller to Felix Guggenheim, Jewish Club, dated July 10, 1944, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942-1945, American Federation of Jews from Central Europe

decisions in his own discretion." But to the outside public, the clear message of the Federation was disapproval of the Council. At the same time, however, it emphasized that opposition to the Council did not constitute disinterest in what would happen to Germany:

> On the contrary: on behalf of our brethren who may have to live in Germany after the war we have such an interest, and a very great one, which, however, we have to safeguard through recognized Jewish organizations and through the institutions of the United nations and not through the "Council" or similar groups.[100]

What mattered in the end was that the two most important organs of the refugee community—AMFED and *Aufbau*—set the tone of opposition to a program they held neglected Jewish interests.

That the argument of Jewish interest could be used to make a case for the Council, however, can be seen from the explanation for Leopold Jessner's participation in the organization. Jessner's friend and former secretary gave a speech in front of the Jewish Club in Los Angeles, which clearly responded to accusations that only a person with a 'confused' Jewish identity and lack of dedication to America would be driven to participate in the Council:

> Leopold Jessner's participation in the Council for a Democratic Germany is—needless to say—not dictated by a German heart, which none of us has anymore; it is dictated by his Jewish and American heart, it comes out of a feeling of solidarity with our Jewish brothers in Europe, who will have survived the decade of murder and for whom—seen from a *real*political perspective—neither the gates to America nor those to Palestine are open and will be open. It is not a German but a Jewish insight/perspective that longs for a democratic environment for the sake of these poor worn down people as a precondition for their emotional and mental [*seelisch*]

---

[100] Ibid.

> convalescence. And it is not a German but a deeply Jewish understanding which is not only concerned about compensation for robbed money and possessions but above else about the foundation for political restitution of our Jewish brethren in Europe.[101]

While other (Jewish) critics proposed that the Council was antithetical to Jewish interests, here, Jessner's spokesman argued that Jessner joined precisely because the Council's work was beneficial to and in the interest of Jews. Even though others, such as members of the AMFED as well as Manfred George, aknowledged the virtues of an interest in a democratic Germany for the sake of Jewish survivors and prospective peace, Jessner's lack of engagement with and ignorance of German atrocities against Europe's Jews did not meet understanding within the larger community.[102] Jessner was rather isolated in holding his position.

While it is difficult to capture people's motivation in hindsight, a brief but closer look at Leopold Jessner's life may offer some explanations for his stance. Together with Max Reinhardt and Erwin Piscator, Leopold Jessner had been one of the great directors of Weimar theatre. Unlike the other two, Jessner could not continue his success in the U.S., however. Even though he preached Americanization to his fellow refugees when he became active in the Jewish Club of 1933, he was not very successful in this endeavor

---

[101] "Leopold Jessner's Teilnahme am Council for a Democratic Germany ist—überflüssig zu sagen—nicht von einem deutschen Herzen diktiert, das wir alle nicht mehr haben; sie ist diktiert von seinem jüdischen und amerikanischen Herzen, d.h. aus seinem Solidaritätsgefühl mit unserern jüdischen Brüdern in Europa die das Mordjahrzehnt überlebt haben werden und denen—realpolitisch gesehen—die Tore weder Amerikas, noch Palestinas offen stehen und offen stehen werden. Es ist keine deutsche, es ist eine jüdische Einsicht, die sich für diese armen zermürbten Menschen eine demokratische Umgebung als eine Vorbedingung ihrer seelischen Rekonvaleszenz ersehnt, und es ist kein deutsches, es ist ein zutiefst jüdisches Verständnis, das sich nicht nur um den klagbaren Schadenersatz für geraubtes Geld und Gut, sondern vor allem um die Grundlage für die politische Restituierung unserer jüdischen Brüder in Europa sorgt." Mitgliederversammlung, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1944-1945, Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe

[102] George articulated in April 1943 his strong wish for the construction of a democratic Europe.

himself. Jessner died in December of 1945 at the age of 67 but had, according to his close friend Alfred Perry, seriously considered the idea of return to Germany from 1944 on.[103] These variables, together with the fact that Jessner was both a socialist and religious Jew, and a firm believer in a German-Jewish synthesis, make his decision to join the Council seem much more understandable.[104] While it is not clear how Jessner could ignore the crimes against the European Jews, himself included, this short sketch reveals the complexities of human existence and emotional belonging that characterized the lives and experiences of some of the German Jewish refugees. As the refugees' life stories and identities were complicated and inconsistent, so could be the decisions they made.

If Jessner is at one extreme of the spectrum of attitudes that German Jewish refugees held toward Germany during this time, Manfred George's stance can be regarded as the other. As a major public figure of the German Jewish refugee community and chief editor of *Aufbau*, the mouthpiece of that group, he was in a very different position of responsibility than Jessner. George was always concerned with the image, standing, and future of this community in the United States. Thus, George's articulations and calls on the refugees to abstain from having a political interest in postwar Germany and joining organizations such as the Council have to be seen in this context. When the

---

[103] From a letter from Alfred Perry to Marta Mierendorff, July 17, 1974: "If you do not wish to believe me that Jessner was willing to return to Germany, I cannot help that. However, I would point out to you a central thought in Jessner's life: The theatre, as well as the individual, must change with the requirements of time. It does not extend a great deal of understanding of your subject if you fail to appreciate that Jessner's preparedness for a return to Germany from the later part of 1944 on was different than it had been before." Marta Mierendorff Papers, Collection no. 0214, Marta Mierendorff Collection on Leopold and Fritz Jessner, 1910-1986, B1, Marta Mierendorff, Correspondence, 1965-1972, 1, 1, Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

[104] Anat Feinberg, "Leopold Jessner: German Theatre and Jewish Identity," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 48.1 (2003),120

public debate on what should be done with Germany after the war was ongoing in the summer of 1943, the U.S. State Department made known that it did not seek to cooperate with anti-Nazi Germans.[105] Moreover, other historians have pointed out that the U.S. government distrusted the motives and aims of the German emigrants in their postwar planning schemes.[106] Hence, George's strict position of non-interest and non-engagement in discussions of postwar Germany represented the safest way to situate his community in America. Besides Jessner's contrary behavior, voices of refugees who held dissenting opinions to George's position did not appear in *Aufbau* during that time. It is unclear whether this was the case because there were no dissenting voices, because people did not want to raise such voices publicly, or because George's editorial policy was particularly strict on this issue. The individual position and degree of interest refugees held toward Germany at the end of the war had certainly much to do with people's personal experiences in the old country, the fate of family members and friends, their age, family situation and integration into American life. The official principal stance of the larger organized community was to have no interest in Germany beyond issues of restitution, retribution and those that related to the immediate safe-guarding of surviving Jews in Europe.

---

[105] See Claus-Dieter Krohn, "Der Council for a Democratic Germany," Langkau-Alex and Ruprecht, *Was soll aus Deutschland werden?* 27 and fn. 32

[106] Petersen , "Das Umfeld," 71

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that in the last few years of the war, German Jewish refugees, not without difficulty, carved out a special position within America, and toward postwar Germany, and that the organized refugee community also attempted to establish their particular German Jewish position within the larger American Jewish community. In doing this, they took part, both within their community and more widely, in the debates concerning German punishment and restitution. Their discourse on these topics however (leaving George's and Jessner's very specific formulations aside) though superficially similar, is of a different quality to that outside the community. It betrays an impatience, angst, and intimacy with the events that bespeak a deeply personal connection to the debate, born of traumatic experience and the close connection of various aspects of their identity to its central questions. Overall, their engagement in this discourse resulted in a strengthening of German Jewish refugee identity, and even though this was an identity projected against Germany and deeply entrenched in a genuine attachment to America, suspicion about their allegiance to the United States from the outside, and fear of such suspicion, in turn nurtured insecurity about their position in the United States within the community. This fear prompted the leading American refugee organizations to not only emphasize their belonging to the United States, but also to encourage refugees to abstain from showing too close an interest in Germany. While Leopold Jessner's position, one that attempted to look beyond the atrocities in order to pursue a new Germany, did not meet with much understanding within the community, George's rationalist stance, advocating complete disinterest in political developments in Germany, offered an

alternative that ultimately also asked too much. Even though George insisted that the primary makeup of the refugees' identity, patriotically speaking, must be American and Jewish, their connections and special interests in Germany could not be denied and too many great questions regarding Germany demanded their interest. This is not to suggest that there was any significant positivity toward Germany or optimism for its future. To the contrary, at the end of the war and in the initial years after the war, the majority refugee opinion was suspicious and critical of the new state, regularly cautioning Americans not to be so trusting.[107] Nevertheless, the detachment from German affairs that George advocated flagged, and, as the next chapter will show, the relationship to Germany of the organized refugee community at large changed to one of critical engagement, an approach that was legitimated and even promoted by George himself.

---

[107] See, for example,"A Fateful Mistake" *Aufbau* 11 (May 18, 1945) which is critical of the ways the Allies handle the situation in Germany. Similarly, "Die Nazis haben es gut: Die Zustände in der englischen Besatzungszone"; *Aufbau* 12 (March 22, 1946) or see "Selbstbekenntnisse deutscher Schuld" a letter from Pastor Niemöller who to the Aufbau journalist despite his "very sympathetic account," in no way represents someone who could lead Germany on a new and democratic path. *Aufbau* 12 (March 8, 1946). See also interviews in Peck, *Queen City Refuge* and Wolmann, *Crossing Over*

Chapter 6

Entangled Relations: German Jewish Refugees in the United States and the West German Foreign Office

In November of 1965, the German Jewish refugee community in Los Angeles invited the local German Consul General to attend an event to commemorate the November Pogrom of 1938.[1] Afterward, the consul reported to the Foreign Office in Bonn that he had told the audience his participation in the event was "an outward sign of the beginning of a new chapter in the relationship between the German and the Israeli people [das israelische Volk]."[2] The Consul's address at that sort of commemorative event, his metaphor of the "new chapter" and his somewhat clumsy terminology, ("Israeli people" for the entire Jewish diaspora), neatly encapsulate the thrust of this chapter. Firstly, the fact that a German official had been invited by German Jewish refugees to an event that commemorated his own country's aggression toward them and that he attended and gave a conciliatory speech, shows that the relationship between German Jewish refugees and Germany had come some way since the end of the Second World War. It also shows that their relationship was mutually important—enough for engagement to have been sought and maintained. Secondly, however, the official's linguistic stumble

[1] The Austrian and Israeli Consul Generals were invited as well.

[2] In the German original: "als ein aeusseres Zeichen fuer den Beginn eines neuen Abschnitts in den Beziehungen zwischen dem deutschen und israelischen Volk." PA AA, B32, F. 211, letter from CG LA to AA Bonn, Nov. 11, 1965 As, prior to the foundation of the state, the word Israel was frequently used to refer to the Jewish diaspora, it may be that I am misreading the apparent clumsiness of this usage so soon after the establishment of the state of Israel.

points to the fact that it was a relationship fraught with misunderstandings, missteps, and often suspicion on the refugees' part. As such, it required continual learning and change. One can acquire insight into the relationship during the 1950s and 60s by focusing on West German state officials, particularly employees of the Foreign Office, on the one side and representatives of the organized German Jewish refugee community in the U. S. on the other. I argue that the relationship between Germany and former German Jewish refugees in the United States was forged largely because it was for various reasons important to both and, further, that each saw positive relations with the other as practically advantageous. In fact, at certain times, the relationship was of mutually constitutive character, each affecting the way the other group constructed or viewed itself.

For West Germany, a good relationship with German Jewish refugees in the United States was an essential part of its postwar identity construction as a 'new,' democratic country. Because of the atrocities of the Holocaust, other states evaluated the position and development of post-World War II Germany based in part on how it dealt with Jews, both those still in Germany and those abroad, and, inevitably, its relations with Israel. Furthermore, as part of this new post-war identity and to secure a solid position in the West, it was imperative for West Germany to develop a close bond with the United States in particular. Thus, because German state officials deemed German Jewish refugees in the U.S. to be influential in swaying American public opinion about Germany —at least partly reflecting the persistence of a traditional anti-Semitic notion of excessive "Jewish influence"—they engaged in outreach activities to this community in the 1950s and 60s. Yet, while historians have written about Germany's special postwar relationship

with the broader American Jewish community and Israel, they have largely overlooked the role that German Jewish refugees played for postwar Germany.[3] I will illuminate this evolving relationship and show how it influenced West German politics.

While it is relatively straightforward to pinpoint why and how this German-Jewish relationship was significant for Germany, it is more difficult to encapsulate the motivations of the German Jewish refugees. Among the approximately 90,000 refugees who came to the U.S., there were those who were averse to any kind of relationship with Germany. However, West German outreach to the community and certain actions that displayed a positive attitude toward Jews and Israel, particularly restitution, made it acceptable for many refugees to pursue various forms of contact with their former home country. Moreover, the practicalities of restitution demanded an involvement of German Jewish refugees, and the organized refugee community in particular recognized the importance that a good relationship with Germany would hold for them in this regard.

Indeed, the establishment and course of this relationship was not dictated by the German government. The refugees' status as victims of a great wrong, perpetrated by Germany, gave them a moral authority which translated into indirect political influence, at least in certain spheres, as the allies and the first West German government decided how they would deal with Germany's recent past and come to exist as a modern nation of the post-war West. The refugee community recognized the German government's need of

---

[3] See, for example Shlomo Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations: The American Jewish Community and Germany Since 1945* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), Hannfried von Hindenburg, *Demonstrating Reconciliation: State and Society in West German Foreign Policy Toward Israel, 1952-1965* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), Michael Wolffsohn and Douglas Bokovoy, *Eternal Guilt?: Forty Years of German-Jewish-Israeli Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), Niels Hansen, *Aus dem Schatten der Katastrophe: Die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen in der Ära Konrad Adenauer und David Ben Gurion: Ein dokumentierter Bericht* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2002)

their public goodwill and acted upon it to influence German conduct and further its own interests, asserting that their experiences as victims of Germany entitled them to be expert observers and judges of matters of Nazism and anti-Semitism and the overall democratization process in West Germany. Though only a few individuals from the community had direct interactions with German officials, the voice of the larger community, as expressed in their newspapers or at gatherings in their local Jewish communities across the United States, was accorded much importance by the German government. The refugees were pleased that their opinions mattered—at least to some important individuals in the German government—and did not shy away from articulating both praise and criticism of Germany or making demands on it. Thus, although Germany sought to use a good relationship with refugees to bolster its image, it was the German perception that they held such influence that actually empowered German Jewish refugees. As I will illustrate in this chapter, for many German Jewish refugees this developing relationship with Germany and the empowerment that came with it was not only practical, in that it helped them reach certain goals, but also also deeply satisfying. It gave them a voice of power and influence, instead of being simply helpless victims or mere supplicants for restitution from the German state, I argue that this relationship permitted them to finally embrace their particular German Jewish refugee identity many years after emigration.

This chapter draws heavily on documents from the Archive of the German Foreign Office, which give insight into the strategies of West German foreign policy and the everyday work of the diplomats and illuminate the interactions between the German

diplomats and German Jewish refugees at the intersection of the official and the personal. To represent the other side, I used German Jewish refugee publications and oral histories with former refugees, particularly from Los Angeles, to show how they made sense of Germany in the 1950s and 60s.

West German Foreign Policy Considerations and German Jewish Refugees in the U.S.

After the end of the Second World War, the first West German chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, recognized that the international position of the future West German state was tied to the legacy of the Third Reich—namely the wars of occupation and the annihilation of European Jews. For Adenauer, who initially also served as head of foreign relations, an important aspect in his conceptualization of German foreign policy was to address this legacy in a way that allowed the country to secure a solid position in the West and, in particular, develop a close bond with the United States.[4] While reconciliation with other nations was important in securing this position for the FRG, the ways in which postwar Germany would deal with Jews became another indicator for the Allies of whether the country was making its transition into a "new" democratic, pacifist Germany. In 1949, the declaration by John J. McCloy, High Commissioner of the American Occupation Zone, about Germany's stance toward its small Jewish community made the point explicit: "What this community will be, how it forms itself, how it becomes a part and how it merges with the new Germany, will, I believe, be watched very closely and very carefully

[4] Adenauer has been criticized for addressing the German past in purely instrumental terms to secure the internation position of the FGR. See below.

by the entire world. It will, in my judgment, be one of the real touchstones and the test of Germany's progress toward the light."[5] Organized American Jewry and German Jewish refugees were among the keenest observers and critics of this progress and paid particular attention to developments that hinted at the continuity or revival of Nazi sentiments and activities in Germany and the way Germany dealt with issues that concerned Jews.[6] This scrutiny was not lost on Adenauer, who also believed that Jews in America had great influence on public opinion in the United States (a view which unnervingly echoes one of the most common anti-Semitic stereotypes, even though Adenauer himself cannot be accused of that) and that gaining their goodwill was thus an important, if difficult to accomplish, component of his efforts to gain for Germany "acceptance as a morally equal partner of the West." Various scholars and contemporaries of Adenauer have debated to what extent Adenauer's interest in Jewish issues were motivated by moral concerns or guided by pragmatism. While personal motivations are difficult to unearth for historians, it was surely a combination of, at least, these two components that was responsible for Adenauer's politics. Some scholars refer to Adenauer's membership in a Zionist committee in 1927 and his good relationship to the Jewish community in Cologne, where he served as mayor during the Weimar Republic, as evidence for the sincerity of his ambitions. While he does seem to have held a genuine interest in the reconciliation with

---

[5] John J. McCloy, High Commissioner of the American Occupation Zone, at a 1949 conference in Heidelberg debating the question of the future of Jews in Germany. Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany*, Trans. Barbara Harshav (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 76. This declaration by McCloy was registered by the German Jewish community in the U.S. as well, as this article illustrates: "Hochkommissar McCloy über jüdische Tagesprobleme: Prüfstein für Deutschland," *Aufbau* 16 (August 4, 1950)

[6] See Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations*

and wellbeing of Jews who had suffered at the hand of the Nazis, and desired a secure future for them, then, he was also conscious that certain actions he could undertake in this regard would be beneficial to his political goals.[7]

Thus, the West German government considered it an important task of its foreign political mission to create good relationships with the American Jewish community and particularly German Jewish refugees in order to project a positive image of West Germany in the United States.[8] In order to foster these good relationships, it had to be careful to send diplomats to the United States who represented the values of the "new Germany" and who would likely be accepted by the German Jewish communities they wanted to reach. This was by no means a straightforward process. As historians have long pointed out, there was significant continuity of personnel in the West German Foreign Office from the Third Reich to the Bundesrepublik.[9] This continuity resulted in an early postwar Foreign Office in which many employees were not only unsympathetic to the Jewish cause but were demonstrably so, and thus there was a very limited pool of candidates to carry out the policy in the United States. Worse still from the point of view of German diplomacy, the legacy of Nazism in the Foreign Office could not simply be

---

[7] Jay Howard Geller, "Das Bild Adeneuers vom Judentum und seine Beziehungen zu Vertretern jüdischer Organisationen," Hanns Jürgen Küsters (ed.), *Adenauer, Israel und das Judentum*. *Rhöndorfer Gespräche* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 2004), 151 and fn. 44. See also Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations*, 166f. For discussions on Adenauer's motivations, see, for example, Michael Wolffsohn, "Wiedergutmachung oder Realpolitik - Eine Bilanz der Israelpolitik Adenauers in den fünfziger Jahren," in ibid. 212f., and other chapters in Küsters, *Adenauer, Israel und das Judentum*. Also see works by Norbert Frei.

[8] Frank Stern has pointed out that philosemitism served as the "moral legitimator of the democratic character of the Second German Republic" in its early years. Thus, good relationships with Jews were an essential part of policy. Frank Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1992), here xi.

[9] The most recent comprehensive study is Eckart Conze, Norbert Frei, Peter Hayes, and Moshe Zimmermann, *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (München: Karl Blessing Verlag, 2010)

glossed over. German Jewish refugees in the United States closely monitored the presence of Nazis within German government institutions. In the late forties and early fifties, articles in *Aufbau* offer a clear view of the community's stance toward Germany, revealing that German Jewish refugee journalists were critical and skeptical observers of the German state and society.[10] Discussions about antisemitism, denazification, the degree to which individual Germans had been and were still Nazis, and reports that many Germans were attempting to evade responsibility for their past actions were common. The presence of Nazis in the new German government was of particular concern, and a series of articles appeared on former Nazis in the German Foreign Ministry.[11] With this scrutiny from the German Jewish press, in which the journalists discussed details of the (proposed) diplomats' biographies in relation to their history during the Third Reich, the German government could not just post anyone. Hence, particularly for areas with Jewish constituencies, pragmatism demanded carefully considered appointments. In New York, for example, "[i]n response to suspicious public opinion, the consular staff... at first included such outspoken anti-Nazis as Hanna Kiep, the widow of the former consul general Dr. Otto Kiep, who had been executed after the failed coup of July 20, 1944, and the Social Democrat Dr. Georg Krauss."[12] The Consul General in New York was Dr.

---

[10] One example of *Aufbau* articles discussing certain individuals regards the German pastor Martin Niemöller, who was an early follower of Hitler but then became a leading figure in the Confessing Church. In the postwar years, several articles questioned his attitudes and activities during the Third Reich and after. An example from 1945 of Germans trying to show that they had not been Nazis was sent to *Aufbau* by a leading official of the Berlin Police which was entitled "Everybody wants to be Jewish here now," the original title: "Hier will jetzt jeder Jude sein," *Aufbau* 11 (December 28, 1945).

[11] See, for example, "Adenauers Vertrauensmann: Der Mann, der Hitlers Rassengesetze kommentierte," *Aufbau* 15 (December 16, 1949) and "Adenauers erste Ausland-Diplomaten,"*Aufbau* 16 (May 12, 1950)

[12] Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations*, 183

Heinz Krekeler, who had also never been a member of the NSDAP and "presented himself as a strong supporter of German-Jewish reconciliation" which caused Adenauer to choose him for the post.[13] He subsequently became the first West German Ambassador in Washington D.C. Dr. Heinrich Knappstein, consul general in Chicago, also did not have a Nazi past.[14]

Before opening a German consulate in Los Angeles, the German government even inquired how the local refugee community would look upon a German diplomatic mission in their city. They contacted Dr. Harry Salinger, a German Jewish refugee who had served as president of the L.A. refugee organization in 1946-1947 and went so far as to ask for his recommendation for consul.[15] Salinger recommended a man named Richard Hertz, whose case is particularly interesting. He had served in the German Foreign Office until 1937, when he "was retired" because of his Jewish ancestry.[16] He then left Germany for Mexico and spent the war years in the United States, where he lectured at various colleges, one of them in the Los Angeles area, which is presumably how he was known to Dr. Salinger. When Hertz was recruited to once again join the German Foreign office after 1951, it was a rather unconventional and unpopular move, as there existed a bias in

---

[13] Frank Lambach, *Our Men in Washington: From the first Prussian Minister Resident to the Ambassadors of the Federal Republic of Germany* (Köln: Druckhaus Rudolf Müller, 1976). Krekeler was much liked by the refugee community in New York. See, for example, a letter to the editor in *Aufbau*: "Wir haben Dr. Krekeler immer als einen einwandfreien Antinazi kennen gelernt." "Kein Zweifel über Pauls," *Aufbau* 31 (August 6, 1965)

[14] See Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations*, and for more detailed information on the biographies of these diplomats in Lambach, *Our Men in Washington*

[15] Chronicle of the Jewish Club of 1933, Compiled and composed by Alvin Barbanell, Private Collection

[16] Biography Richard Hertz, provided in email conversation by archivists from Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (PA AA)

the Foreign Ministry against reemploying people who had lost their positions in it because of National Socialist exclusion.[17] The reason for this sentiment is somewhat unclear, but there seems to have been a fear that such people would harbor anti-German sentiments.[18] In addition, there existed a regulation which prohibited posting such people to the countries where they had spent the war time, presumably in order to avoid divided loyalties.[19] Thus, within the Office, some raised objections against sending Hertz to the United States because they thought he could not adequately represent Germany in the place of his former exile. However, the consultation with Salinger makes it clear that in the context of German political reconstruction, Hertz's exile experience, and his Jewishness, were in fact principal reasons for sending him to serve as consul general in Los Angeles.[20]

This personnel strategy of the Foreign Office is evidence that the German Jewish refugees in the United States wielded a significant influence as West Germany constructed itself in the postwar period. Partly because of the importance of creating good relationships with the refugees, it was forced to assign people who would likely be accepted by those communities, either because they were already people who represented

---

[17] Conze et. al., *Das Amt*, 536f.

[18] For more details, see ibid. 542ff.

[19] Ibid., 536f.

[20] Conze et.al. *Das Amt*, 542ff. Shafir calls Los Angeles a "sensitive spot because of the growing Jewish community." Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations*, 183

a "good West German" or because they had the potential to become one.[21] Through the appointments of these diplomats, the West German Foreign Office began to change its identity in these places, even while its headquarters in Bonn initially remained largely an institution staffed with former Nazis. Reform thus took place from the periphery, as these appointments gained in influence and importance in their roles, and then as they returned to Germany.

In practice, this personnel policy often worked well for the German government in gaining the trust of refugees. When the consulate was opened in Los Angeles, for example, there existed strong disagreement within the community as to whether the refugees should have anything to do with it. On the anniversary of the German *Bundestag*, Consul Hertz gave a reception and one former refugee, Heinz Pinner, remembered that "quite a few people from the immigrant colony were invited, among them my wife and I. And when I accepted that invitation, a storm broke loose in the [local German Jewish refugee] Club. How could you accept the invitation to the Nazis?"[22] For

---

[21] Because of the large number of former Nazi party members who worked in the Office, it was not always possible to prevent their being posted to German missions in the United States. It seems, however, that the Office selected its appointments carefully and considered factors beyond party membership. For example, Georg Federer, who eventually became consul general in New York, had been a Nazi party member and career diplomat in the Foreign Office until 1945. However, his diaries, written during that time, reveal that he was "very critical of the Nazi warfare against the Jews." (Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations*, 180 and 418, footnote 3) Because of this, Krekeler, the senior German diplomat at the time, did not see any problems with Federer's appointment but nevertheless recommended that he initially keep a low profile in New York City. (Ibid., footnote 11), Federer's letters to the Foreign Office in restitution matters and the invitations he received from Jewish groups to attend their events reveal that he was indeed sympathetic to their problems and was able to gain their acceptance. (See Ibid., 191) Another prominent example of a German Foreign Office member with a questionable past who nevertheless became very prominent with German Jewish refugees—in the United States as well as in Israel—is Rolf Friedemann Pauls. Pauls was the first ambassador of the FRG to Israel and his appointment was initially met with great protest and disapproval. Rabbi Nussbaum, who features in the later pages of this chapter, was one of the first refugees who became very fond of him and expressed his admiration for him.

[22] Interview with Heinz Pinner, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: Jan. 1, 1972, LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1331811

Pinner though, and subsequently for most other refugees in Los Angeles, the identity of the particular consul mattered. He stated that, in choosing him, "Mr. Adenauer had a very lucky hand. They sent us the right man. The first one was one fourth Jewish, Herz [sic]."[23]

Invitations to representatives of the refugee community for events held at German consulates, such as the above example in Los Angeles, were not rare. In fact, from the beginning the "German diplomats were anxious to present themselves and their government's policies" to different groups within the American Jewish community.[24] They frequently reached out to popular and influential individuals among the refugee community, such as rabbis or journalists, the idea being that if these people reacted positively, others might also look more favorably at German diplomats and consequently Germany.[25] In this way, the diplomats also sought the support of some individual "pro-German" refugees, such as the New York-based lawyer Fritz Oppenheimer, who had good contacts with the U.S. State Department and German high officials, which he used

---

[23] Pinner is not aware of the controversy in the Foreign Office about to Hertz' appointment. While some people were nevertheless against commencing relationships with the German consulate, oral history interviews reveal that the Jewish background of the first consul was a well-observed fact in the community.

[24] Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations,* 191 writes that the diplomats were particularly eager to get in touch with "elite groups of the American Jewish community, who were considered more moderate than most of the middle- and lower-class activists." These elites were, among other groups, represented in the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith. Both of these groups, while not giving up their critical stance on Germany, developed an increasingly open attitude toward the idea of communicating with officials in the FRG, particularly under the motto of understanding and reconciliation and the fight against antisemitism, Neo-Nazism, racism, and intolerance. Over the years, delegations of these organizations visited Germany frequently, often upon invitation of the government or Foreign Office. See the invitation of Rabbi Nussbaum in the latter part of this chapter. For the relationship between American Jewish organizations and the West German government, see also, Wolf Calebow, *Auf dem Weg zur Normalisierung. 15 Jahre Dialog mit amerikanischen Juden* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag Arno Spitz GmbH, 1999)

[25] The latter part of this chapter gives insight into the visitor program of the German Foreign Office through which Rabbi Max Nussbaum (formerly of Berlin, then of Los Angeles) was invited to Germany several times in the 1960s, in the hope that he would change his critical outlook on his former home country.

to promote friendly relations between the two.[26] In addition, the diplomats engaged in "gesture[s] of goodwill" in an effort to reduce animosity among other refugees, such as the former chief rabbi of Cologne, to whom New York Consul General Heinz Krekeler made a visit carrying personal greetings from Chancellor Adenauer. Adenauer had been mayor in Cologne prior to the war and this, presumably positive, pre-war connection was now used to make contact.[27] These efforts were not always successful though. When Krekeler sent Passover greetings to the American Federation of Jews from Central Germany in 1951, for example, the president of the organization refused to accept them.[28] Thus, German Foreign Office outreach efforts to German Jewish refugees received mixed reactions in the early 1950s, as the community remained mostly skeptical, with its members not completely united in their attitudes toward Germany.

A discussion the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe (AFMED) organized in the summer of 1950 around the question "Are we as Jews interested in the German Problem and if so, what is our position?" exemplifies the currency of the issue in

---

[26] Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations*, 185

[27] Ibid, 184

[28] Shlomo Shafir, *American Jews and Germany After 1945: Points of Connection and Points of Departure* (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1993), endnote 25. Another way in which consuls practiced outreach was through *Aufbau*. One example is a letter to the editor from Consul Knappstein from Chicago, in which he informed the readers that he had read about a call for Chanukah donations and thus collected some money. He wrote that he hoped that the "modest amount" would be accepted "as a small sign of our good will. Wherever in the world there is a collection for children, righteous people should never be missing, and I believe, particularly as Germans, we have reason enough to participate in a collection for Jewish children." In German: "als kleines Zeichen unseres guten Willens annehmen zu wollen. Wo immer in der Welt für Kinder gesammelt wird, sollten Gutgesinnte niemals fehlen, und ich glaube, gerade als Deutsche haben wir Grund genug, dabei zu sein, wenn für jüdische Kinder gesammelt wird.""Ein Brief aus Chicago,"*Aufbau* 17 (December 7, 1951)

the community.[29] The first speaker, Rudolf Callmann, Chairman of the board of directors of the Federation, rejected the notion of German collective guilt but stressed that every Jew ought to be aware of his responsibility toward the larger Jewish community. Jews who had not experienced great personal hardship at the hands of the Germans still had to act in ways that would not downplay the atrocities that the German nation had inflicted on Jewry at large. Callmann believed that, in principle, German Jewish refugees should not engage in German problems. He added, however, that life made certain exceptions necessary, which included keeping relations with German friends who had not been implicated in the regime and being in touch with Germans over restitution issues.[30] The degree to which these exceptions were interpreted fell to the responsibility of the individual, who, as Callmann stressed, should be aware of the principal idea of non-engagement. Overall, his organization was determined to engage with German problems only in cases that would be in the interest of its members.

The second speaker of the evening, Rabbi Max Grunwald, harshly criticized attempts to interact with Germans that would minimize what had happened, stating that the "graves were still too fresh." The third speaker, however, *Aufbau* Editor in Chief Manfred George, took a different stance on Jewish engagement with Germany. Without ignoring the "Blutschuld" (blood guilt) of the Germans, he argued that the German problem had become a central European problem and that one, "particularly if one is an American of Jewish decent from Germany, had the duty to concern oneself with

---

[29] "Deutschlandfrage in der 'Federation'" about the question: "Sind wir als Juden am deutschen Problem interessiert, und wenn ja, welches ist unsere Einstellung dazu?" *Aufbau* 16 (July 21, 1950)

[30] "Deutschlandfrage in der 'Federation,'" *Aufbau* 16 (July 21, 1950)

Germany." This, he said, "was not a question of sentimental ties to personal memories, but the utilization of factual experience for the benefit of the USA and thus the world."[31] Following this objective, one year later, George met with German President Theodor Heuss. The interview George did with him was subsequently published in *Aufbau* and followed by an article in which George pointed to what he believed was the specific duty of the German Jewish refugees: to recognize that there were "a number of significant personalities and circles in Germany with whom communication [and understanding] had never been broken off."[32] He emphasized that connections with such German individuals might hold benefits not only for American politics but also for "the Jews in- and outside of Germany, and even some day for Israel."[33]

Thus, all three speakers, even though generally distrusting of Germany, did not advocate an absolute prohibition or avoidance of relations. Rather, they believed that there were certain ways in which relations with certain Germans or the German state could benefit their community and Jews more generally. This idea, as put forward so articulately by George, would become the reasoning of many refugees, particularly

---

[31] "Wer in irgendeiner Form als amerikanischer Bürger sich mit Politik beschäftige und für die demokratische Weltkonzeption der Vereinigten Staaten kämpfe, habe—und ganz besonders wenn er ein Amerikaner jüdischer Abstammung aus Deutschland sei—die Verpflichtung, sich mit Deutschland zu beschäftigen. Das sei keine Frage sentimentaler Bindung an persönliche Erinnerungen, sondern der Ausnutzung sachlicher Erfahrungen zugunsten der USA und damit der Welt." Ibid.

[32] "Zur Frage steht dass gerade diejenigen amerikanischen Bürger jüdischer Abstammung, die aus Deutschland stammen und Deutschland kennen, verpflichtet sind, ihre Kenntnisse und ihre Erfahrungen der amerikanischen Politik dienstbar zu machen ... d.h. anzuerkennen, dass es in Deutschland eine "Anzahl wesentlicher Persönlichkeiten und Kreise in Deutschland gibt, mit denen eine Verständigung nie abgebrochen war. Festzustellen, wer sie sind, welche Bedeutung sie haben, welche Möglichkeiten durch Gespräche und Beziehungen mit ihnen für die amerikanische Politik sowohl wie für die Juden in und ausserhalb Deutschlands, ja auch irgendwann einmal für Israel haben könnten, war einer der Gründe für meine Reise ..."Manfred George, "Juden und Deutsche. Vorbemerkungen zu einer Artikel-Serie und Nachbemerkungen zu einem Interview," *Aufbau* 17 (July 27, 1951)

[33] Ibid.

representatives of refugee organizations who decided to engage with Germans and Germany.

Among the German officials who did gain trust of the official representations of the organized German Jewish community in the 1950s and 60s were German President Heuss, the Social Democratic opposition leader Kurt Schumacher, and Chancellor Adenauer.[34] Significant in this thawing of relations was Adenauer's speech to the German Parliament in September 1951, in which he acknowledged the crimes that had been committed "in the German name" and declared Germany's obligation for moral and material reparations. Adenauer's speech came after much pressure from Jewish organizations within and without Germany, who had criticized the lack of commitment to restitution on the part of the German government.[35] In 1951-52, Israel and American Jewish organizations, mainly the newly founded "Jewish Conference on Material Claims against Germany" helped secure reparation settlements to Israel and to the Claims Conference, which were first set out in the Luxembourg Agreement of 1952. Adenauer hoped that the reparation payments would have a particularly positive influence on West Germany's image in the world, certainly among the American public, and would benefit Germany's efforts at political and economic integration into the West.[36]

---

[34] Rather close relationships developed between some of the German politicians and the representatives of the refugee community. Manfred George and Theodor Heuss, for example, became very friendly and communicated regularly about political and private matters until Heuss' death. See Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau*, 143.

[35] See Constantin Goschler, *Wiedergutmachung: Westdeutschland und die Verfolgten des Nationalsozialismus (1945-1954)* (München: Oldenbourg, 1992), 200f. and Ibid., 142f.

[36] Constantin Goschler has shown that "public opinion in the United States proved to be the strongest weapon in the struggle for compensation." "German Compensation to Jewish Nazi Victims," in *Lessons and Legacies VI: New Currents in Holocaust Research*, Jeffrey M. Diefendorf (ed.) (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2004), 400.

Around the world, the announcement of restitution was indeed generally received positively. Even though there were individual refugees who for various reasons neither believed in nor wanted restitution, not infrequently because they perceived it as "blood money," the organized refugee community in the U.S. responded to the prospect of restitution with approval.[37] *Aufbau*'s editors greeted Adenauer's speech as "the first step onto a rightly chosen path," and the board of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe sent a telegram to Adenauer expressing their hope that the proclamation would soon be followed by actions. This combination of welcoming positive developments and watchful skepticism was characteristic of the stance of the German Jewish community toward the FRG throughout the 1950s and 60s.[38]

German diplomats in the U.S. closely observed Jewish reactions toward restitution and actively undertook efforts to publicize information about it to communities that may not have heard about it on their own, believing in the positive impact of the message.[39] While the passing of the Luxembourg treaty and its ratification in 1953 indeed

---

[37] See different voices on this in *Aufbau.* In the aftermath of the speech, a series of letters were published in which refugees commented on what they thought about the speech, the message, and Jewish engagement with Germany. The general tone of the newspaper, and many of the responses, was rather positive toward Adenauer, but the following excerpts from refugees' letters exemplify the opposite stance, which *Aufbau* editors made a point of publicizing as well: Louis Freimann, who lost his son, daughter-in-law and 9-month-old grandson, wrote that there were perhaps a few exceptions but everybody else, "einschliesslich des Bundeskanzlers Adenauer, waren Nazis. [...] Für diese direkten und indirekten Mörder gibt es nur Untergang. Jeder jüdische Mensch, der mit diesen Schurken Freundschaft anknüpfen will, soll auch untergehen." A woman who had survived living underground in Germany during 1943-1945 wrote: "Eine Versöhnung mit dem deutschen Volk in meiner Generation gibt es nicht. [...] Sehr geehrter Herr Rabbiner Kober, für sich selbst ist es all right, wenn man sich mit den Deutschen versöhnen will aber bitte nicht für die jüdische Allgemeinheit." *Aufbau* 16 (November 14, 1951) See also the discussion in the issue from November 2, 1951

[38] In fact, when rumors were first heard that restitution might leave Allied control and be put under German authority, a series of articles appeared in *Aufbau* that illustrate the mistrust that the refugees had toward Germans and their willingness to engage in restitution. See, for example, "Restitution in deutsche Hände gelegt?" *Aufbau* 16 (September 29, 1950), (October 20, 1950), and (October 27, 1950).

[39] Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau*, 194f.

"softened the hostility" of most American Jewish pro-Zionist groups and "also affected the attitude of committed Jewish legislators on Capitol Hill," the majority of Holocaust survivors, Orthodox groups, and left or communist leaning Jews remained hostile toward Germany. Thus, the overall "impact on American Jewry at large was rather limited."[40] However, the German Jewish refugees who had initially been quite reserved toward West Germany, had, by 1954, come to see Germany in a much more positive light, following the passing of the restitution laws, the FRG's adoption of a positive position toward Israel, and various conciliatory speeches by the German president.[41]

The German diplomats in turn saw this thawing as a significant step in the rehabilitation of Germany's reputation. For them, the German Jewish refugees were of particular importance to German efforts at creating and advancing the image of a new Germany in the U.S. Partly this was a practical view: the refugees appeared to be generally less critical than American Jewry at large, and they were also easier to reach for the German diplomats, since restitution matters frequently made it necessary for the refugees to be in contact with people at the German consulates and thus offered a pretext for dialogue. But the diplomats also believed that the refugees were especially good advocates for the FRG because of their particular identity. Having been persecuted by Nazi Germany, they might have been universally expected to dislike the country and to be the least likely to speak favorably about it.[42] Hence, a favorable inclination toward

---

[40] Shafir, *American Jews and Germany*, 362

[41] See Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (PA AA), B 81, F. 334: Bericht, Dr. Knappstein CG Chicago to AA, Aug. 4, 1954

[42] PA AA, B 81, Folder (F.) 334: Consulate General (GC) San Francisco to Foreign Office Bonn (AA), Oct. 7, 1954

West Germany on their part was a far better advertisement than, for example, that of non-Jewish German-Americans. In the eyes of many diplomats, the majority of these other German-Americans represented a Germany of the past,[43] and indeed, there were some German-American groups that still held extreme nationalist and antisemitic views, which the German missions naturally made efforts to disassociate themselves from.[44] Also, even if they had not been not so politically out of line with contemporary German aims, many German-Americans seemed to some observers in the Foreign Office to have gotten stuck in "*Heimweh-Wunschprojektionen*" (projections of homesickness) of the 19th century, a way of thinking that had little to do with the image the diplomats wanted to project, that of a modern and cultured West Germany of the 20th century.[45] The majority of the German Jewish refugees with whom the diplomats came into contact were, in contrast, much closer to the imagined new West German citizen and were, as such, more suited as promoters of the new Germany.[46] They also possessed, according to a report by the Consulate General in New York, more cultural potential and importance than the vast majority of non-Jewish German-Americans.[47] This was a critical point because the diplomats deemed it especially important to sway Germany-skeptical circles of

---

[43] Ibid.

[44] The consul in New York cites, for example, Federation of American Citizens of German Descent. See PA AA, B 32 F. 239: Consulate General New York to AA Bonn, Feb. 4, 1966.

[45] PA AA, B11 F. 965: Notes of the Cultural Attaché, Diplomatic Mission Washington, D.C. to AA Bonn, June 14, 1954

[46] They were of course also the more recent group of immigrants from Germany.

[47] PA AA, B 32, F. 239: Consulate General New York to AA Bonn, Feb. 4, 1966

intellectuals, such as columnists and commentators working mainly for important opinion-shaping newspapers on the East Coast.[48]

Restitution and Other Troubles

The overall improvement of the refugees' perspective on West Germany in light of developments like restitution could not be taken for granted, however, and whenever events occurred that disturbed the image of 'a new West Germany,' the refugees were forthright in voicing their concerns. When problems arose in the actual execution of restitution in the mid 1950s, the refugees' initial softening of sentiments toward Germany was almost reversed.[49] Communicating their disappointment with Germany's arrangements for restitution, the refugees now used the German government's perception of their influence to promote their interests specifically in that program.

The refugees were aware that the German government's actions, while initiated by people who held sincere interests in German-Jewish reconciliation and the creation of a 'different' Germany, were nevertheless in large part motivated by strategic considerations. Understanding the role they played in this, namely that their treatment by Germany and their good opinion of it were an important part of legitimizing the new state, they used this position of judgement to exert pressure on the German government.[50]

---

[48] Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations*, 179

[49] In his analysis of American public opinion about Germany in regard to restitution, Norbert Frei states that in the 1950s there was skepticism about the stability of the new democracy. So, the refugees were not alone in their concerns. In the American press, concerns about a renewed rise of National Socialism and antisemitism were widespread. See Norbert Frei, "Die deutsche Wiedergutmachungspolitik gegenüber Israel im Urteil der öffentlichen Meinung der USA,"in *Wiedergutmachung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Ludolf Herbst and Constantin Goschler (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1989), 218

[50] Both of these points become very clear from reading several years worth of *Aufbau*.

In the case of restitution they did so by publishing articles in *Aufbau* that heavily criticized both its theory and practice.[51] The editors did so not only to record these opinions as news items—and in doing so publicize their discontent with Germany—but also to send messages because they knew that this public discontent would reach the German authorities. While *Aufbau* was initially only read by diplomats in the US, it soon also became important reading for politicians in Germany, particularly those who were working in the field of restitution.[52] As such, in publishing such articles, the refugees could make it clear to German politicians that as long as Germany was not living up to its promises, it could not count on their endorsement, at times even addressing them directly. An excerpt from an article about a meeting between Nahum Goldmann and German Foreign Minister Heinrich von Brentano in 1955 provides an example:

> The foreign minister will be interested to hear that through the manner of execution of the restitution legislation, and the fact that the *Dritte Masse Gesetz* [name of specific restitution legislation] has not been passed by the Bundestag, much of the credit that West Germany initially gained, will be lost. We hope and wish that West Germany's foreign minister does not only listen to the Jewish representatives with his ear but also with his heart, and that when he returns to Bonn, he will exert his not

---

[51] See, for example, Kurt Grossmann,"Sabotage der Wiedergutmachung. Zwei empörende Fälle der Praxis deutscher Behörden,""Wie lange kann eine Einundneunzigjahrige noch auf ihre Rente warten?" *Aufbau* 21 (September 30, 1955). See particularly Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau*, which focuses on the treatment of restitution in *Aufbau* and illuminates the interactions between different representatives of the organized refugee community with German officials.

[52] See Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau,* 193. *Aufbau* even had a German member of Parliament among its advisory board: Franz Böhm who was in the Bundestag for the CDU from 1953 to 1965. Böhm had been an opponent of the Nazis and their anti-Jewish laws. (*Aufbau* 26 (January 8, 1960) Also, *Aufbau* began to publish a regular special section dedicated to all restitution questions: "Die Wiedergutmachung" in 1957.

> inconsiderable influence, so that the necessary reforms in this area will finally be executed.[53]

Besides allowing them to exert public pressure on the German government in this fashion, the refugees' position of influence also allowed them a role in the procedures surrounding restitution. Through representatives like Kurt Grossmann or Hermann Muller from the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, the German Jewish refugee community was directly involved in discussing restitution issues with German politicians.[54] In addition, refugee lawyers in the U.S. were often involved with individual restitution cases—frequently through their membership in the American Association of Former European Jurists or their work with the United Restitution Organization—and they also communicated to German authorities their ideas about how restitution should be carried out.[55] A group of lawyers from Berkeley, for example, submitted a memorandum to Bonn that included proposals on how to improve *Wiedergutmachung*.[56]

---

[53] In the original: "Der Aussenminister wird [...] interessiert sein müssen, zu hören, dass durch die Art und Weise der Durchführung des Entschädigungsgesetzes und die Tatsache, dass das Dritte-Masse-Gesetz noch nicht vom Bundestag verabschiedet worden ist, viel von dem Kredit eingebüsst wird, den Westdeutschland sich ursprünglich errungen hat. Wir hoffen und wünschen, dass Westdeutschlands Aussenminister den jüdischen Vertretern nicht nur mit dem Ohr zuhört, sondern auch mit dem Herzen und, nach Bonn zurückgekehrt, seinen nicht geringen Einfluss zur Geltung bringt, damit die notwendigen Reformen auf diesem Gebiet endlich durchgeführt werden." "Konferenze Brentano—Goldmann," *Aufbau* 21 (September 30, 1955)

[54] See Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau* for more detail.

[55] See, for example, Hans Günter Hockerts "Anwälte der Verfolgten. Die United Restitution Organization," in Ludolf Herbst and Constantin Goschler (eds.) *Wiedergutmachung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,* Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte Sondernummer, München 1989, 249-271. An example of how the American Association of Former European Jurists was of interest to German officials is the visit of the Chairman of the Committee on Restitution of the German House of Representative to the Association in September of 1962. The announcement of the event says: "Mr. Hirsch has come to the United States to find out about the situation of the refugees in this country, which is of interest to him because his committee will have to pass on the 'Wiedergutmachungsschlussgesetz' now in preparation." Letter to members of the Association, Sept. 6, 1961, American Association of Former European Jurists Collection; AR 6546; box number; folder number; Leo Baeck Institute.

[56] "Zur Verbesserung der Wiedergutmachung. Eine Denkschrift des Juristenkreises von Berkeley," *Aufbau* 21 (February 18, 1955).

These connections to German officials and their role in shaping the restitution process gave many of those involved considerable satisfaction.[57] This satisfaction also percolated throughout the wider community, as the refugee press frequently publicized such connections, broadcasting the influence the refugees had gained. Underlying the many articles that appeared in *Aufbau* on this topic is a sense of pride on the refugees' part for having transformed their status from that of victims, people who had been persecuted by the German state, to that of people who could make demands on it, and were thus, in fact, actively taking part in reshaping it. In an interview in 1972, Felix Guggenheim, a refugee in Los Angeles, explained how he experienced restitution:

> ... restitution was something you fought for, and you mostly did not get what you should get, and it was a hard fight, and you didn't have to say thank you for it. […] On the contrary, the tougher you were, especially in the beginning there were a few attorneys who did not use the law, they used the toughness, and say what do you want. The house the family lived in, 900 people are dead, one is alive. Should he also be dead, so that you could keep the house? […] In other words, the mentality in the restitution, especially in the first ten years, or five years, was a fighting mentality. It was not, we have to behave and to be nice, so that Germans give us something. This is ours.[58]

Many refugees gained considerable satisfaction from being able to make these demands and from gaining results. Certainly results frequently came late, and being

---

[57] At the 20th Anniversary Annual Meeting of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, Inc. (AFJCE) in October 1960, Hermann Muller said about the organization's involvement in the process of the Federal Indemnification Law (Bundes-Entschädigungsgesetz): "It gives us great satisfaction to know that we were able to participate in the shaping of this legislation by presenting our views and suggestions to the competent authorities in close cooperation with other agencies active in this field, especially with the Council of Jews from Germany and the Legal Committee of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany." "Twenty Years American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, Inc. 1940-1960," New York: AFJCE, 1961

[58] Interview with Felix Guggenheim, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles: January 6, 1972. LBI Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1328082.

involved with restitution proceedings was in the overwhelming majority of cases a frustrating and often painful experience.[59] Even so, an analysis of sources from the organized refugee community reveals that they did not want negative feelings to be the dominant emotional reaction. Frustration and disappointment were expressed not into the void to dissipate among a community of fellow victims but to a German audience that, for its own good, needed to listen and react in a productive way.

The German consulates in the United States were important centers to which many refugees turned in their need to solve pressing problems with individual restitution claims and to articulate their frustration. In 1954, the German Embassy in Washington reported to the Foreign Office in Bonn that refugees—who they had submitted great numbers of complaints to several diplomatic missions in the U.S. about the way the restitution offices in Germany had been handling their cases. The primary source of dissatisfaction was the very long processing times that the restitution applicants were experiencing: in some cases, applicants had not heard back from the responsible offices

---

[59] An extensive and excellent body of scholarship and writings attests to that. Correspondences between former German Jews and restitution offices certainly included many in which the voice of the German Jew did not convey the confidence and entitlement to restitution that Guggenheim expressed. While most often the German Jews expressed frustration and complaint, there are also letters, in which the German Jewish refugees formulated their requests with extreme politeness and humbleness. There were even letters in which the refugee writers sounded as if the Germans were doing them a favor and as though they were sorry for the work their application created for the German officials. For more on restitution and its reception among those who applied for it, see, for example, Helga und Hermann Fischer-Hübner (eds.) *Die Kehrseite der "Wiedergutmachung:" Das Leiden von NS-Verfolgten in den Entschädigungsverfahren* (Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1990), Norbert Frei, José Brunner, and Constantin Goschler (eds.) *Die Praxis der Wiedergutmachung: Geschichte, Erfahrung und Wirkung in Deutschland und Israel* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009), Hockerts, "Anwälte der Verfolgten" and works by Cordula Lissner and Tobias Winstel.

in Germany for over two years.[60] The reports that various German consuls sent to Bonn concerning these complaints further illustrate the strategic role the refugees and restitution held in the West German effort to represent itself as a changed nation. In their letters, the consuls emphasized that disillusionment was growing among the refugee population and warned that this significantly endangered "Germany-friendly public opinion" in the United States.[61] They stressed that the refugees, who had been influential in promoting a good image of Germany, were now beginning to express harsh criticism and accusations against the country. The Consul General in Chicago, for example, wrote to Bonn that the refugees in his administrative district felt that, "perhaps the government and the parliament had the best intention and will to carry out a just restitution, but that these efforts were sabotaged by the civil servants in charge, using bureaucratic excuses."[62] An even more extreme accusation by the refugees, even if it was put forward only sporadically, was "that the Federal Republic, by making all their statements about their intention to make restitution, had only wanted to win over public opinion in the

---

[60] PA AA, B 81 F. 334: Diplomatische Vertretung Washington, D.C. to AA, Bonn, July 26, 1954. Delays were caused by the complex restitution bureaucracy while various problems arose because of restitution office staffing, see Boris Spernol, Matthias Langrock, "Amtliche Wirklichkeit: Die Praxis der Entschädigung aus behördlicher Binnenperspektive," in *Die Praxis der Wiedergutmachung: Geschichte, Erfahrung und Wirkung in Deutschland und Israel*, Norbert Frei, José Brunner, and Constantin Goschler (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009), 600-634. See other scholarship on the execution of restitution laws, such as Fischer-Hübner, *Kehrseite der "Wiedergutmachung* or Alfons Kenkmann, Christoph Spieker, and Bernd Walter (eds.) *Wiedergutmachung als Auftrag: Begleitband zur gleichnamigen Daueraustellung–Geschichtsort Villa ten Hompel* (Essen: Klartext 2007)

[61] These are the words used in the "regards" line of several of the letters from the consuls. See different documents in PA AA B 81, F. 334

[62] PA AA, B 81, F. 334: Bericht, Dr. Knappstein CG Chicago to AA, Bonn Aug. 4, 1954. Knappstein actually refers to the refugees as "Emigranten," which of course has a different connotation, making them appear as having left Germany willingly.

world and in the United States. In reality, however, they intended to let restitution peter out in bureaucratic quicksand."[63]

Communicating these sentiments and complaints to Bonn, the consuls emphasized to the Foreign Office that it should stress the political dimension of restitution to the responsible offices and people in Germany. Consul General Hertz in Los Angeles wrote that, from abroad, it seemed like the civil servants in Germany who had been entrusted with restitution evaluated the whole matter entirely by applying fiscal and legal measures but neglected the effects their work had on foreign policy. The damage and the loss of prestige that would result from treating restitution matters in such a way, he argued, would be completely disproportionate to the money that Germany might save in the end.[64] Other similar statements by German diplomats demonstrate that as a group they saw it as an urgent matter to solve the complications that had arisen in regard to restitution in order to prevent damage to Germany's image in the United States. Protecting Germany's reputation was, after all, their job.

Beyond the pragmatic argument regarding diplomacy, however, the diplomats' letters also reveal a second level of support for more efficient restitution. In addition to arguing that it was important to clear up problems because they jeopardized Germany's reputation in the US, they also argued that it was important to do so because the delays

---

[63] Ibid.

[64] PA AA, B 81, F. 334: Letter, Richard Hertz, CG Los Angeles, to AA Bonn, Feb. 28, 1955. The pragmatic aspect of restitution comes through in many letters. To give just one additional example: a few years later, when a proposal was discussed to send German physicians to the U.S. to speed up and smooth still existing problems with restitution proceedings, New York Consul General Federer expressed that in his view, the amount of money that Germany would have to spend to do so would be small in comparison to the millions that are usually spent for public relations efforts. PA AA, B 81, F. 334: Letter, Federer, GC New York, to Ministerialdirektor Dr. Friedrich Janz, Bundeskanzleramt, Dec. 26, 1960

were ethically and morally wrong. In their letters, the diplomats not only confirmed the refugees' complaints but emphatically and at length described different cases in order to demonstrate the existential need that people were in, as many were unable to achieve financial security after having come to the United States as refugees from Nazi persecution.[65] The empathy with which these letters were composed and the fact that they portrayed the refugees' suffering as a consequence of Nazi persecution—at a time when direct references to German responsibility were almost always absent in the responses that reached the consulates from restitution officials in Germany—demonstrates that the diplomats had a stake in the *moral* obligation that lay behind restitution.[66] In their letters, several consuls condemned the insufficient productivity of the German restitution offices, criticized aspects of the restitution laws, and drew attention to the lack of empathy and factual knowledge among those who were dealing with restitution cases in Germany.

---

[65] They emphasized that many of the refugees were old and not well, and that, if their restitution cases were to be delayed even longer, they would possibly never be able to make use of the money. A representative of the San Francisco consulate gave a most harrowing example, when he illustrated the case of one Dr. Epstein, who had survived the war in Shanghai and arrived in San Francisco at the age of 60. The man had been an attorney in Germany, but he and his wife were forced to live in abject poverty, as they were only able to secure menial jobs in the U.S. While his restitution case was still pending, Dr. Epstein got word that so-called Shanghai refugees were not eligible to receive restitution. Upon hearing this information, Epstein fell into a depression and committed suicide. Besides referring to the negative publicity this story generated —it had been picked up by some San Francisco newspapers--the diplomat insisted that "this case shows that especially older persecutes, who cannot get employment here, are particularly dependent on the assistance provided through restitution and that particularly these people have to be helped as fast as possible." PA AA, B 81, F. 334: Letter, Liebrecht, GC San Francisco, to AA Bonn, Oct. 7, 1954 See the above cited letters as well as other reports from Seattle, Boston, and from diplomatic missions in Canada and France, in PA AA, B 81, F. 334

[66] See, for example, PA AA, B 81, F. 334: Letter, Richard Hertz, CG Los Angeles, to AA Bonn, Feb. 28, 1955. The letters that diplomatic missions received from the Foreign Office and other offices dealing with restitution questions such as the Ministry of Finance, rarely contain any acknowledgment of the moral implications of these restitution problems but rather exemplify the diligent bureaucrat, referring to paragraphs and financial restrictions. See, for example PA AA, B 81: 334: Letter, Office Bundesminister der Finanzen to AA Bonn, Aug. 23, 1953; Letter, Blessin, Bundesminister der Finanzen to AA Bonn, Sept. 22, 1954

At this point, it is worth reiterating that the diplomats who wrote these letters criticizing German restitution legislation and practice had been put in place precisely because the Foreign Office saw them as having the potential to understand and connect with the refugees. Living up to this expectation, these German diplomats in the United States actually embodied and acted in accordance with the image some West German politicians wished to project and create. In this way, part of the creation of the "good Federal Republic of Germany," in both image and personnel in fact happened outside of German territory in its diplomatic missions, considering that in the 1950s and 1960s, the politics and views of large parts of the German population did not match that image.[67]

Restitution proceedings, and particularly problems arising out of the process, led to increased interaction between German Jewish refugees and the Foreign Office, and by extension other German officials. The refugees observed these efforts on their behalf and generally appreciated the ways in which the German diplomats handled their restitution problems, often looking at Germany in a more favorable way as a result, acknowledging

---

[67] See, for example Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, *Anti-Semitism in Germany: The Post-Nazi Epoch Since 1945* (New Brunswick, N.J., U.S.A: Transaction Publishers, 1997) and Stern, *Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge*

the existence of well-meaning and decent German officials.[68] Refugees from Los Angeles recalled, for example, that while there were those who never entered into relationships with the German consulate as a matter of principle, even if they actually needed certain documents, many others changed their opinions after they experienced positive interactions in restitution matters.[69] In order to move opinion among refugees further toward the positive view of restitution, and thus Germany, by smoothing the stuttering

---

[68] See, for example, interview with Heinz Pinner. Upon the question: "Do you also think that there was an understanding of post-War Germany, that was fostered by the consulate?" he answered: "In some ways yes. I think you have the same experience in New York. All these four or five consuls we had, one after the other, tried to make personal contact with, first with the, let's call them leaders of the colony, but then for their big reception on the occasion of a New Year or so, where they have 200 people or more coming, there are all kinds, especially people who work with the consulate, like the Vertrauensärzte, the Vertrauensanwälte, whatever, who worked for the consulate, or who are recommended by the consulate. And then people who are customers, as I call them, of the consulate, who go with their claims directly to the consulate without lawyers, and find that they are treated very nicely." Interview with Heinz Pinner conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: Jan. 1, 1972, LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1331811. While Atina Grossmann writes that "interactions with representatives of German consulates" were "almost always distinctly unpleasant," (Atina Grossmann, "Family Files: Emotions and Stories of (Non)-Restitution," *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 34.1 (May 2012): 59-78) in Los Angeles, the overwhelming experience seemed to have been positive, however. An article in the Jewish Club *Mitteilungsblatt* reported about a man who used a Club event on restitution to criticize the local Consulate. Members of the Jewish Club were indignant about this accusation, stating that they had only positive experiences with the local consulate and its employees who had always acted with "greatest complaisance" ("Zuvorkommenheit). *Mitteilungsblatt* 20, no. 2 (February 1966) Also, in my readings of *Aufbau*, most refugees describe the relationship to the people working at the Consulate as positive. See also Tobias Winstel,"Über die Bedeutung der Wiedergutmachung im Leben der jüdischen NS-Verfolgten. Erfahrungsgeschichtliche Annäherungen," in, *Nach der Verfolgung: Wiedergutmachung nationalsozialistischen Unrechts in Deutschland?* ed. Hans Günter Hockerts and Christiane Kuller (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003), 199-227, particularly pgs. 208f.

[69] Heinz Pinner, remarked: "There are still people, and I don't argue with them, who refuse to go to the Consulate, even if it is to get necessary [documents]…. for notarization or legalization. They just don't go there, and if a person has lost twelve relatives out of thirteen or fourteen, I don't blame him, I don't argue with him. But the others have realized, quite a few at least, over the years that the next generation of Germans should not be held responsible for what their fathers and grandfathers did; and the German Federal Republic, you can still say they didn't do enough, but did more than any of us expected when we left Germany." Interview with Heinz Pinner, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: Jan. 1, 1972, LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1331811 See also, for example William Stagen, who said: "people…who don't like too much a relationship with the German Consul General. Maybe they are accustomed to it now, because they see them and they know. And they feel that they also did something, a lot, when it came to restitution, to claims, and so forth and so forth. They have always been very helpful." He added at another time of the interview: "We were very lucky in having consuls here who showed a lot of sympathy for us." Interview with William Stagen, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: Jan. 1, 1972. LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1337416.

progress of restitution claims, the German government thought it useful to send officials involved in restitution work within Germany to the United States. The idea was first proposed by a representative of the American Association of the Former European Jurists who thought that if those officials could see with their own eyes what the situation of the restitution applicants was, this would then lead to a more efficient processing of the cases in the restitution offices back in Germany.[70] After the Germans concluded that the cost of sending people on this trip would be justified by the result, and after securing additional funds from the American State Department, a small group of German officials working on restitution traveled to the U.S. in the early summer of 1957.[71] Besides meeting with people working on restitution at the diplomatic missions, the German officials appeared at events set up by the local refugee organizations in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, which all recorded large numbers of attendees.[72] In Los Angeles, the Jewish Club of 1933 organized a forum on restitution on June 6 with Georg Blessin of the Ministry of Finance and Kurt Brockhaus, a representative of the Berlin Senate. The message the two men brought to the community was that the refugees could and should trust the sincerity and goodwill of the German government.[73] They explained that there was no reason to doubt Germany's ability and intention to meet the

---

[70] See, Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau*, 200.

[71] Ibid. Part of the letter from Reifferscheidt to AA Bonn from Jan. 12, 1956 read: "um sich an Ort und Stelle selbst zu überzeugen, wie die Verhältnisse hier unter den Immigranten liegen und ihre Stimmung kennen zu lernen, dann könnte ganz allgemein die Erledigung der Entschädigungsfälle in Deutschland zweckmäßiger und rascher gestaltet werden." The Claims Conference was interested in making these trips a reality and secured funding from the U.S. State Department. See Ibid. 200f.

[72] Ibid. 201

[73] Henry D. Sass, "Forum über die Wiedergutmachung," *Mitteilungsblatt* XI, no. 7 (July 1957)

financial obligations of restitution and that delays and problems were simply because of administrative and technical difficulties, which were expected to be solved in due course. They clearly sought a sympathetic understanding of these issues among the refugee population, and thus a stay of the public pillorying of Germany for not living up to its obligations. The officials' trip was successful in uplifting the sentiments and hopes of many refugees in these places at least momentarily.[74] In response to the Los Angeles event, the editors of the L.A. Club's publication printed the following:

> In conclusion, one dare say that the Federal Government and the City of Berlin chose their best messengers of good will, that no one could have possibly closed oneself off to their genuine good will as representatives of their governments, and that the gentlemen left with a sense of having fulfilled the aim and purpose of their mission.[75]

> Even though troubles and problems in restitution did not disappear in the following years, the refugees appreciated the attention German authorities paid to their opinions on the matter and recognized that their protest did reach certain individuals with authority who took their problems seriously. When, in late 1957, German Minister of Finance Fritz Schäffer ignited serious upheaval again with his criticism of restitution, the refugees

---

[74] Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau*, 202f.

[75] Ibid.

responded by putting pressure on German officials whom they trusted to represent their interests positively.[76]

By the late 1950s then, the relationship of the organized refugee community in the U.S. to Germany had become established as one of alternating criticism and praise. When at the turn of the year 1960 a series of anti-Semitic incidents—more than 470 cases of swastika smearings and desecrations of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries—occurred in Germany, the German Jewish refugees, as well as all major American Jewish organizations and press outlets of the West reacted with great concern.[77] These incidents did not shatter the relationship between German Jewish refugees and German officials, however, but rather strengthened its characteristics, both of praise and criticism. In January of 1960, *Aufbau*'s pages were filled with analyses and reports on the antisemitic occurrences and the state of German society. In these, various regular journalists, as well as special contributors such as well-known community leader Rabbi Joachim Prinz, presented themselves as experts on the topic and voices of authority, offering criticism

---

[76] See Ibid. 203-215 for details. The refugees knew that there were people they could trust but that they were not the rule in Germany. At the annual meeting of the AMFED in May 1956, Benjamin Ferencz (not a German Jewish refugee but someone who had spent considerable time in Germany in the postwar period) presented his observations on the German scene. About restitution and trustworthy officials, he said: "As far as the attitude of the officials is concerned, it depends upon the official. If you are talking to the Federal Chancellor—his attitude is marvelous. Without the attitude and the spirit of Chancelor [sic] Adenauer, I am quite sure, this program would have taken a substantially different turn. That spirit passes down through the ranks in various degrees." About the people who work in the restitution office and may question restitution, he wrote: "Such approaches are largely deficiencies of small people, without vision, understanding or sympathy. They are not policies of the Federal government." (22) About the general population, he reported that there was a "complete lack of any sense of guilt and remorse about what happened." (29) "Generally, however, throughout the country, there is no sense of shame, there is no sense of guilt, there is no remorse, there is a feeling that something unpleasant happened that should be quietly forgotten." (30) Benjamin B. Ferencz, "Observations after ten years in Germany," American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, Inc., *Annual Meeting, Reports and Addresses* (New York City: 1956)

[77] On the reaction of different sections of the American Jewish community, see Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations*, chapter 11.

and advice.[78] They issued warnings that the German authorities should not take the incidents lightly and also that they ought to clean up Nazis in their own ranks. At the same time, they complimented those, for example officials in Berlin, who in their eyes reacted appropriately to the "Nazi activities."[79]

At the same time as the refugees engaged in this commentary of praise and criticism, German officials, and particularly diplomats in the United States, reached out to the refugee community in efforts to assure them that such incidents were neither tolerated by the German government nor representative of the majority opinion of the German people. For example, Consul Georg Federer released a statement that was broadcast on a New York radio station and subsequently published in *Aufbau* and which ended with the following words:

> Restitution payments to the State of Israel and to tens of thousands of former Nazi victims have proven to the world that democratic Germany accepts the responsibility emanating from its terrible past. Today, German courts render rigorous judgments against those criminal elements that have tried to again fish the swastika out of the gutter ...[80]

---

[78] See also the telegram Siegfried Moses, president of the Council of Jews from Germany, the international organization of German Jewish refugees, sent to then German president Heinrich Lübke. Moses wrote that the antisemitic incidents of 1959/60 represented the looming "shadows of a horrible past." Invoking the Jewish victims of the past, he appealed to the German government in the hope that it would not only make speeches and declarations but "recognize the symptoms of an illness of moral dimensions and systematically and indiscriminately destroy its roots." See "Protest des Council of Jews from Germany" *Aufbau* 26 (January 22, 1960) Further, the community organized events, such as the lecture "Vortrag über Deutschland" by Bruno Weil at the New York New World Club (*Aufbau* 26 (January 15, 1960). Interestingly, *Aufbau* journalists did not exclusively blame Germany for the attacks but pointed to an international fascist conspiracy. See *Aufbau* 26 (January 8, 1960) and subsequent issues.

[79] In Berlin, law enforcement cracked down vigorously on people they suspected of having been involved in the antisemitic acts. See Kurt Kersten, "Hintergründe der Nazi-Aktionen: Der Abwehrkampf West-Berlins," *Aufbau* 26 (January 15, 1960) Rabbi Joachim Prinz was an important German Jewish leader and thinker who arrived in the United States as a refugee in 1937. There, he became involved in American Jewish organizational life as vice-chairman of the World Jewish Congress and the World Zionist Organization. He also became very active in the Civil Rights Movement and was a main speaker at the March on Washington in 1963.

[80] *Aufbau*

While such words certainly did not relieve the concern of all refugees about the recent events in Germany, they made sure that relations and a dialogue between the refugees and the German government remained possible. Arguably it was these events that motivated and inspired a more intense dialogue between the two groups, inspiring interest and commentary on the part of the refugees, while necessitating an intensification of official German efforts to keep that critical community on Germany's side.[81]

Another, more explicit effort that the German government began to employ to gain or keep individual refugees as advocates was the bestowal of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic. The Order of Merit was established by President Heuss in 1951 to be "awarded for achievements in political, economic, social, and intellectual realms that served the rebuilding of the fatherland and is intended to honor all those whose actions contribute to the peaceful development of the Federal Republic of Germany."[82] Clearly, for the German government, German Jewish refugees who supported friendly relations with the country in the postwar period might be seen to have contributed to the improvement of the country, as they served as legitimators of its new democratic and especially anti-Nazi identity. In 1959, one of the first refugees on whom President Theodor Heuss chose to confer the award was the long time editor-in-chief of *Aufbau,*

---

[81] Before and during the Eichmann Trial (1961/1962), officials in the Foreign Office were also very sensitive to fostering a good image of Germany. For that reason, one diplomat suggested that Germany circulate books on German resistance during the Nazi period through the German missions. See correspondence in PA, AA, B.32 F. 11. Other events, such as the meeting between Adenauer and Ben Gurion in March 1960 in New York provided news that aided the development of more positive perspectives on Germany. In general, West Germany's relations with Israel played an essential role in the way German Jewish refugees in the United States evaluated Germany.

[82] "Der Verdienstorden der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," Bundespräsidialamt (ed.), Berlin, 2009. http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/verdienstorden.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

Manfred George, in recognition of his efforts at improving German-Jewish relations.[83] George, however, declined the honor, believing that the larger community did not understand the FRG to be quite as new and anti-Nazi as it wanted to project itself and was unlikely to approve of him receiving an award from that country. In his letter to Heuss, George expressed his appreciation for the gesture but explained that he felt accepting the award was likely to endanger his efforts at German-Jewish reconciliation.[84] This example illustrates the complexity and constraints of the German-Jewish relationship during this time. While it had become acceptable for many refugees to engage with Germany, especially in order to further Jewish interests, and while some refugees held an optimistic view of Germany, particularly those with direct access to and regular interactions with well-meaning Germans, skepticism toward the new Germany nevertheless clearly prevailed over unreserved trust. That the skepticism was justified was made clear by the wave of antisemitic acts that swept across Germany at the end of 1959. One refugee, Ludwig Lowenstein, who had been on the list to receive the Order of Merit in early 1960, was prompted by these occurrences to "indefinitely defer" the acceptance of the honor.[85] He ultimately did accept it in November of 1960 and on that

---

[83] Ernst Wolfgang Becker, Martin Vogt, and Wolfram Werner (eds.), *Theodor Heuss, Der Bundespräsident, Briefe 1949-1954* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 470, fn. 3

[84] See Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau*, 143.

[85] Ludwig Lowenstein, sometimes Loewenstein or Löwenstein, was the president of New York City's New World Club in the 1950s and 60s. PA AA, B 32, F. 111: German Embassy Washington, D.C. to AA Bonn, Feb. 6, 1960

occasion expressed his interest in "a permanent improvement of the German Jewish relationship."[86]

For the refugee, receiving this honor most certainly carried deep personal satisfaction.[87] While perhaps not unanimously accepted by their own community, the award marked their engagement with Germany as serving a peaceful as well virtuous cause, something one could personally feel good about and that most refugees would find difficult to argue against.[88] For Germany, a refugee's acceptance of this award was a clear success, as it announced that a prominent Jew approved of Germany in the new identity it was trying to project. While one might argue that the bestowal of the Order of Merit was a particularly transparent attempt by German officials to buy the support of individual refugees in order to polish the new Germany's image, Lowenstein's deferment and George's refusal of it demonstrate that the award was by no means a straightforward

---

[86] "dass ihm an einer staendigen Verbesserung des deutsch-juedischen Verhaeltnisses gelegen sei." PA AA, B 32, F. 111: Federer to AA Bonn, Nov. 21, 1960

[87] This was more likely for those people who had held important positions in pre-war Germany and strong German identities and had suffered greatly from the experience of having been cast out by the state and country they had firmly believed in. Thus, it was often older people who were more inclined to engage in relationships with Germany.

[88] One might even argue that for Germany the stake of the refugees accepting this award was higher than for the refugees.

process decided unilaterally by Germany and that ultimately the refugees held the power to bestow their public approval or not.[89]

Rabbi Max Nussbaum, West Germany, and American Jewry

As we have seen so far, for the German government, a good relationship with German Jewish refugees was important in its efforts to create a good image of Germany in the United States. While it kept up a dialogue with well-inclined German Jewish refugees like Manfred George and took actions that demonstrated its goodwill to the greater community, German officials were also interested in gaining the trust of other critical individuals who they believed held influence over public opinion. In the following section, I will offer a case study of one such German Jewish refugee, his interactions with Germany, and his role as opinion maker in the United States. The case of Rabbi Max Nussbaum furthers my argument about the importance of the relationship to both sides, shows how Israel became an increasingly important variable in the German (American) Jewish relationship in the 1960s, and further illuminates the balance of power in this relationship.

---

[89] While touching on the case only briefly, Cordula Lissner uses a very critical tone in regard to the case of one German Jewish refugee lawyer being awarded the Order of Merit. Cordula Lissner, "'In der Justiz lebe ich wie im Exil:' Zur Rückkehr jüdischer Juristen und Juristinnen,"in *NS-Unrecht vor Kölner Gerichten nach 1945,*ed. Anne Klein, Jürgen Wilhelm (Köln: Greven Verlag Köln, 2003), 75-88. This also intersects with what Norbert Frei has termed *Vergangenheitspolitik*. Norbert Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (München: Beck, 1996). I have come across quite a number of German Jewish refugees who received this decoration from the German government, generally for activities that were seen to have served German-Jewish reconciliation. The award could be for writing articles about Germany as journalists, such as Tom Tugend, for working as *Vertrauensanwalt* for the German consulate, such as John Baer, or for being active in creating connections between their new communities and Germany, as in the case of Ernest Herman or Rudi Fehr who were active in the Los Angeles-Berlin Sister City Committee.

Max Nussbaum was rabbi of Temple Israel in Hollywood from 1942 to his death in 1974. Born in Bukovina, educated in Breslau and Würzburg, he had come to Berlin in 1934 and fled from the Nazis to the United States in the summer of 1940.[90] After spending time as rabbi and lecturer in Oklahoma, he arrived in Los Angeles in September 1942 to take up his position at Temple Israel, where he found many German Jewish refugees among his congregants, some of whom he had even known back in Berlin.[91] Besides his work in the congregation, Nussbaum became active in American Jewish life and over the years held leadership positions in several large American Jewish organizations, such as the vice-presidency of the American Jewish Congress, the presidency of the Zionist Organization of America, and the chair of the American Section of the World Jewish Congress.[92] In these capacities, in addition to his personal background and that of many of his congregants, Nussbaum maintained an interest in Germany and frequently addressed topics concerning it in public.[93] His background gave

---

[90] See Lewis M. Barth and Ruth Nussbaum (eds.), *Max Nussbaum: From Berlin to Hollywood, A Mid-Century Vision of Jewish Life* (Malibu: Joseph Simon/Pangloss Press, 1994) for more details on his life.

[91] Historian Michael A. Meyer's family was among those who joined the Temple because they had known Nussbaum in Germany. Meyer recalled that his parents were the first couple Rabbi Nussbaum ever married back in Berlin. His family emigrated to Los Angeles, and, when his grandmother saw in the newspaper that Max Nussbaum was coming to Los Angeles, his parents joined his congregation in Hollywood. There were not as many German Jewish refugee members in Nussbaum's congregation as in Jacob Sonderling's at the Fairfax Temple. Many of his German congregants had been in Los Angeles prior to the arrival of the refugees. Among the congregants were many Zionists as well also famous people from the entertainment industry. Personal conversation with Michael A. Meyer, Cincinnati, OH: September 5, 2012. See also Ibid, 16

[92] See Ibid.18-20 for exact dates and details. It must be noted that over all and by comparison, Israel took up much more of his attention than German topics.

[93] After his arrival in the U.S. in the 1940s, for example, he gave many lectures on the situation in Germany. During and after the war, he shared his opinions on the country in sermons and speeches. See for example a sermonette on Sept. 1, 1950 entitled "Germany-our newest ally?" Manuscript Collection No. 705 (Ms. Coll.), Max Nussbaum (1928-1974), Series C. Sermons (1932-1974), Box 4, Folder 5 (4/5), Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (AJA)

him a position of authority, in this regard, particularly among American Jews. In 1953, for example, he was one of the delegates of the United Jewish Appeal who travelled to Berlin, Paris, and Israel to report back to the UJA about the situation of Jews in these localities.[94] In 1958, upon his return from another such trip, he delivered a sermon in which he also commented on the state of Germany:

> This Germany of today, about which so much has been written and so much said, is not easy to define. There are people in the American Government who are completely convinced of the Western allegiance of Germany. I wouldn't sacrifice my life on this premise. I am not so convinced of it. [...] The movement toward neutralism is growing in all the places. You feel it in Berlin too. [...] Where is Germany heading? --the question you expect me to answer. How far has it rejuvenated itself or went through any experience of cleansing its soul? I had one fascinating experience that might answer the question.[95]

The experience Nussbaum referred to was that of two very antithetical speeches he heard in Berlin at an event to commemorate those who had taken part in the assassination attempt on Hitler on July 20, 1944 and were subsequently executed by the Nazis. The first speaker was Berlin's Minister of the Interior, Joachim Lipschitz. According to Nussbaum, his address was one "which, coming back to Germany after so many years, you expect to hear [...] which made you feel there is a new voice and it may be a new turning point."[96] Lipschitz, half Jewish and a member of the Social Democratic Party, reminded the audience that it was imperative that they face their responsibility for creating a German past that saw "brutality," "slavery," and the murder of millions in

---

[94] His trip and also his Passover Service in West Berlin for Jews who had fled the Eastern zone was mentioned in the major Los Angeles newspapers and the *B'nai B'rith Messenger*

[95] Max Nussbaum, "European Jewry and Berlin Revisited," August 22, 1958, The is the original English language version written by Nussbaum. Ms. Coll. 705, 5/5, AJA

[96] Ibid.

death camps.[97] The second speech was delivered by the Federal Minister of the Interior, Christian Democratic politician Gerhard Schröder. In it, Schröder made the point that the Third Reich lasted only for a very short time, that it would be wise to forget about it, and the sooner the better. The major concern he articulated at this memorial was that the "Fatherland is bleeding because the nation is not unified yet."[98] Nussbaum's conclusion from this experience was that there were some Germans, particularly Chancellor Adenauer and President Heuss and the Social Democrats, who could be trusted. If the future was with them, one could be optimistic. However, should Germany be dominated by conservatives of the likes of Schröder, who had been a Nazi party member, Nussbaum saw no good outcome. Thus, his message offered a warning...

> ... to the Western nations not to fall so easily into a trap again. I am not so sure at all whether that is not going to be the nation which may be the cause for another war, and another one, and another one unless the big nations on the outside understand this danger and neutralize it to a point by which she never becomes a great power again.[99]

Nussbaum published a version of this criticism of Germany and also of Western and particularly American ambitions to build up Germany as a NATO stronghold against

---

[97] According to Nussbaum, Lipschitz said: "if such a memorial service should make any sense, should have any message to us and to the young generation then we have to understand each time we think of that period one has to go back to the very basic fact of what happened; that a crucial time in Germany [sic] history our nation in having the choice between freedom and brutality selected brutality; that at a crucial point in the selection where it could make up its mind between slavery and liberty, it chose slavery; that it is upon its conscience and upon its hand and the blood has still to be felt of the millions who we sent to death camps; and that this is the only point that matters and ought not to disappear from German memory for generations to come." Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid. This is the original English version written by Nussbaum.

the East a few weeks later in *Aufbau*, thus reaching not only the greater German Jewish refugee community in the world but also the newspapers' critical German readers.[100]

Nussbaum's opinions frequently reached wide audiences. In 1959, at the instigation of the news agency Voice of America, Nussbaum wrote a speech addressed to the German people to be broadcasted via RIAS (the radio in the American sector in Germany) on the eve of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.[101] In the speech entitled "Is Forgiveness possible?" Nussbaum's message was consistent with the tenor of alternating, sometimes simultaneous, praise and criticism characteristic of the German Jewish refugee stance on Germany during these years. He said that while the German people had already taken some steps in the right direction by engaging in actions that demonstrated good will, there were nevertheless "reactionary forces ... still dreaming of the splendors of a national socialist Germany."[102] Appealing to his listeners, Nussbaum expressed the "hope that the good, decent, and progressive voices in the Bundesrepublik will prevail in this desperate struggle for the German soul. Only then will real atonement occur."[103]

In the next several years, however, several German actions communicated the impression that a German desire for atonement and reconciliation with the Jewish people

---

[100] See Max Nussbaum "Journey with History," *Aufbau* 24 (Sept. 3, 1958), part 1 and *Aufbau* 24 (Sept. 26, 1958), part 2

[101] Max Nussbaum, "Ist Versöhnung möglich?"*Aufbau* 25 (September 10, 1959)

[102] Script, "Is Forgiveness possible?" Ms. Coll. 705, 5/6, 1959, AJA

[103] Ibid.

was rather distant.[104] In 1964-1965, the German Parliament debated the extension of the Statutes of Limitation, the legislation that would allow for the continued persecution of Nazi war criminals. When, in the late fall of 1964, the German government first announced that it did not intend to extend the Statutes of Limitation, in the result was great public criticism.[105] Max Nussbaum was again one of the German Jewish refugees who spoke up. In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, he condemned the German policy, pointing out what this meant particularly for its relationship with Jews:

> If the Germany of today desires to be a member of Western society, not only on a political but on the purely human level, and it expects, as it says it does, a future dialogue with the Jewish people—then it has to solve its human problems first by a complete repudiation of its horrendous past.[106]

In addition to the issue of the Statutes of Limitation, the German government also faced criticism for allowing a great number of German scientists and engineers to work for Egyptian President Nasser's armament industry. In the eyes of Nussbaum, the Germans were not only not taking responsibility for destroying Jewish lives in the past in this instance but were again threatening Jewish well-being in the present and future. In early 1965 the crisis around these issues peaked when the West German government

---

[104] Of course, the early sixties also saw the establishment of the Central Office of the State Justice Administration for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes (Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung nationalisozialistischer Verbrechen) in Ludwigsburg, the Eichmann Trial, and the Auschwitz Trials. As such, the crimes of the Nazis were important subjects of public attention in Germany. For a short overview, see Detlef Siegfried, "Zwischen Aufarbeitung und Schlußstrich. Der Umgang mit der NS-Vergangenheit in den beiden deutschen Staaten 1958-1969," in *Dynamische Zeiten: Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften*, ed.Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried, and Karl Christian Lammers (Hamburg: Christians, 2000), 77-113.

[105] The German Ambassador Heinrich Knappstein wrote an article published in *Aufbau* explaining the West German government's actions in this regard (December 25, 1964)

[106] Nussbaum responded to an article that had appeared in the Los Angeles Times a few weeks prior, which had condemned West Germany's policy on Nazi War Criminals as immoral. Max Nussbaum, "Rabbi Criticizes West German Policy on Nazi War Criminals," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 30, 1964, morning edition, Ms. Coll. 705, Scrapbooks X-470, AJA

stopped its regular armament shipments to Israel, because Egypt's President threatened to recognize the sovereignty of the East German state.[107] Egypt's recognition of East German sovereignty would have forced West Germany to either abandon one of its key policies—the Hallstein Doctrine, which stipulated that the FRG would not maintain diplomatic relations with a state that recognized the GDR—or to cease diplomatic relations with Egypt. In this situation, the FRG government halted its weapons shipments to Israel, a decision that met with great criticism domestically and internationally and created, according to one German diplomat, "possibly the Federal Republic's worst foreign policy crisis since its foundation."[108]

The response of the refugee community in the United States was fervent as well. At the Annual Meeting of the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles the members of the Jewish Club of 1933 placed the issue onto the agenda of the wider Jewish community. The Federation members adopted a motion that declared West Germany's behavior to be an "important topic[...] of concern to the Jewish community of Los Angeles."[109] The final line of the official statement pertaining to this issue was formulated not as a general statement of criticism but as a direct appeal to the FRG: "We urge the West German Government to demonstrate its clear understanding of its obligations and its willingness to act in these areas of great concern."[110] In late February,

---

[107] See Hindenburg, *Demonstrating Reconciliation*, 127. See chapters five and six for details on these issues.

[108] These are the words of Heinrich Knappstein, who was then the West German ambassador in to the United States. Ibid., 129

[109] "Teilnahme am Jaehrlichen Meeting des Jewish Federation Council", *Mitteilungsblatt* XIX, no. 2 (February 1965)

[110] Ibid.

this appeal was followed by a community-wide protest meeting which featured Rabbi Nussbaum as the main speaker and which was held at his temple in Hollywood. Nussbaum's speech was a fierce criticism of the actions of the West German government and culminated in this powerful pledge:

> The Jewish Community of the United States—and for this matter the Jewish Community all over the free world—has no intention of taking this dangerous development lying down. We voice our sense of shock ... [...] We will not rest and will not pause until Germany undertakes in repentance the following acts of atonement: the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel; the recalling of the German scientists from Cairo; the extension of the Statute of Limitations; and the resumption of aid to Israel. We will mobilize all forces, Jewish and non-Jewish in this country, and all men of good will wherever they are, to bring about the victory of morality over expediency, of commitment against surrender and of moral responsibility against political blackmail. Let us hope that Bonn will see the light before it is too late.[111]

The intensity of the speech reveals the significance that Germany's actions, particularly its changed behavior toward Israel, held for Nussbaum and, judging from an eyewitness to the event, also for the audience: "Many who had believed in a new Germany, sat there numb and struck in horror. Everybody realized the deadly seriousness [tödlichen Ernst] of the report."[112] Shock, as Nussbaum emphasized, was not to be the continuing response to West Germany's behavior, however. Rather, he called for concerted protest. Nussbaum's confident reference to "calling upon" the allies in this protest—Jewish and non Jewish people and all men of good will—demonstrates his

---

[111] "Excerpts from Speech by Dr. Max Nussbaum, Community Wide Meeting—Temple Israel of Hollywood, Feb. 22, 1965," Ms. Coll. 705, 7/1 1965, AJA

[112] The original says: "Viele, die an ein erneuertes Deutschland geglaubt hatte, saßen wir erstarrt vor Entsetzen. Alle begriffen den tödlichen Ernst des Referates." Walter Wicclair, "Das neue Deutschlandbild ist zerstört! Augenzeugenbericht von einer Protestversammlung," *Die Mahnung*, March 15, 1965, newspaper clipping in Ibid.

consciousness of the power that he and the community he represented held in influencing public opinion about Germany. Among the outraged voices in the world, the refugees understood themselves as one of particular authority and a group with significant influence, one that the West German government recognized.[113] Nussbaum knew that it was the power of publicity, of publicly criticizing, of exerting the influence of the moral authority of the oppressed upon those with direct political power over Germany that created pressure on West Germany.

In this foreign policy crisis, the German Jewish refugees were not the only ones who voiced their outrage against Germany and it is not possible to ascertain the specific degree of influence the German Jewish community really had on Germany and concrete policy decisions. It is clear however, that they were a most significant voice that the West German government noticed and was concerned about, in particular because the event at Temple Israel in Hollywood was neither an isolated case nor unpublicized, even in Germany.[114] A report of it appeared in a publication of the Bund der Verfolgten des Naziregimes (Union of Persecutees of the Nazi regime) in Berlin, a paper with the purpose to monitor the democratic development of West Germany.[115] Its author, a

---

[113] In this situation of crisis for the FRG, the West German diplomats paid particular attention to the Jewish community in the U.S. Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations*, 195. Hindenburg also points to the importance international pressure, and in particular non-governmental actors—played in influencing German policy decisions at this time. Hindenburg, *Demonstrating Reconciliation*, 190f.

[114] Marc von Miquel has pointed out that it was the "massive international pressure on the Federal Republic's political leaders" that brought about the West German decision to extend the statutes of limitations: "[d]omestic protests by victims' associations and Jewish organizations followed on the heels of demonstrations outside the West German embassies in Israel, Western Europe, and the United States." "Explanation, Dissociation, Apologia: The Debate over the Criminal Prosecution of Nazi Crimes in the 1960s," in *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975*, ed. Philipp Gassert and Alan E. Steinweis, (New York: Berghahn, 2006), 58

[115] Walter Wicclair, "Das neue Deutschlandbild ist zerstört! Augenzeugenbericht von einer Protestversammlung," *Die Mahnung*, March 15, 1965

German Jewish refugee, wrote: "If one bears in mind that similar meetings took place in almost all American states, any predications about the consequences for the Federal Republic are obvious."[116] The title of the article disclosed the author's feelings on the public outcry directly: "The new image of Germany is destroyed!"[117]

Notwithstanding such dire predictions, the West German government did take action to resolve at least part of the crisis and to safeguard its image, which nevertheless did not emerge unscathed. The scope of this chapter does not permit me to fully examine these actions.[118] However, what is significant here with regard to the current project is that German Jewish refugees continued to demonstrate their stake and interest in the new Germany, and in their public stance over German actions played their part in, at least conditionally, absolving and re-establishing Germany's image. In late May 1965 Max Nussbaum, like many other public figures, publicly endorsed Chancellor Ludwig Erhard's decision to establish full diplomatic relations between West Germany and Israel.[119] His statements on the event were published in several newspapers, such as in a *Los Angeles Times* article which quoted him as saying that "the German-Israeli link could

---

[116] The German original: "Wenn man sich vor Augen hält, daß ähnliche Versammlungen in fast allen amerikanischen Staaten stattfanden, erübrigt sich jeder Kommentar über die Folgen für die Bundesrepublik." Ibid.) The author of the piece, Walter Wicclair, was a refugee himself. As actor and director who had been ousted by the Nazis, he became active in the postwar in calling attention to theatre in the Third Reich and Nazi actions against artists. Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

[118] For an overview on the German-Israeli relationship, see Carole Fink, "Turning Away from the Past: West Germany and Israel, 1965-1967," in Gassert and Steinweis, *Coping with the Nazi Past*, 276-293. Also see Hindenburg, *Demonstrating Reconciliation*, chapters 5 and 6

[119] German public opinion also played an important role in this decision. For details, see Ibid.

'usher in a new era of happy relations between Germans and Jews.'"[120] Readers of these newspapers could get a sense that West Germany was now moving in the right direction again.

Rabbi Nussbaum promoted this sense of optimism in regard to West Germany also when, shortly after making these remarks, he travelled to Germany at the official invitation of the German government. As part of its program of public diplomacy, the German government had been inviting "politically and culturally significant" personalities from foreign countries to visit the Federal Republic and West Berlin.[121] These individuals were often journalists, representatives of political parties and civil society organizations, clergy, and academics; in short, opinion and decision makers in different domains of society.[122] In Germany, they were given carefully planned itineraries that included meetings with leading German figures from their field of expertise or area of interest. The idea behind these "guest" or "visitor programs" or "information trips," as they were variously called, was that these individuals would gain positive impressions of Germany and report them to their communities upon their return. As such, this was a general outreach and publicity program not aimed specifically at Jews. Nevertheless

---

[120] "Nasser Defeat Seen in Israel, German Ties," *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1965 The *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* presented a more nuanced version, in which Nussbaum was supposed to have "said that further implementation of West Germany's 'moral obligations' can 'usher in a new era of happy relations between Germany and Israel and Germans and Jews.'" "Urge Still Closer Bonn-Israel Ties," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, May 24, 1965

[121] Letter from NYC to AA Bonn, June 22,1965, PA AA, B32, F. 232

[122] Reinhard Bettzuege: "Auwärtiger Dienst," *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*, Gunther Hellmann, Siegmar Schmidt, and Reinhard Wolf (eds.) Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007, 226-245

Rabbi Nussbaum's visit was significant in that he was a Jew, that Germany invited him, and that he accepted the invitation.

Indeed, the West German Foreign Office supported Nussbaum's invitation precisely because he was Jewish. The idea to invite him originally came from Heinz Galinski, chairman of the Jewish community in West Berlin, who referred to the precedent of the Foreign Office having extended invitations to several rabbis in the recent past.[123] Galinski suggested Nussbaum's invitation in 1961 because he wanted him to speak to the Jewish community in Berlin and so that he "could form his own impressions about the actual situation" in Germany.[124] He added that he believed that a visit by Nussbaum would be in the interest not only of the Jewish communities in West Berlin and West Germany but also of the federal government. The Foreign Office approved Nussbaum's invitation after an examination of his case through the Consul General in Los Angeles, who reported:

> In conclusion, one can say that Dr. Nussbaum is a man who enjoys recognition and respect far beyond his local sphere of influence. Because of his experiences during the years of National Socialism, his attitude toward Germany was not very friendly. However, judging from impressions gained during personal conversations, he has recently developed a more open-minded position. A nomination for an invitation to

---

[123] The German government had also attended to the interests of delegations of American Jewish organizations, such as the American Jewish Committee, which had come to Germany to study antisemitism.

[124] Letter from AA Berlin to AA Bonn, March 1, 1961, PA AA, B32, F. 179. While the choice of the wording "actual situation" is not explained in the documents, one can assume that Galinski was hinting at the fact that Jewish observers from outside were sometimes more skeptical about the existence of Jews in Germany. The head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Van Dam, at times criticized foreign Jewish organizations for meddling in matters that concerned the Jewish community in Germany. (PA AA, B32, F. 107) During the height of antisemitic incidents in 1959/60, Van Dam was of the opinion that the situation was not as bad as it was presented in the press and that "Antigermanism" was one reason why foreign countries gave the antisemitic incidents so much attention.

> Germany subsequent to this recent development is greatly encouraged, as a positive influence and broader impact can be expected.[125]

While Max Nussbaum was initially invited to go to Germany in 1962, he did not actually go until July of 1965, and his acceptance of the invitation was not a matter of course, as he relayed to a refugee audience after his return:[126]

> I, personally, had received many such invitations before, and I did not accept them because it is much more difficult for me to make an unsentimental journey to Germany, much more difficult for me to detach myself psychologically, subconsciously, emotionally from what has happened. But quite aside from the personal angel of sentiment, I felt that the time had not come yet till now to go as an official guest of the government. I have been back, of course, many times as the guest of the Jewish Community—but as guest of the government, that was another story. I felt that one had to wait, at least in my concept of it, and to see this 'new' Germany along several lines.[127]

Thus, Nussbaum's decision to visit, and to offer the partial endorsement of the FRG that he felt the visit would imply, depended upon the decisions of the German government and the behavior of its people. The rabbi explained that he wanted to see how seriously the West German government would take the trials against leading Nazis and whether it would extend the Statute of Limitations. He also wanted to see what would happen with restitution and indemnification legislation to the Jewish people and Israel.

---

[125] "Zusammenfassend kann gesagt werden, daß Dr. Nussbaum ein Mann ist, der weit ueber seinen Amtsbereich hinaus Anerkennung und Achtung genießt. Seine Einstellung zu Deutschland war auf Grund seiner Erfahrungen in den Jahren des Nationalsozialimus wenig freundlich, hat jedoch nach den hier in persoenlichen Gespraechen gewonnenen Eindruecken in letzter Zeit einer aufgeschlosseneren Haltung Platz gemacht. Die nachtraegliche Nominierung zu einer Einladung nach Deutschland von der ein guenstiger Einfluss und breitere Wirkung zu erwarten waere, wird sehr befuerwortet." Report from GK LA to AA Bonn, April 21, 1961, PA AA, B32, F. 179

[126] See documents in PA AA, B32, F. 179 and F. 232

[127] Max Nussbaum, "How New is the 'New' Germany?" July 23, 1965, Ms. Coll. 705, 7/1 1965, AJA. The speech was the sermon of the Friday night service at his Temple but was also advertised as a lecture in the newsletter of the Jewish Club of 1933 under the title "Das neue Deutschland—ist es neu?" *Mitteilungsblatt* XIX, no. 7 (July 1965)

But he said, “most of all, I wanted to wait for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel. All of these four steps and many others have, in the meantime, been taken by the German government—not to our full satisfaction, but taken nevertheless.” Considering these “steps in the right direction,” Nussbaum felt it was the “proper time to go and study this ‘New’ Germany of today.” [128]

Good publicity for West Germany being the aim of the program, the invitation itself was supposed to be an honor for the guest, which was only the beginning of what was to be a good experience in Germany. For Rabbi Nussbaum, however, while presumably feeling somewhat honored, it was nevertheless a rather different experience, as his relationship with Germany was certainly much more complicated and fraught than that of the average visitor. Also, Rabbi Nussbaum was a representative of a larger German Jewish community, beholden to this constituency, and as such he needed to justify such a significant move as implicitly endorsing the FDR by a visit as the government’s guest. Thus, explaining that he had waited for Germany to fulfill requirements, he made it clear that he was not the kind of guest who would be easily swayed. He stressed to his Los Angeles audience that he was not a pawn in a strategic game but that he took part in setting the rules himself—beginning with his delayed acceptance of the invitation and ending with his critical report to the community. Moreover, Nussbaum made clear that he had not accepted the invitation to please the Germans but to probe them, and his task for the trip was to investigate the “the moral and historical problems between ... Israel and Germany, on the one hand, and for this matter

---

[128] Ibid.

Germany and the Jewish people, on the other."[129] He went to examine the conditions on which any relationship between Germans and Jews must depend, and the Jewish community in the U.S. awaited his expert "judgment and appraisal."[130]

Nussbaum initially shared his observations and opinions in a sermon he gave at Temple Israel shortly after his return, but parts of his report on Germany also reached audiences beyond Los Angeles, as they were published in several American Jewish press outlets.[131] His report was complex and nuanced in both its approval and disapproval. For example, while criticizing Germany's lack of sensitivity when it came to picking its first ambassador to Israel, he explained that he was nevertheless certain that the man who was chosen—an older man who had been a *Wehrmacht* officer—would do an excellent job. Further, Nussbaum said that while deep-rooted antisemitism was still present in Germany, there were many Germans who opposed it. After visiting Bamberg, one of the places where antisemitic incidents had occurred, Nussbaum assured his audience (as he had also done in Germany) that press reports had misrepresented the incident in not showing the decent reaction of the many good people in Bamberg.[132] He further reported on meetings with high officials and young Germans and was particularly optimistic about the young

---

[129] Ibid.

[130] "The Nussbaum Visit," *B'nai B'rith Messenge*r 69, No. 29 (July 16, 1965) Nussbaum's visit received press attention in the United States, mostly in publications of Jewish organizations, and in Germany as well (see *Tagesspiegel*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Münchner Merkur*. The Southern California *B'nai B'rith Messenger* called him an "exceptionally well qualified observer of the current German scene."

[131] An article appeared also in the *L.A. Herald Examiner*, Ralph Kagan, "Rabbi on Modern Germany," August 15, 1965. See also, for example, "Germany Tries for Image--Nussbaum," *B'nai B'rith Messenger*" 69, No. 31 (July 30, 1965), the Dallas *Jewish Post*, the Detroit *Jewish News.*The British *Jewish Chronicle* published a report on Nussbaum's visit and conclusions as well.

[132] This was noticed in the German press as well, where a small article appeared "Rabbiner lobt die Bamberger" (Rabbi praises??? the people of Bamberg," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 14, 1965, Ms. Coll. 705, Scrapbooks X-471, F. 1965-1970, AJA

generation. Nevertheless, he suggested that Germany should do more in the realm of "Education toward Democracy."[133] In his final statement, Nussbaum offered his opinion on the state and prospect of the German-Jewish relationship:

> To sum up my impressions, I do not believe that the time has come either for forgiving or for forgetting. No fair-minded German even expects it of us, and I don't believe the Jewish people will, for a long time, be ready for either of these two steps. The time has, however, come for the commencement of a dialogue, especially with the young German generation. [...] The dialogue that we ought to begin now will not necessarily always be friendly, and it may have to carry a sharp vocabulary; but the time for discussion has come nevertheless. This is after all not the Nazi Germany of yesterday. There are liberal forces struggling bravely for reshaping the soul of the German nation. These forces are still small, and they have to be encouraged by somebody. And who is in a better position to fulfill this historical function than we the Jewish people? By doing so, we may in time open a new chapter of German-Jewish relationship; help foster better understanding between Bonn and Jerusalem; and make a contribution to the peace of our generation.[134]

Thus, Nussbaum actively encouraged a Jewish relationship with Germany, attributing to Jews, and most immediately his audience of refugees, an important function in West Germany's development into a better state and society. Here again, a former refugee perceived the relationship as one in which Jews would hold the senior position or, at least, a position of guidance with respect to the new Germany. The people who had assembled in great numbers at Temple Israel to hear the rabbi's report appreciated it, even though not all of them agreed with his opinions.[135] Erich Lowinsky, better known as

---

[133] Max Nussbaum, "My Impressions of the 'New' Germany'" July 27, 1965, Ms. Coll. 705 7/1 1965, AJA. While this text is dated July 27, it appears to be an almost identical version of the original sermon, of which no complete version is archived.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Elow, "Das neue Deutschland.—Ist es neu?" Mitteilungsblatt XIX, no. 8 (August 1965)

Elow, the former Berlin cabaret master of ceremonies who organized the cultural program of the Jewish Club of 1933, expressed disapproval of Nussbaum's refusal to accept earlier invitations. His reasoning was that Nussbaum could have participated earlier and more directly in steering Germany in the right direction, had he visited earlier.[136] Elow's criticism however, nonetheless further illustrates the existence of a recognition among the refugees of their, and in his representative position Nussbaum's, special role and influence in and on Germany.

While audience reactions are frequently difficult to ascertain at long remove, there is evidence to suggest that Nussbaum' speech met with widespread approval. A report from an employee of the German consulate who had attended the event stated that a small minority in the audience had expressed that they felt Nussbaum was too harsh and 'unforgiving' toward Germany in his speech.[137] It is safe to assume then, given that German observer's likely bias, that the majority of the assembled appreciated Nussbaum's report for its presentation of the complexities of the German situation. As an important moral leader and trusted person, Nussbaum legitimated dialogue with decent Germans, something many refugees could agree with, as they most frequently had personal stories about such decent Germans themselves. To those Jews who were in search of it, Nussbaum's trip to Germany and his report offered guidelines on how to make sense and assess one's personal relationship to Germany or Germans. His critical

---

[136] Elow, "das neue Deutschland.-Ist es neu?" Response to Nussbaum's sermon, Erich Elow Collection, AR 1280, Folder 2, LBI New York

[137] "Aufzeichnung" on speech by Nussbaum at Temple Israel "How New is the New Germany," GK Los Angeles, August 20, 1965, PA AA, B32, F. 232

stance and the position of moral authority he attributed to Jews offered a relatively comfortable basis for an engagement with Germany, allowing them to explore their relationship with that country as more than simply one of antagonism. This is one example of how a German government program influenced identity constructions of former German Jewish refugees in the United States.

For German government officials, meanwhile, Nussbaum's visit to Germany was also a success, as a report from the Los Angeles Consulate to Bonn concluded. While a representative from the German Consulate in Los Angeles who had attended the rabbi's lecture was somewhat irritated that he presented so many negative impressions, the report to Bonn noted that:[138]

> Because positive statements from the mouth of a man—who had hitherto only been disapproving toward us—weigh doubly, one can view the result of Dr. Nussbaum's Germany trip as satisfactory. One could not have expected him to give up his reservations toward us, but the climate has improved. Thus, Dr. N. for example likes to say that he was a guest of the federal government. And after all, he gave his congregation a favorable impression of the direction of the politics of the Federal Republic.[139]

That Rabbi Nussbaum's visit did in fact change his own attitude toward Germany can also be seen in his acceptance, while still in Germany, of another official invitation—this time extended by the mayor of Berlin. He took this trip in January of 1966. Yet another invitation from the Foreign Office came in 1967, initiated by the German

---

[138] See Ibid.

[139] Deutschlandreise des Rabbiners Dr. Max Nussbaum, Präsident der Zionisten in den USA, GK LA to AA Bonn, August 20, 1965 "Da auch positive Äußerungen aus dem Munde dieses Mannes, der uns bisher nur ablehnend gegenueberstand, doppeltes Gewicht haben, kann das Ergebnis der Duetschlandreise von Dr. N. als befriedigend angesehen werden. Daß er seine Vorbehalte uns gegenueber aufgeben wuerde, konnte nicht erwartet werden, doch das Klima hat sich verbessert. So sagt Dr. N. gern, dass er Gast der Bundesregierung war. Seiner Gemeinde hat er immerhin einen vorteilhaften Eindruck von der Ausrichtung der Politik der Bundesrepublik gegeben."

ambassador to Israel, Rolf Friedemann Pauls, acknowledging Nussbaum's growing positive inclination toward Germany after the first two visits.[140] While developing this optimistic outlook, Rabbi Nussbaum never lost his critical edge, however, and continued to make suggestions on how West Germany could do better. While these suggestions and recommendations were the source of slight annoyance on the part of some diplomats—which was only expressed in internal office communications—German officials outwardly cultivated the positive potential of Nussbaum's engagement.[141] For the diplomats, his knowledge and interest in Germany and his standing within the American Jewish community made him a useful liaison between that community and the FRG, and Nussbaum did not reject this role. An example of this is the correspondence between Heinrich Knappstein, who was the German ambassador to the United States in 1966, and Nussbaum on the occasion of the outrage over the appointment of Kurt Georg Kiesinger as West German Chancellor. Kiesinger had been a Nazi Party member and head of the Foreign Office's International Radio Propaganda Office during the Third Reich, and his appointment received much opposition within West Germany as well as criticism in the international press. In this situation, Knappstein reached out to Nussbaum, sending him the minutes of Kiesinger's denazification court trial, which had placed him in the "exonerated group." Based on this finding, Knappstein wrote:

---

[140] German and American newspapers covered Nussbaum's visits to Germany. See different documents in collections from the AJA and PA AA.

[141] It is most interesting that the acting Consul General in Los Angeles seemed to personally question Nussbaum's expertise based on the fact that he had an Eastern European background. See, for example, GL LA (Kiderlen) an AA Bonn, zu Hd. des Herrn Leiters Referats L 3 o.V.i.A.
Vertraulich! PA AA B 32 F. 246, LA, Feb. 28, 1967

> I think that one cannot in good consciousness dismiss the careful verdict of the court on Kiesinger's case. I personally feel that the 'ex-Nazi' Kiesinger did more to oppose the National Socialism [sic] regime in Germany and thereby risked his life to a greater extent that [sic] many a 'good citizen' who did not join the party and simply bent his head to allow the storm of National Socialism to pass over him. I would be very interested to hear your impression of the court's verdict on the Kiesinger case.[142]

Nussbaum's opinion on the court verdict mattered to Knappstein, as Nussbaum was Chairman of the American Section of the World Jewish Congress at the time and as such was potentially able to influence the stance of a greater Jewish community on the Kiesinger issue. After all, he had shown himself to be a critical observer and judge of the German scene and must have appeared trustworthy in the eyes of many in the highly critical wider American Jewish community.

What is more is that Nussbaum was one of the few people in the organization who could in fact read the trial minutes in the German language. Max Nussbaum's response to Knappstein was again careful in balancing praise and criticism of German actions. He thanked Knappstein for his "thoughtfulness," expressing that he found the minutes "impressive" and that it put "the whole story in a somewhat different light."[143] In agreement with Knappstein that knowledge of this document would reduce the criticism toward Kiesinger, he suggested that an English translation might be useful, so that other

---

[142] Letter from H. Knappstein to M. Nussbaum, Washington, D.C. November 22, 1966, "Chancellor Kiesinger: An Exchange of Letters,"published in *World Jewry: The Review of the World Jewish Congress* X, No. 1 (January/February 1967) Ms. Coll. 705, F. 7/3, AJA This was not the first exchange of letters between Knappstein and Nussbaum. Nussbaum had written to Knappstein in December 1965 to protest a delay in indemnification payments to Nazi victims. The correspondence was also published, put together by Hershel Glick in the *B'nai B'rith Messenger* (March 25, 1966) Ms. Coll. 705, Scrapbooks 1965-1970 X-471, AJA

[143] Letter from M. Nussbaum to H. Knappstein, Hollywood, CA November 30, 1966, Ibid.

American Jewish leaders could read and judge it for themselves. While he found himself agreeing with the West German government in respect of Kiesinger's individual merits and offered them a mitigating course of action, Nussbaum also said that he found Kiesinger's case to be difficult, as it showed that West German officials were still not sensitive to the fact that a man with former Nazi party membership would be a problematic choice to lead this "new" Germany. It was, he said, particularly questionable at a time when the recently established Neo-Nazi party had just gained an increased following in two German states. He closed the letter by appealing to Knappstein's own anti-Nazi background and the hope that the new grand coalition government in West Germany would learn from the mistakes of the past and "steer Germany in the direction of a true democracy—a goal so genuinely desired by you and me alike."[144] This episode shows that by the mid to late 1960s a working relationship had developed between German Jewish refugees and German government officials in matters that dealt with the legacy of the Nazi past. Historians have pointed to the 1960s as a time when German responsibility for the Nazis past was gradually beginning to become part of West German self-understanding, and Knappstein's letter shows that there existed consideration for Jewish opinion, which was, as I have argued, an essential part of this self-understanding.[145] However, this episode is reminiscent of the example I described at the

---

[144] Ibid.

[145] This happened because of many different event, such as the 1961/62 trial of Adolf Eichmann (responsible for the deportation of European Jewry), aforementioned debates about the statutes of limitations, a change to a Social Democratic government etc. For different essays on these developments see Gassert and Steinweis, *Coping with the Nazi Past*, and for a short overview Konrad Jarausch's essay "Critical Memory and Civil Society: The Impact of the 1960s on German Debates about the Past," in the same publication

outset of this chapter in which a diplomat called American Jews "Israeli people." Both examples show that there existed a significant gap between the German understanding of Jews and the Jewish perception of Germany and Germans. The assumption on Knappstein's side was that because Kiesinger had been proven to be not actively complicit in the persecution and annihilation of Jews, he was a good person after all, just a nominal Nazi so to speak, and thus that he ought to be a reasonable choice to be Chancellor. Nussbaum, however, pointed out that it was "only 21 years" after the war and that the "world hasn't forgotten yet" and that "it is the symbol of Nazi membership, even if it is was a nominal one only, that stirs the emotions."[146] Thus, while Germans were beginning to actively engage with their Nazi past, they still had much to learn about how it was viewed from other perspectives, especially that of German Jews, and not least that they could not unilaterally determine how to evaluate that past and when to declare it "absolved." The interaction between Knappstein and Nussbaum—that of student and teacher in that learning process—is representative of the larger relationship between Germans and Jewish refugees at the time. The publication of the correspondence in the *Review of the World Jewish Congress* communicated the balance of power in this relationship to a considerable audience.

Interpersonal Relationships

So far, we have focused on relations between German officials and the refugee community in the United States in the realms of politics and public diplomacy, and

---

[146] Letter from M. Nussbaum to H. Knappstein, Hollywood, CA November 30, 1966, Ms. Coll. 705, F. 7/3, AJA

mostly on matters of restitution. However, as a consequence of increased interactions over these issues, social interactions increased as well. These interactions took place in various ways. Firstly, former German Jewish refugee lawyers and doctors frequently worked for the German consulates as so-called *Vertrauensanwälte* and *Vertrauensärzte* (legal counselors and physicians), and these professional contacts frequently developed into friendly personal relationships.[147] Also, the two groups participated in each other's social events. In Los Angeles, for example, while the German consulate had initiated invitations to people from the refugee community, these were subsequently reciprocated, and in the 1960s representatives from the local consulate became regular attendees at events of the Jewish Club of 1933. William Stagen, one time president of the Club, said: "I don't recall any important affair, official affair, where we don't invite the German

[147] See, for example, the case of John Baer, a refugee originally from Breslau: "Ironically, the first consulate that retained me as its lawyer was the consulate of the Federal Republic of Germany. As a former Jewish refugee from Nazi persecution whose family had been decimated by the Nazis, I had strong emotional reservations against the resumption of any kind of relationship with Germans. However, I found out that most of the members of the German consulate here belonged to the young generation which had grown up after the war. Most of them agreed with me that while they could not and should not be held responsible for the atrocities committed by or in the name of the previous generation, they carried a heavy responsibility for the future. The dialogue which I had with numerous members of the new generation were a most interesting and encouraging experience, which in many instances led to lasting personal friendships." Baer, *Witness for a Generation*, 104. There does not appear to be any scholarly treatment of the topic of refugees working as *Vertrauensanwälte* and *Vertrauensärzte* but is is something that I would like to further explore in the future.

consulate. And most of the time there are either representatives, in most cases probably the Consul General himself and his wife who appear."[148]

These occasions were beneficial to both parties. For the German diplomats, they offered an insight into the attitude of the émigrés and at the same time a chance to demonstrate their good will, their support of the refugee community, and Germany's interest in refugee matters. On occasion, the consular staff were able to give speeches at these events, addressing concerns that the refugees had about occurrences in Germany, while also guiding their attention to topics the Foreign Office deemed important. For the refugees, having German diplomats at their functions created a forum in which they could address the German state publicly on matters of importance to the community. They used the diplomats as mediators to further their interests, as they could be certain that a report from the event and their praise or dispraise of German actions would reach the Foreign Office in Bonn. In addition, by frequently inviting both the German and the Israeli consuls to their events, the refugees in the U.S. furthered the German-Israeli relationship, which, as we have seen, was particularly important to them.

---

[148] Original words of William Stagen. Interview with William Stagen, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: Jan. 1, 1972. LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1337416. On the occasion of a tribute to Manfred George in April of 1967, for example, the Jewish Club's publication reported about the event: "'Everybody who is Anybody' among the Los Angeles Branch of refugees from Central Europe seemed to have turned out for that evening, save those who were ill or out of town. Guests of honor [...] included the German Consul General, the Hon. Hans Rolf Kiderlen, the Consulate's Cultural Advisor Ingeborg Kurtze and other staff members of the Consulate." "Manfred George Tribute," *Mitteilungsblatt* XXI, no. 4, (April, 1967). The original: "'Everybody who is Anybody' among the Los Angeles Branch of refugees from Central Europe seemed to have turned out for that evening, save those who were ill or out of town. Guests of honor (who could not be joined by the Ho. Avshalom Caspi, Consul General of Israel, because of Ben Gurion's visit) included the German Consul General, the Hon. Hans Rolf Kiderlen, the Consulate's Cultural Advisor Ingeborg Kurtze and other staff members of the Consulate." See also "Max Reinhardt Abend:" "Der deutsche General-Konsul erwies uns die Ehre Elow's Einladung zu folgen, und begruesste uns besonders herzlich mit einer sehr feinen und warmen Ansprache."*Mitteilungsblatt* vol. xxii, no. 2 (Feb. 1968)

Two other incentives for inviting the German diplomats to their functions as well as participating in events at the German consulate demonstrate the community's engagement with matters beyond those solely concerned with the Nazi persecution of Jewish Germans. Firstly, many refugees greatly appreciated German culture, and such events allowed for conversations with educated Germans. Secondly, the refugees enjoyed the individual and community prestige conferred by the presence of senior diplomats and state representatives. The presence of these officials at their functions was always particularly noted in their publications. To give another example from Los Angeles: Upon the arrival of a new consul general in 1967, the Jewish Club made it a point not only to send him a welcome message but also to publish it in their newsletter.[149] Without meaning to suggest that this was in any respect a wish to once again become German or to repatriate, these last two factors nevertheless demonstrate a re-engagement by the refugees with their identity as middle-class Germans. For the German diplomats, on their side, the German Jewish refugees were important ambassadors for German culture in the United States and for German-American understanding. In one report from Chicago, a German diplomat described the "emigrants of the Hitler-period" (not specifying a Jewish identity) in this way: "They represent a valuable bridge between the German and

---

[149] *Mitteilungsblatt* XXI, No. 9 (September 1967) See also the publication of a letter exchange between the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Club and German Ambassador Pauls in late 1969. *Mitteilungsblatt* XXIV, No. 2 (February 1970)

American mind and help to give German visitors insight into American life and to create a platform to bring German ideas to the Americans."[150]

Over the years, friendly personal relations sometimes developed between individual members of the refugee community and the consuls, often over shared interests in German culture or German political or business matters. These interactions would go beyond the formal events of the Consulate and the organized refugee community.[151] For example, the former president of the Los Angeles Jewish Club, Felix Guggenheim, and his wife had a close friendship with Consul General Constantin von Dziembowski and his wife. Even after von Dziembowski left his post in Los Angeles, the couples kept in touch, visited each other in Germany and in California and maintained a regular correspondence.[152] The letters they exchanged concerned matters of German (and occasionally American) politics, business and culture as well as the wellbeing of each others' families. Relationships like these were possible in the first place only when the German representatives appeared to be genuinely concerned about their country's past

---

[150] In the German original it is: "Sie stellen eine wertvolle Bruecke zwischen dem deutschen und amerikanischen Geist dar und sind Helfer, die deutschen Besuchern Einblick in das amerikanische Leben zu vermitteln, oder eine Plattform zu schaffen, um deutsche Gedanken an die Amerikaner heranzutragen." PA AA, B 32 F. 211: " Bericht ueber das Deutschtum in Chicago from GC Chicago to AA Bonn, March 1962. This raises the question of which kinds of outreach were directed specifically at Jewish refugees or refugees/emigrants more generally. In Los Angeles, the communities partly overlapped and invitations to cultural events at the consulate seemed to have gone out to all.

[151] See Interview with William Stagen, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: January, 1972, LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1337416.

[152] Felix Guggenheim Papers, B 7, F 4.1 "Correspondence, Deutsches Generalkonsulat Ehemalige Konsulatsbeamte,"Collection no. 0312, Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

and interested in reconciliation.[153] Then, if they were socially compatible, friendships could be formed. Thus, Annelise Bunzel explained that her friendship with one consul and his wife commenced over the couples' mutual love for Dachshunds and the fact that neither of them had children.[154] These friendships between German Jewish refugees and German officials were significant turning points in the history of postwar German Jewish relations.

Conclusion

The growing relationship between the refugee community and the German state remained fraught with tension. Many refugees steadfastly refused to have anything to do with Germany and Germans, and there were ongoing tensions over restitution and German politics. Yet, it is clear that there was a dramatic change in that relationship across the 1950s and 60s, considering that at the end of the Second World War, there was almost no direct interaction between the refugee community and Germany at all, nor any immediate prospect of it. The relationship that developed was certainly not one of uncomplicated relations and unconditional reconciliation. However, as this chapter has shown, it was one in which both parties, German officials and representatives of German Jewish refugee organizations in the U.S., had a sincere interest and from which each side

---

[153] The appeal of German goodwill and interest in reconciliation comes out in many interviews. There is, for example, Walter Bucky, who to the question: "Did you feel one should have contacts with the Germans?" answered: "Absolutely, yes. Absolutely yes. Ridiculous. Somebody reaches you the hand you don't have to refuse." Interview with Walter Bucky, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, CA: January 2, 1972, LBI New York, AR 25385, Digibaeck: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1326552

[154] Annelise Bunzel's experiences of coming to Los Angeles are described in the first chapter. Interview with Annelise Bunzel, conducted by the author, Los Angeles: February 4, 2005.

gained. For the German government, the relationship with the refugee community legitimated their claim to be a 'new' German state. While this was initially predominantly a strategic consideration, partly because of the dynamic that evolved in the interaction between the Germans and the refugees, the German state actually began to transform itself.[155] In order to gain the trust of the refugees, the German government not only posted people who genuinely represented the projected ideals of the new state but also made decisions based on the pressure or the input of members of the refugee community. Moreover, as Rabbi Nussbaum's case showed, through their relationships with individual representative German Jewish refugees, German officials sought to and could influence opinion about Germany beyond the refugee community.

Overall, personal interactions between Germans and refugees in the U.S. most frequently resulted in an increased acceptance of dialogue and even an improved image of West Germany on the side of the refugees.[156] Refugees who entered into relationships with Germans almost invariably had better opinions of Germans and Germany than those who did not.[157] For German Jewish refugees, the advantage of forming relationships with Germany, particularly high German officials, was to some degree practical, as community

---

[155] This gives further evidence of the entanglements of German Jewish history that scholars have emphasized in recent years.

[156] One revealing example is the reaction of some members from the German Jewish community to a speech Rabbi Joachim Prinz, former rabbi in Berlin and then President of the American Jewish Congress, gave in Los Angeles in late 1962. His rather critical account on Germany caused some people to accuse him of wanting to "incite new hatred." In the aftermath of the speech, the consulate received calls from various German Jews, including one rabbi, who wanted to express their disapproval of Prinz's remarks—a gesture, akin to that of reassuring a hurt friend of one's loyalty in the face of criticism, that reveals that some refugees felt in a certain sense closer to West Germany than to the larger American Jewish community. PA AA, B 32 F. 154: Letter, General Consul Kiderlen, Los Angeles, to AA Bonn, Dec. 7, 1962

[157] Perhaps this is just correlation, as it is possible that many of those who entered into relationships Germans only did so because they already had a more positive image of them and the cause and effect lies as much or more the opposite way.

leaders gained influence on restitution matters. In other realms, the German interest in receiving a positive endorsement of West Germany—or at least in avoiding a negative public critique—from the German Jewish refugee community in the United States presented refugees with the opportunity to critically engage with Germany. Knowing that their opinion would be taken seriously, they used public demonstration of it to affect German political developments. As critical observers of the West German state and society, they were able to exert pressure on the West German government and the representatives they frequently came to trust, to follow the path they had pledged to take. It is difficult to determine whether and to which degree this pressure translated directly into the policies or actions the refugees desired because of the obvious existence of various other factors on German decision-making. However, the West German government was certainly highly sensitive and susceptible to the voice of the refugees as a significant potential threat to good public opinion and also as a positive voice on Germany.

Finally, the satisfaction many refugees gained from their new position of empowerment ought not to be underestimated. It allowed them to have a new relationship with the country many of them felt pained to have lost. For many, this was not a relationship that was dominated by nostalgia for the past before emigration, however. Rather, it was a relationship that allowed them to remain content in their new country but at the same time retain an interest in their former home. Moreover, the special relationship with Germany enabled them finally to embrace their identity as refugees. Refugees is what they were, and how they had identified themselves for a long time, but,

as we have seen in the previous chapters, it was an identity that had frequently carried a negative connotation and association in both Germany and the United States. Now, it also carried positive meaning.

Chapter 7

Entangled Relations II: German Jewish Refugee Travel to Germany and West German Municipal Visitor Programs

> How about a nice long drive through the country(side)? We deliver the country. And the car. And a good amount of free kilometers. With Pan Am's three week 'Freewheeler Holiday Tour' to Germany—for only $338. And that's not all you get for this low price. You'll get the round-trip jet flight from New York to Frankfurt, 20 overnight stays in a lovely guesthouse in Paderborn, and a car with 1000 kilometers free of charge. Think about how wonderful it will be to once again experience the beauty of Germany.[1]

This Pan Am advertisement, printed in German and accompanied by a photo depicting a VW Beetle in front of a castle on a hillside, is taken from a May 1969 edition of *Aufbau.* There, it appeared in the company of German language ads from Lufthansa, offering "low-priced non-stop flights to Germany" and Swiss Air, promising that: "Our Service to Germany is twice as good. To and fro. Our non-stop flights from New York to Frankfurt are as comfortable as you can only wish for."[2] While perhaps they were not originally written solely for the still German speaking audience of the mostly Jewish *Aufbau* readers, the regular presence of such advertisements in the main newspaper of the

---

[1] Excerpt from Pan Am advertisement, *Aufbau* 35 (May 23, 1969) The original is in German: "Wie wär's mit einer netten, längeren Fahrt durch's Land? Wir liefern Ihnen das Land. Und das Auto [the pictures show a VW Beetle!]. Und eine ganze Anzahl Kilometer Freifahrt. Mit Pan Am's dreiwöchiger 'Freewheeler Holiday Tour' nach Deutschland—für nur $338*.Und das ist noch nicht alles, was Sie für diesen niedrigen Preis bekommen. Sie bekommen den Jet-Flug von New York nach Frankfurt und zurück, 20 Übernachtungen in einer bezaubernden Pension in Paderborn und einen Wagen mit 1000 Kilometer Freifahrt. Bedenken Sie, wie wunderbar es sein wird, die Schönheit Deutschlands wieder zu erleben."

[2] Ibid.

community suggests that these companies saw a potential customer base of travelers to Germany to be found among former German Jewish refugees in the late 1960s, and that *Aufbau* editors largely agreed, or at least considered the idea to be acceptable to their readership. Was this so? Why would German Jewish refugees want to travel there, given their not too distant past? Was visiting Germany just a matter of finding the best travel bargain? If so, how could Germany be considered just another European destination?

This chapter answers these questions by examining German Jewish travel to Germany, and the reasons behind it, focusing particularly on the development of West German municipal visitor programs for former Jewish citizens from the 1960s to 1988.[3] I argue that these programs emerged in a climate of ongoing individual travel that German Jewish refugees undertook to Germany prior to their inception. The previous chapter showed how restitution and positive interactions between leaders of the German Jewish refugee community in the U.S. and German officials created an atmosphere that made engagement with Germany—in a practice of alternate criticism and praise—acceptable to some refugees. In the context of this public engagement, ordinary refugees also interacted with Germans. This they did not only in the U.S., but also in Germany, where some went in the 1950s and 60s to take care of restitution issues or family matters. For these German Jewish visitors, going to Germany did not necessarily mean that they approved of the country, and they had a wide range of experiences there. However, with the onset of mass

---

[3] In cities which had a large Jewish population, German Jewish visitor programs were carried out on a yearly basis. Berlin is the prime example for this. There, the last large group of visitors came in 2010. Individual visitors are still received by the city government, however, and frequently accompanied by volunteers. Interview with Margit Mücke, conducted by the author, Berlin: October 8, 2011. Interview with Barbara Boehm-Tettelbach, conducted by the author, Berlin: January 5, 2012.

tourism and increased travel to Europe from the U.S., and the changing outlook of certain leaders in the community who were coming to believe in German-Jewish reconciliation, an atmosphere developed over the course of the 1960s in which travel to Germany was no longer uncommon and, most notably, was supported by the community's most important press organ *Aufbau*.

In this chapter, taking a closer look at motivations, experiences, and discourse on individual travel, I show how German Jewish refugees were themselves significant in the development of municipal visitor programs. These programs tend to be associated with the various cities and their government and administration that ran them. However, the impetus for these programs arose from German Jewish travel to and interest, both individual and communal, in Germany, and also relationships between German Jews and Germans who were invested in a personal and good relationship with these former Jewish citizens for various reasons. This chapter provides insight into some of these actors and their motivations, with particular attention given to the Berlin visitor program, which was the largest in Germany, but also drawing on examples from smaller cities. Building and expanding on the broader focus of the dissertation, it concentrates on the experiences and effects the trips and visitor programs had on German Jewish refugees from the United States and their relationship to Germany.[4]

In the first place, refugees' travel to Germany changed their relationship to the country from one that was predominantly based on memory and observations of German

---

[4] Lina Nikou is currently completing a dissertation which is a comparative analysis of the visitor programs of Hamburg, Berlin, and Munich, and which will provide a broader and detailed picture.

actions from afar to one of direct encounter, particularly with their former home town, and, most importantly, with German people.[5] The trips affected refugees in different ways, which depended on such factors as their age, memories, individual experience of persecution, and, significantly, individual personality traits and behavior of Germans they met during the trip. However, beyond the individual experience of visits, the existence of the programs and the refugees' participation in them marked, broadly speaking, a recognition and acknowledgment among refugees of a connection to a particular place in Germany, which in most cases affected their image of the country as a whole. For many, their relationship to Germany was intensified or transformed by their visit into a more positive one than it had been in the many years prior to their return. By the mid to late 1980s, trips to Germany and reports about visitor programs were featured regularly in *Aufbau*, together with articles about events such as German commemoration activities, synagogue reconstructions, initiations of German-Israeli city partnerships, and history projects on German Jewish and Holocaust history. In this way, the visitor programs were part of an emerging memory culture surrounding the persecution and annihilation of European Jews that would reach a new height in Germany and the United States by the late 1980s.[6] *Aufbau* played an important facilitating role in this and its editorial stance

---

[5] There were certainly other events that occurred during the 60s, 70s, and 80s that influenced the relationship between the refugees and Germany, and observation and evaluation of German policy decisions and events, such as the Ronald Reagan and Helmuth Kohl's visit to the cemetery in Bitburg where members of the Waffen-SS had been buried. See ,for example, Angelika Wahl, *Zwischen Heimat und Holocaust: das Deutschlandbild der Nachkommen deutscher Juden in New York* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1992), which looks specifically at reactions to Bitburg and the highly problematic speech by West German President Philipp Jenninger on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the November Pogrom, which resulted in his resignation from office.

[6] Within this context, the visitor programs can be understood as memory as a social practice—going beyond the representational level (memorials), something that will be explored further in future work. See Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006)

communicated to the refugees that Germany held a special, positive, significance in that community and that German Jewish refugees also had a special significance for Germany. While this view was certainly not universally the case on either side and the relationship was difficult, contested, and by no means free of inhibitions and tensions, the special relationship was nevertheless acknowledged by the organized refugee community, individual refugees and many Germans.

Like the relationships between West German politicians and foreign office employees and representatives of the German Jewish community described in the previous chapter, the interactions between 'ordinary' refugees and German citizens and the ensuing relationship between individuals and communities can, with reservations, be characterized as mutually transformative. For German Jews, individually and communally, the German, German Jewish, and refugee facets of their identity (as opposed, say, to their identity as American immigrants, American Jews from Europe, or simply Americans) were strengthened through these interactions. German towns, for their part, transformed their physical landscapes and images, and German citizens—by inviting Jews and restoring the local synagogue, for example—could cast themselves as 'good' Germans, who had put anti-Semitism and Nazism behind them. In this way, one effect of the visitor programs was that they materially and experientially blurred the artificial, yet nevertheless emotional, historical, and geographical separation and dichotomization of German and Jew. Examination of these programs once again makes evident the entanglements of German and German Jewish history. These entanglements were increasingly acknowledged and emphasized by both groups over the course of the 1970s,

80s and subsequently, as a consequence of the consciousness of a common past and the feeling of responsibility for the future.[7]

This chapter draws on the developing scholarship concerning the visitor programs, but also *Aufbau* (particularly the 1994 special edition on German visitor programs), the newsletter of the Jewish Club of 1933 in Los Angeles, and it relies to a large extent on individual testimonies from refugees themselves.[8] Many of the latter accounts are drawn from the collection of correspondences at the Senate Chancellery in Berlin and the city's publication *Aktuell*, a magazine created in 1970 by the Berlin Press and Information Service on the occasion of the launching of the Berlin visitor program. Aktuell was specifically addressed at Berliners who were forced to leave the city because of National Socialist persecution.[9]

---

[7] This chapter concerns the change of the relationship of German Jewish refugees to Germany that has taken place in the context of the German visitor programs. A worry in writing a chapter such as this is that it suggests that everything was suddenly rosy in the relationship, which it clearly was not for many people and in many respects. The chapter mentions some people who had negative experiences, whose participation in invitation programs made them miserable, and a few examples of people who did not want to accept the invitations because they questioned their value for themselves and saw it primarily as a German effort to whitewash themselves. Overall it is a description of positive change in the relationship because of the visitor programs. Lost in this narrative are the voices of those German Jewish refugees who refused to go to Germany and who retained an unshakeable antipathy. They do not appear not because I hold their voices as unimportant, but simply because they did not engage in the activities that this chapter concerns itself with.

[8] "Besuch in der alten Heimat" – Eine Dokumentation des AUFBAU über Besuchsprogramme deutscher Gemeinden für ihre ehemaligen jüdischen Bewohner, *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994). In the following it is referred to as *Aufbau* 60, (October 28, 1994)

[9] I had the opportunity to access these materials at Berlin's *Rote Rathaus* in 2010, when the program was winding down and the last program coordinator, Rüdiger Nemitz made the materials available for research to me and my colleague Lina Nikou (see footnote above), who happened to be there at same time. Access to *Aktuell* was made possible and was assisted by Heike Kröger, editor of the magazine at the Senate Chancellery (the spelling of the magazine's name differs: in earlier years it started with a capitalized first letter, later with a lower case "a"). All documents were made available under the obligation to honor privacy protection law. Thus documents used from these collections either do not include names or use aliases chosen by me.

Individual Travel to Germany in the 1950s and early 1960s: Attitudes

German Jewish refugees began to travel to Germany in the 1950s.[10] Among them, as we have seen, were leaders from the United States refugee community who frequently traveled to manage issues connected with their official standing: to attend meetings with German officials about restitution matters, for example, or to meet representatives of Jewish communities in Germany. At the same time, some 'ordinary' refugees also traveled to Germany, mostly in order to take care of some sort of business, such as attending to restitution or family property issues, some to look after family graves, occasionally in the context of their profession, and sometimes to visit relatives or friends. Most of these visits were not undertaken for the primary purpose of vacation, and they were usually embarked upon with some degree of suspicion toward Germany and the people one would be likely to encounter, especially people in refugees' former hometowns. In contrast to those refugee leaders who were invited to go to Germany, whose schedules were busy and who often spent most of their time meeting selected officials, those who went individually encountered ordinary Germans in ordinary life situations. Without the structure of an invitation, it was easier to feel overwhelmed by difficult emotions connected to one's own past in Germany. Ruth Nussbaum, Rabbi Max Nussbaum's wife, remembered her first encounter with Germany after the war in 1957 as very traumatic. Returning from a visit to Israel, she stopped over in Berlin, where her husband had already arrived a few days earlier as a guest of the Jewish community. In an

---

[10] Israeli citizens, and thus German Jews who had emigrated to Israel, were not permitted to travel to Germany until after 1956. Lina Nikou, *Zwischen Imagepflege, moralischer Verpflichtung und Erinnerungen: Das Besuchsprogramm für jüdische ehemalige Hamburger Bürgerinnen und Bürger* (München: Dölling und Galitz Verlag, 2011), 7

interview she gave many years later, Ruth Nussbaum recalled that after her arrival in Berlin's airport:

> I became so nauseated that I said to my husband: 'I have to, well I have to leave, I cannot do it....' — I got sick. And I am not a hysterical person per se. This was my first return to Berlin ...[...] yes, to Germany. And—well they somehow managed to tow me to the hotel and of, of the five days in Germany, I was about three days in the hotel. I just could not go outside. And then I walked around a bit and showed my son where we had lived and my school and so on.[11]

Stories of ordinary and individually traveling refugees' direct encounters with Germany, and of their encounters with their individual pasts, were not part of the larger discourse on Germany as it was taking place in the 1950s and the early 1960s however. Rather, in the community's major newspaper, discussions on Germany were dominated by reports of journalists and leading community figures. Research suggests, moreover, that neither were these trips topics of widespread private discussion among the refugees.[12] However, personal testimonies reveal that some ordinary refugees visited Germany and how they experienced it.

---

[11] See Interview with Ruth Nussbaum conducted in German by Alexander von der Borch-Nitzling, in Alexander von der Borch-Nitzling *(Un)heimliche Heimat: deutsche Juden nach 1945 zwischen Abkehr und Rückkehr*. Oldenburg: Paulo Freire Verlag, 2007, (CD-ROM), 504 "Und mir wurde so schlecht, dass ich sagte zu meinem Mann: 'Also ich muss nur, also ich muss weg, ich kann das nicht...'— ich wurde krank. Und ich in bin an sich nicht hysterisch. Das war meine erste Rückkehr nach Berlin...[...]...ja, nach Deutschland. Und - also irgendwie haben sie mich ins Hotel bugsiert und aus der, aus den fünf Tagen in Deutschland war ich ungefähr drei Tage im Hotel. Ich konnte gar nicht raus. Und dann bin ich ein bisschen da rumgelaufen und hab meinem Sohn gezeigt, wo wir gewohnt haben und meine Schule und so weiter."

[12] Stefanie Fischer suggests that the trips to Germany were not very much discussed in the refugee communities abroad, and points in particular to an "absence of [such] trips in the Jewish family memory (*Familiengedächtnis*)." "Entangled Transnational Relationships: Former Jewish and Non-Jewish Neighbors in the Postwar Era," German Studies Association Paper Presentation, Denver: October 2013.

One such example is that of Ernest Wolf. Wolf was a professor at San Diego State University in the 1950s and returned to Germany in the context of one of the European study tours he organized for the university. He recalled:

> The first time I brought students to Dortmund was in 1955. It felt terrible. I couldn't believe that people could be so self-satisfied and carry on the old ways as if nothing had happened. For me, it was like visiting a huge cemetery. That's what I told one of my friends. He asked why I didn't move back to Germany. 'I can't live in a cemetery.' This was a non-Jewish person, but he could understand.[13]

The symbol of Germany as a cemetery was not infrequently used by Jews when talking about Germany at this time. Ernie Sommer went to visit his former hometown Soest in 1954 and remembered:

> It was like digging in graves. It was very, very depressing. There were a few people left who we had known before. One neighbor showed us a book with something written in it. She said, 'Your father gave this to me.' We went across the street to another neighbor. There was a crystal bowl on the table and she said to look at that bowl. 'That was yours. Your father gave it to me when he was driven out of his house. The Jews were all put together in a 'ghetto house,' and then sent to extermination camp.' And so, I heard a report about the end of the Jewish people in my town. They had been on the last transport.[14]

Yet, both Ernie Sommer and Ernest Wolf, while recounting these somber stories and emotions of their first trip to Germany during interviews in the 1990s, also reveal that there remained Germans with whom they had agreeable relations. Ernie, for example, trusted that the people who had his father's things spoke the truth about how they

---

[13] "Ernest Wolf," Ruth E. Wolman, *Crossing Over: An Oral History of Refugees from Hitler's Reich*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996, 248. The experience of the American students who went with this refugee teacher must have certainly been very interesting. Ernest remembered: "It was an emotional trip, but still I could tell them [the students] from experience about recent history. Since I had lived through it, I could make it vivid for then."

[14] Sommer did not say in the interview why he decided to visit. "Ernie Sommer," Wolman (1996), 159

acquired them, stating that they had been well acquainted with his family since his childhood. Other people in the town he distrusted, however, knowing first hand that they had been Nazis or because they—as many Germans did—denied having had anything to do with the Nazis.[15] In this regard, Ernest Wolf found that it was easier for him to engage with Germans who were honest about their past actions and regretted them: "We later met people that had been in the SS, but they turned around and were sorry. Others were not. With those that were not, I didn't make contact for long. But the others I took as persons."[16]

For both, Ernie Sommer and Ernest Wolf, their first, uncomfortable, trip to Germany was not their last. Both returned again, their attitude being that not all Germans were the same and that particularly the younger generation was different. Ernie Sommer explained that he could continue his relationship with Germans and travel back again because: "Things had changed. I had made up my mind, more or less, not to forget but to forgive the German people."[17] These examples illustrate that frequently the behavior of individual Germans—the willingness of some to face the past and perhaps attempt to make up for it, in combination with the perception of a generational change in German

---

[15] "Ernie Sommer," Wolman (1996), 158f. There is, for example, the experience of Betty Gradmann-Josefi, who visited her former home town of Nuremberg in 1961. Returning to the apartment building where she used to live, she encountered four different families who had lived there already before the war. While they all expressed that they were very happy to see her, each of the respective families also tried to convince her that they were the only one in the building who had not joined the Nazi party. This experience evoked painful memories in Gradmann-Josefi. "Besuch in der alten Heimat"–Eine Dokumentation des AUFBAU über Besuchsprogramme deutscher Gemeinden für ihre ehemaligen jüdischen Bewohner, Aufbau *60*, (October 28, 1994): 15

[16] "Ernest Wolf," Wolman (1996), 247. He also explained: "I tried not to judge people in aggregate, like all Germans are bad, or all Jews are good." Ibid, 248

[17] "Ernie Sommer," Wolman (1996), 160

society—were important factors that influenced refugees' decisions to travel to Germany, at least to do so more than once.

More significant in this regard were, however, the individual perspectives and attitudes German Jewish refugees adopted. John Best, a German Jewish refugee in Los Angeles, explained how different these attitudes could be, even among people who were close to each other. He and his business partner and brother-in-law, Max Ponder, had completely different relationships to Germany, something they themselves found somewhat puzzling. Ponder and Best's company, dealing in photographic equipment, did business with German manufacturers. On his first trip to Germany, John Best "hate[d] every second of it," a feeling that did not substantially change after going a second time. When he went to Germany, he could not "get out fast enough and away from it."[18] Ponder on the other hand, as represented by John Best, "loved to go back to Germany. He enjoyed doing business with the Germans." Best's explanation for their difference in attitude was his partner's older age and the enjoyment he got out of returning "as a big business man," a situation in which "he was a customer, and they [the Germans] had to bow and to cater to him and to make overtures to him...." Best said: "I think that gave him the biggest thrill." Also, John Best recalled that his partner turned these trips into "fun" experiences going to theaters and night clubs, something Best could not relate to.

---

[18] Interview with John Best, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles: January 3, 1972. LBI NY, AR 25385, URL: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1326485

Although he was engaged in business with German companies, he told his interviewer "I personally have no love for the whole German enterprise."[19]

A refugee's personal attitude toward Germany and visiting it certainly depended on various factors, but, as Best suggests, the age of the refugees was one particularly significant variable. People who had been older when they left Germany retained much stronger ties to the country than did younger refugees. Their family's graves were there, they had good memories of life before the Nazis, and of friends and communities. In an interview Hedy Wolf gave in the 1990s, she recalled "It is terrible that that had to happen to us. Germany is a beautiful country. I loved it. I *loved* it. I had those wonderful friends which I had to give up. I loved it there."[20] Older refugees simply retained more points of connection to their old country and though they often hated Germany in the initial years after emigration, these sentiments frequently abated with time. Moreover, traveling to Germany did not necessarily imply approval of the country, but rather, as with much travel in general, was an exploration. Hedy said about traveling to Germany: " A lot about Germany still bothers me. But I still went there."[21] In her case, it was the friends she mentioned who made a difference in her decision to visit Germany: "Somebody in that little town of Laupheim got my address here, and they all started writing to me. Very good friends. I visited them three times when we were in Europe."[22] Traveling to Europe

---

[19] Interview with John Best, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles: January 3, 1972. LBI NY, AR 25385, URL: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1326485

[20] "Hedy Wolf," Wolman (1996), 237

[21] "Hedy Wolf," Wolman (1996), 239

[22] "Hedy Wolf," Wolman (1996), 238

in general for vacation purposes was something that the older generation of German Jewish refugees in the United States did increasingly in the 1960s and it was on these trips, as in the example of Hedy Wolf, that not few decided to also visit Germany.

Germany as a Tourist Destination? Individual Trips in the 1960s

Both *Aufbau* and the *Mitteilungsblatt*, the publication of the Jewish Club of 1933 in Los Angeles, were paying a great deal of attention to the topic of travel by the end of the 1960s, and this attests to the great interest that a significant portion of the refugee community also paid it. *Aufbau* included a regular column on the topic, "Travel and Traffic" and published special vacation guide supplements for the summer months.[23] Spring of 1969 editions of the newspaper featured a large number of advertisements by airlines, travel agencies, and guest houses. Besides Upstate New York, Israel, Northern Italy, and Switzerland, unexceptionable destinations for a refugee from Nazi persecution, trips to Germany and Austria were also regularly advertised.[24] The interest in travel took place in the context of a general growing popularity of mass tourism in the west, which accelerated rapidly in the post war period for a number of reason, most especially the full flowering of the U.S. economy and the increasing wealth of its middle class, the associated extension of interest in travel from the wealthy to the middle classes, and the rapid development of transport technologies, particularly mass air travel.

By the late 1960s, the older generation among the refugees had reached an age at which some could afford to no longer work, which allowed more time for travel. The

---

[23] For example, "Reise und Verkehr," *Aufbau* 34 (Sept 13, 1968) and *Aufbau* 35 (June 13, 1969)

[24] For example, *Aufbau* 35 (May 23, 1969)

attention paid to travel in two main refugee press organs suggests that a considerable number must have been able to afford to travel and—considering particularly the costs for trans-continental trips—bespeaks economic success in the United States and a comfortable standard of living.[25] In addition, restitution payments that some of the older people received monthly, as compensation for the salaries they would have gotten in Germany, also made a considerable difference to their financial well-being.[26] This was particularly the case for people who had been—or would have been, if the Nazis had not interrupted their career paths—higher officials and state employees. [27]

Many of those refugees who could afford it then, traveled during their later years. Frank White from Los Angeles, for example, a board member of the Jewish Club, was a particularly avid traveler who went to South America, Southeast Asia, the Mediterranean, Iceland, Israel, Germany and Austria.[28] Upon returning from these trips, he regularly shared his experiences abroad with other refugees in the group's newsletter or at

---

[25] See *Aufbau* and *Mitteilungsblatt.* Herbert Strauss has pointed to the economic success of the refugees and they themselves frequently point out in interviews, that while the beginnings were difficult, they were able to build a comfortable life in the U.S. Herbert A. Strauss, *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA*, vol. 6, *Essays on the History, Persecution, and Emigration of German Jews*, New York: Saur, 1987, 298ff.

[26] See, for example, Atina Grossmann, who remembers that: "even at a very young age I was acutely aware of the sudden turn in my family's own fortunes, in 1957, when the restitution money (Wiedergutmachungsgeld) started rolling in." Atina Grossmann, "Family Files: Emotions and Stories of (Non)-Restitution," *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 34. 1 (May 2012): 61

[27] A dramatic, though representative example of this is Fred Ikenberg, who had been a municipal judge in Germany before he left. Ikenberg received a monthly restitution check of $165, which made a dramatic difference to his family, then living in Los Angeles. Later, he was even promoted to *Oberlandesgerichtsrat* (superior court judge), and because he did not want to return to Germany to take up this post, his wife Ann remembered in an interview in the 1990s that he received, as she believed, "71 percent of the regular salary." Ann explained: "I continue to get 55 percent of his salary for my lifetime, because he was a civil servant. ... I continue to get medial assistance—55 percent of my medical expenses are paid by the German government. Also, they pay for home nursing and for medication, even for dental expenses and eyeglasses." "Ann 'Annchen' Ikenberg, Wolman (1996)," 104f. The couple also received compensation for children's eduction ("*Kinderzuschlag"*) when their children went to college.

[28] "Travelogue Frank White" and announcement of event, *Mitteilungsblatt* XX, no. 3 (March 1966) and "Frank White Reisebericht 1. Forts." *Mitteilungsblatt* XXI, no. 1 (January 1967)

presentations organized by the Club.[29] White's travel activities were certainly an exception as far as the number of trips and breadth of locations are concerned, but he was not the only one from Los Angeles who vacationed in Europe. When he visited his "*alte Heimat*" (old home) Austria in 1966, he "ran across many friends and Club members from L.A." in Bad Gastein.[30] Judging from the article, meeting fellow Los Angeles refugees there did not seem to have come as a surprise to him. At the time, spa vacations were very popular among a certain age group and in some cases, refugees received subsidies for treatments and stays at health spas from the West Germany restitution offices.[31] Thus, many older refugees spent their vacations in European spa towns like Bad Gastein for health treatments.[32] One of them was William Niederland who explained in an interview in the 1980s that he enjoyed going for spa treatments in Bad Kissingen—near Würzburg, where he had grown up—because his parents used to do that once a year. For him, going there as well, was a "sentimental," an "emotional" matter.[33] This form of vacation and destination resonated with many refugees' European heritage and for some,

---

[29] In these years the cultural program of the Los Angeles Club included numerous events at which members reported about their travels and showed photographs.

[30] "Frank White Reisebericht 1. Forts." *Mitteilungsblatt* XXI, no. 1 (January 1967)

[31] I have not been able at this point to find out whether support from German restitution offices for these health treatments were connected to treatment centers in Germany. This will be investigated further in my next project.

[32] "Auch in diesem Fruehjahr werden wieder viele von usn die Gelegenheit der Fahrpreisverguenstigungen der zahlreich angebotenen Gesellschaftsfluege nach Europa benueten und eine jener Reisen unternehmen, die teils Vergnuegen und teils MIttel zum Zweck sind, sei es Erholungsaufenthalt in einem Kurort, sei es perseonliches Vorsprechen bei einem der Aemter." "Die Wiedergutmachung in der Laien-Perspektive" 4. Forts." *Mitteilungsblatt* 21, no. 6 (June 1967)

[33] Niederland was born in 1904 in East Prussia and grew up in Würzburg, where his father was the rabbi. Via England, he came to the U.S. in 1940. Trained as a physician, he worked as professor of psychology after the war and with people suffering from persecution and survival experience. "William Niederland," Thomas Hartwig and Achim Roscher (eds.), *Die Verheissene Stadt: Deutsch-jüdische Emigranten in New York,* Berlin: Das Arsenal, 1986, 168

who never had completely become comfortable in the United States, going to a German speaking destination, and perhaps a familiar one, may have even been a more comforting experience than traveling in the United States. In addition, charter and group flights to Europe, offered by various airlines and regularly advertised in *Aufbau* and the LA Club newsletter, made such trips affordable to many in the 1960s.[34] White's article and the advertisements for travel to Germany and Austria convey a sense that it was normal for refugees to travel to Austria. This was a new phenomenon, as in prior years trips of German Jewish refugees to Germany where primarily reported on in conjunction with an evaluation of German conditions, always with a view to the past, while, at the same time, individual trips purely for vacation purposes were virtually non-existent in public discourse.

This sense of normalcy was also communicated in other reports about travel. In 1968, a group of refugees from Los Angeles took advantage of a charter flight to visit Berlin. The article about this trip which one Club member wrote for the Los Angeles newsletter is free of any reference to Germany's national socialist past and did not contain any hint at a difficulty of encountering the country and city which some of the travelers must have left under dire circumstances. There is no reference to emotional discomfort, or problems encountering Germans. In the report's estimation, the only thing that seemed to have clouded the Berlin visit was the cold weather: "It can safely be assumed that not one of the 169 charter passengers came back with less than two nice

---

[34] For example, *Mitteilungsblatt* XXIII, no. 1 (January 1969), *Aufbau* 34 (August 9, 1968)

warm woollies that they probably won't look at again until their next trip."[35] One wonders, are warm sweaters the only thing they took back from Germany? The article also mentioned a "next trip," and that it did so is yet another indicator that travel to Germany does not seem to have been so unusual then, nor was it perceived to be so, at least among certain refugees.

The recognition of German Jewish refugees as potential tourists to Germany, as signified by the efforts German companies like Lufthansa took to attract their business, perhaps reached its apotheosis in the advertisements that Berlin hotels and businesses posted in *Aufbau* on the occasion of the Jewish New Year in the late 1960s. Under headlines such as "Hier gratuliert Berlin" (Congratulations from Berlin), some, like the Hotel Kurfürstendamm, even printed their new year's greetings in Hebrew. This expenditure of advertising budgets on advertisements tailored toward such a particular consumer group makes it clear that Berlin businesses saw former German Jews as a valuable clientele.[36]

All these examples show that refugees travelled to Germany far more commonly in the late 1960s than one might suppose, or historians have hitherto generally acknowledged. To give some idea of the eventual extent of this travel, notwithstanding the general lack of data on the subject, Steven Lowenstein found that by the 1980s, more

---

[35] Margret Collin, From the Editor's Desk, "Easter Parade," *Mitteilungsblatt* XXII, no. 6 (June 1968)

[36] See *Aufbau* 34 (September 20, 1968) and Aufbau 35 (September 5, 1969) Along with German businesses, the President of the German Bundesrat, at that time Klaus Schütz, later mayor of Berlin, also sent Rosh Hashanah greetings in 1968.

than half of the 513 people he surveyed in Manhattan's Washington Heights community had visited Germany.[37]

The notable absence of criticism and apparent normalization of travel to Germany in the main German Jewish press organs does not mean, however, that the overall relationship between German Jewish refugees and Germany had become 'normalized' and that all refugees went to Germany and had a wonderful time. Many German Jews would not go to Germany—if we take Lowenstein's data as representative, perhaps as many as half would not go. One of those who would not was Hilde Kracko:

> I go to Italy every year and I have been in Europe a few times, but I can't go to Germany. My husband wouldn't go near it and that sits in me too. I can't get myself to go back. Because if I would see the people and would to shake hands with the ones who could be the same age as the ones who killed my parents, or my … I just can't do it. They say you should forgive but not forget. You can't forget what they did to us. I lost more than twenty people in my family. We had a very big, close family and all of a sudden you are only three. You miss a lot of love. And I suffered because my husband suffered.[38]

It seems only natural that such experiences and memories of the Holocaust would inhibit the desire to return to Germany. Those refugees that suffered more than others had usually much less incentive to return and every reason not to. However, the way people dealt with their past and how it affected their relationships to Germany, inevitably, varied from person to person. Ernst-Günther Lilienstein, whose parents and younger brother

---

[37] Lowenstein (1989), 242; 328. Lowenstein sent out 1629 questionnaires in total, covering "a fairly large proportion of the middle of the religious spectrum in Washington Heights (excluding only the most Orthodox and the unaffiliated.)" 513 were returned to him and 53.4% indicated that they had traveled. Ibid, 267. He also found that it was more common for Reform Jews to travel to Germany (71.6%) than for Orthodox congregants (44.0 %). Ibid, 342

[38] "Hilde Kracko," Gloria D. V. Kirchheimer and Manfred Kirchheimer, *We Were so Beloved: Autobiography of a German Jewish Community* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 229

were killed in Auschwitz even went back nine times before then taking part in the official visit organized by his home town of Usingen in 1985. He expressed his close relationship to the town with the following words: "I was, I am and I will be a Usinger, wherever I live."[39] While he held a particular bond with his home town, for others going there was particularly difficult. Annelise Bunzel recalled that she enjoyed going to Germany but not to her home town of Hamburg:

> Annelise Bunzel (AB): And there it comes. There is a division within myself. Hamburg I remember. I grew up in it. There was my family, and if I am in Hamburg, I feel very uncomfortable. It all comes back.
>
> Interviewer (I): In the rest of Germany you are a tourist.
>
> AB: I am a tourist, and I just happen to be able to speak the language. This is, I mean, so people say, why don't you go to Hamburg. I mean, I did, with my husband I did it. I did it, as matter of fact, once after he died. I went to the cemetery. You know, I had to, I wanted his name engraved on the … what is it?…in the cemetery where his …
>
> I: The gravestone.
>
> AB: Yes. The gravestone. And I couldn't get fast enough away from Hamburg. I couldn't … I just called the airline. I said, any plane that is leaving just put me on it. I didn't want to stay there. The appointments, the dates that I had, I just canceled them all. I just wanted to get away. But the rest of Germany, I am a tourist. Exactly. I enjoy it.[40]

Other testimonies of refugees who went to Germany in the 1960s and 70s reveal that individual experiences varied widely in a spectrum from wonderful to horrible, frequently with both positive and negative occurrences, memories, and emotions

---

[39] *Aufbau* 60, (October 28, 1994): 28. From the article it is not apparent what accounted for his close relationship with the city. His brother, Fred Lilienstein, who also went on the official visit expressed some more hesitancy about the people in the town. While he said that he enjoyed meeting so many decent people, he also wondered "what those think who were not in the city hall or at any of the other events."

[40] Interview with Annelise Bunzel, conducted by Joan C. Lessing, Los Angeles: March 15, 1985, LBI NY, AR 25385 Digibaeck, URL: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1326565

happening during the same trip. Even so, refugees increasingly did travel to Germany, and though not all people enjoyed it, the idea of it became less unusual, as the treatment in publications demonstrates. A significant contribution to his image of normalcy in regard to travel was a general change of discourse on Germany in *Aufbau* and the Los Angeles *Mitteilungsblatt*, which began to featured a new engagement with Germany outside of the topic of its National Socialist past. One such article appeared, for example, in *Aufbau*'s women's section ("Welt der Frau" [World of the Woman]) in May 1969. Under the title "Berlin was worth a trip," it reported about an international fashion fair held in Berlin, the exhibitors at the fair, and that it was good for the city to have that event there. While such reporting without any reference to the past was rare, its existence at all was a novelty.[41] Most of the coverage on Germany in *Aufbau* still followed the familiar discourse of criticism and praise. In this regard, however, a steady rate of articles appeared that featured the journalists' praise, as they announced the reopening of a synagogue in a German town, for example, or gave credit to Germans—frequently Social Democrats holding posts in municipal governments—that engaged in projects that addressed the Nazi persecution of Jews and other groups, through, for example, publishing commemoration publications.[42]

This new discourse on Germany largely occurred because influential leaders in the community supported the development of good relationships with Germany. Hans Steinitz, the successor of Manfred George as editor of *Aufbau*, was a key figure in

---

[41] C.F.,"Berlin war eine Reise wert," *Aufbau* 35 (May 30, 1969)

[42] See,"Das Beispiel Oberhausens: Gedenkbuch für die Opfer des Faschismus" and in the same issue "Synagogeneröffnung in Osnabrück" *Aufbau* 35 (July 4, 1969)

developing this narrative. Steinitz came to the United States in 1947—he had been interned in Gurs in France and survived in Switzerland and did not, as did most *Aufbau* readers, spend the war years in the U.S. In 1947, with Hitler gone, it seemed logical to him that German Jews would continue relationships with Germany:

> Naively, I thought that. I was completely overwhelmed and flabbergasted to find I was totally isolated, totally alone with that kind of attitude. In fact, I was almost lynched by people who were outraged [about the idea of return to Germany]. For all of these people, the idea of going back to Germany, for a visit, to recuperate lost property, buying German goods, was completely out of the question. They were deadly enemies forever. It took me years—and I take some credit for that—to change that attitude.[43]

As editor of *Aufbau*, Steinitz was a driving force behind the newspaper's postwar editorial stance of "comradely openness" ["kameradschaftlicher Offenheit"] toward the democratic forces in postwar Germany.[44] His interest in a democratic reconstruction of Germany partly followed on from his political engagement with the Socialist Youth in Germany before the Nazis had come to power.[45] Now, he was invested in bringing the refugee community and West Germany closer together and saw himself as an active 'bridge-builder.' He recalled that when Lufthansa advertisements first appeared in *Aufbau*, people objected to them but that this criticism "disappeared completely over the years."[46] Like his predecessor George, Steinitz also worked with German institutions, but

---

[43] "Hans Steinitz," Kirchheimer, *We Were So Beloved*, 224

[44] In the original German: "kameradschaftlicher Offenheit,"see Hans Steinitz, "Aufbau, Neubau, Brückenbau: Ein Geleitwort vom Chefredakteur des '*Aufbau*,' Will Schaber (ed.), *Aufbau Reconstruction: Dokumente einer Kultur im Exil* (New York: Overlook Press, 1972),17

[45] Elke Vera-Kotowski (ed.), *Aufbau: Sprachrohr. Heimat. Mythos* (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich Verlag, 2011), 33

[46] "Hans Steinitz," Kirchheimer, *We Were so Beloved*, 225

somewhat differently than George, whose primary concern were greater refugee interests, Steinitz cared about creating a good and amenable German-Jewish relationship.[47] With him as editor in chief, *Aufbau*, while it remained an institution that observed developments in Germany critically, nevertheless adopted a much more German-friendly bent. The number of advertisements that it published, not only for issues related to travel to Germany, but also German products, like brandy or beer, increased, even though there were many refugees—not to mention many American Jews—who boycotted German goods.[48] A very interesting, and unusual, advertisement was posted by the German newspaper *Die Welt*, stating the corporation's socio-political principles:

> We want Germany to be reunited in peace and liberty. We reject any type of totalitarianism from the right or the left. We advocate for reconciliation between the German and the Jewish people. We approve of a socially oriented free market economy and free world trade. We support the parliamentary democracy grounded in the basic law of the Federal Republic. We support international cooperation according to the Charter of the United Nations.[49]

This particular outreach from a large German institution proclaiming desire for German Jewish reconciliation was another way in which Germany's positive image received promotion in *Aufbau*. The placing of the advertisement was no coincidence as

---

[47] Will Schaber also stated that Steinitz' attitude toward Germany was "far more positive" ("weit positiver") than George's. See Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau*, 30

[48] Ads featured, for example, "Rheingold Bier" and "Asbach Uralt," and many real estate companies. *Die Welt* was founded after WWII by the British occupying forces and then taken over by Axel Springer and his publishing company. The original German reads: "Wir wollen, daß Deutschland in Frieden und Freiheit wiedervereinigt wird. Wir lehnen jeden Totalitarismus von rechts oder links ab. Wir treten für die Aussöhnung zwischen dem deutschen und dem jüdischen Volk ein. Wir bejahen die sozial orientierte freie Marktwirtschaft und den freien Welthandel. Wir bekennen uns zur parlamentarischen Demokratie auf dem Boden des Grundgesetzes der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Wir sind für die internationale Zusammenarbeit gemäß der Charta der Vereinten Nationen." *Aufbau* 35 (May 23, 1969)

[49] *Aufbau* 35 (May 23, 1969)

Hans Steinitz served as the foreign correspondent for the Axel Springer publishing group to which the newspaper *Die Welt* belonged.[50] Here, German business interests—and in this particular case a desire for reconciliation—and the economic benefit that advertisements brought for *Aufbau* coincided with the less critical views on Germany of the newspaper's editor-in-chief.[51] As a result, these ideological and economic factors created a strong narrative in the major refugee newspaper that it was common and acceptable for German Jewish refugee to travel to Germany and to want German products.

The city of Berlin figured particularly prominently in *Aufbau* during this time, not only in the advertisements devoted to it, but also the more general attention it received in the late 1960s and after, even to the extent of publishing the playing plan of Berlin's Opera and Theatre stages.[52] This sort of coverage afforded the paper, according to Steinitz himself, the character of a Berlin newspaper in the United States.[53] This remarkable notion, that a newspaper with the character of a fundamentally German city paper could cater to a community of refugees from Nazi oppression, contributed dramatically to the growing discourse of a normalization of relations between German

---

[50] Lars-Broder Keil, "Kurz vor seinem Tod empfing Kennedy drei Berliner," *Die Welt*, June 26, 2013, URL: http://www.welt.de/print/die_welt/politik/article117453348/Bis-dann-Deine-Amerikanerin.html, Fritz Backhaus, Dmitrij Belkin, Raphael Gross (eds.): *Bild dir dein Volk! Axel Springer und die Juden* [Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung im Jüdischen Museum Frankfurt am Main vom 15. März bis 29. Juli 2012]. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012. 224 pp.

[51] *Aufbau* was not a for profit newspaper and needed advertisements to fund its publication. Especially with dwindling readership in the 1960s, this was becoming more important.

[52] After the announcement of the Berlin visitor program, the September 5 edition in 1969 included a large spread advertising the program of Berlin's Philharmonic as well as program of the Berliner Festwochen, a festival featuring music, theatre, dance, and literature events. *Aufbau* 35 (September 5,1969)

[53] Hans Steinitz, "Der 'Aufbau.' Eine Berliner Zeitung für Deutsche in den USA," *Berliner Forum 5*, Berlin: Presse- und Informationsamt des Landes Berlin, 1989

Jewish refugees and the new Germany. Berlin's prominence in the paper, and the success of this coverage, was the result of Steinitz' fondness of and connections with the city—many other *Aufbau* staff were also former Berliners—combined with the fact that a great number of refugees were also from Berlin, which before the war had been the largest Jewish community in Germany.[54]

It is in this context of growing individual travel and the reestablishment of personal ties to Germany, and a public discourse normalizing such travel and relationships, that the organized visitor programs for former Jewish citizens of German cities were introduced and must be understood.

The Emergence and Development of German Municipal Visitor Programs

While they are associated with cities, the genesis of municipal visitor programs is much more complicated than that. There was no official call from any German government office that initiated them, nor even one for German cities to be in touch with their former Jewish citizens, though support for the programs did tend to fall along party lines: SPD members tended to support them, in light of their own persecution by the Nazis, while the other major parties were initially rather more reluctant. Rather, in many cases the programs came about through the refugees' travels to Germany, and the Jewish presence this reintroduced, and sometimes their involvement and advocacy in combination with certain German groups, individuals and grassroots initiatives who sympathized with the refugees and were interested in reconciliation. Moreover, the

---

[54] Ibid

manner in which the programs developed in different cities varies, even though, across time, many were inspired by successful projects of other towns. The first city to invite German Jewish refugees to visit their former home town was Munich, which received three individually traveling visitors 1961.[55] The invitation happened in the wake of an outreach initiative from the city in December 1960, published in various refugee media outlets, which called on its former citizens to send a "*Lebenszeichen*" (sign of life) because 'Munich' was interested in renewing contact with them. Some of these former citizens responded and expressed an interest in visiting the town. While it is not clear whose idea the outreach campaign was initially, it was begun as part of a larger municipal project intended to address issues of Antisemitism as well as to create positive relations with Israel.[56] Initially, uptake among refugees was somewhat hesitant, however, and by 1965, the open invitation still only resulted in thirty-five program visitors. Their trips were not purely touristic adventures but, much like the visits many refugees had been undertaking on their own, were a *Mittel zum Zweck*, or means to an end—business but with some culture mixed in. The city paid for their accommodation, gave them theatre tickets, and also provided assistance with restitution issues. As such, the invitations were an official recognition that refugees had significant relations with their home town, a primarily pragmatic (restitution) but also cultural, interest. In the early 1960s, several other Southern German towns also extended invitations to their former Jewish citizens. In

---

[55] "München reicht die Hand," *Aufbau* 31 (August 20, 1965)

[56] Lina Nikou, paper draft "Coming Back Home? Berlin Presents Itself to Refugees of the Nazi Regime Living Abroad," Second International Graduate Students' Conference on Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Strassler Center of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Clark University, Worcester (2012)

these cases, invitations were not actively initiated by city officials, but were solicited, being responses to requests by individual refugees who previously dwelled in these cities.[57]

Hamburg

Of the larger cities, the emergence of the Hamburg and Berlin programs, which were initiated in 1965 and 1969 respectively, are more easily traceable. In Hamburg, the initial idea to establish connections between the city and former citizens came from the Social Democratic senator of Finance, Gerhard Brandes. While his motives do not seem to have been made public, one can speculate that they might have been connected to his own history of persecution by the Nazis.[58] The city's Social Democratic Mayor, Herbert Weichmann, himself a Jew who had returned to Hamburg, did not immediately agree that outreach to Hamburg's former citizens would be a good idea.[59] It is most likely that Weichmann's hesitancy resulted from the context of the predominant memory culture of 1960s Germany, which focused more on perpetrators (based on some of the major trials held at that time) and "moderate" remembrance.[60] However, the precedent set by Munich,

---

[57] Kräutler, 13.

[58] Nikou, *Zwischen Imagepflege*, 17

[59] Weichmann had spent the war years in New York City and was brought back to Hamburg in 1948 by the former mayor Max Brauer, a Social Democrat who had also been an emigrant in New York. *Aufbau* 33 (June 30, 1967), Nikou, *Zwischen Imagepflege*, 27

[60] In her work on Hamburg, Lina Nikou has speculated why Weichmann, a former Jewish refugee himself, acted this way. Either, he was so entrenched in the memory culture of his time and place that his Jewish background did not affect him in this decision. Alternatively, it is possible that he felt that acting against the predominant memory culture would have negative consequences precisely because he was Jewish and in a public position. Because, as Werner Bergmann as shown, Jewish returnees were generally only welcomed when they did not act in ways that could be understood as criticism of Germany. Ibid, 27f.

connections with individual refugees (including one who had requested an invitation), and the recognition that German Jewish refugees were traveling to Germany—which was interpreted as an expression of their bond to Germany—all influenced Weichmann's eventual decision to support the outreach.[61] Consequently, the Senate Chancellery sent out a call to all former Jewish citizens of Hamburg on the occasion of the publication of a memorial book for the Jewish victims of the "national socialist terror," based on the research of the head of Hamburg's Jewish community. The call was published in several newspapers in and outside of Germany over the course of 1965 and 1966. Its message was that Hamburg was not only remembering the dead but wanted to also express that "we"—though the we in this case was mainly a select few, as the interest of the general populace of Hamburg was rather low—"had never lost the bond" to the living members of the Hamburg Jewish community.[62] The call asked for the refugees to contact the city so the Senate could inform them about political, cultural, and economic developments that had taken place in Hamburg.[63] While some supporters of the project argued, altruistically, that it would be a nice idea for the refugees to see that they had not been forgotten, the major result the Senate hoped for was that the refugees would think positively about their old home and project that positivity to their communities.[64] In taking this approach, the Hamburg senate was pursuing a similar image campaign for its city in refugee

---

[61] Ibid, 18f.

[62] Ibid, 21, 26

[63] In this approach, the Hamburg senate followed the approach of the city of Frankfurt, which had been sending out infomration materials since early 1960s. Ibid, 25

[64] Ibid, 25f.

communities throughout the world, to the one that the German Foreign Office was engaged in on a larger scale for the entire country. The response from refugees to the call by Hamburg was significant: in 1967 more than 600 letters reached the city.[65] To those who had responded, the Senate Chancellery then sent out the book of commemoration. Reactions to this publication that reached Hamburg were overall positive, although some refugees were bewildered and distressed when they received it. In an interview conducted with Irene Brouwer from Argentina in the 1991, she recalled that the arrival of the book, documenting Hamburg's murdered Jews, caught her off guard: "And then I was in such desperation that I wrote that letter that they should kindly leave me alone, I don't want to see and hear anything else. I thank you for the orderliness with which you noted the extermination."[66] While Hamburg's outreach may have initially caused interest, and perhaps fostered positive associations to the Hamburg before the Nazis, the book brought direct confrontation with the murderous past. Thus, German outreach and commemoration efforts, even if well-intended, invoked misery for some people and actually prevented rapprochement. In voicing her sentiments to Germans who reached out, Brouwer is an exception, and we do not know how many refugees felt similarly but abstained from communicating it.[67]

---

[65] Ibid, 23

[66] "Und da war ich so verzweifelt, dass ich 'n Brief geschrieben hab', sie sollen mich gefälligst in Ru' lassen, ich will nix mehr seh'n und nix mehr hör'n. Ich danke Ihnen, mit welcher Ordnung Sie die Vernichtung aufgeschrieben haben." The name is an alias. The interview was conducted by Beate Meyer, August 1, 1991. See, Ibid (2011), 23 and fn. 37

[67] Nikou, *Zwischen Imagepflege*, 23 makes the same argument here.

Other refugees were encouraged enough by the initiative that they expressed a desire to be invited by the city to visit, wishes that the Hamburg Senate did not fulfill at this time, apparently due primarily to financial considerations.[68] Hamburg's first invitations, in fact, were eventually issued only in the 1970s, and this had much to do with the establishment and success of the municipal visitor program which was launched by West Berlin in 1969 and which paid for the visits of its former citizens. Refugees would invoke Berlin's example in asking Hamburg for invitations and members of Hamburg's city government—in particular the acting Social Democratic Senator for Social Issues and head of the restitution office, Ernst Weiß—also pleaded for invitations to be extended after the Berlin model.[69] In the end, strategic considerations concerning the prospective positive effects of invitations on the city's image abroad were decisive, as they had been in Munich and Berlin. Even so, the Hamburg program developed only very slowly, initially extending only individual invitations, and even these not without complications.[70] An open invitation program only came into being in the early 1980s, by which time an increased public interest in the Nazi past had created an atmosphere in which various actors, introduced later in this chapter, pushed for a full-fledged program.[71]

Berlin

---

[68] Ibid, 28; 24

[69] Ibid, 28ff.

[70] See Ibid, 32ff. for more detail on problems with early invitations.

[71] See Ibid for details. 38-61. Also, see the example of Constance and Heilbronn, where former Jewish citizens asked whether the city would not want to follow the precedent of other cities and invite them. *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994)

The Berlin program, meanwhile, though it had its beginnings later than either Munich or Hamburg, was by far the most extensive of the German municipal visitor programs. Berlin's pre-war Jewish population had been the largest in Germany with about 160,500 Jews in 1933, about half of whom were able to leave Germany between 1933 and 1939, while 50,000 Berliners were deported and murdered. [72] The origins of the Berlin visitor program sprang from the connection that existed in the 1960s between individual German Jewish refugees and German officials, most particularly that between *Aufbau* editor Hans Steinitz and Hanns-Peter Herz, speaker of the Berlin Senate.[73] Steinitz and Herz shared a Social Democratic as well as a Jewish background, and both retained a particular fondness for their home city of Berlin.[74] Both men also shared the sense that a special relationship to Berlin also remained among refugees in various

---

[72] In June of 1933, there were 160,564 people of Jewish faith registered in Berlin. Beyond that there was, as Annegret Ehmann writes "a considerable number" of people who had been baptized, were from mixed marriages etc. who would later also fall under the Nazi race laws. "Verfolgung—Selbstbehauptung—Untergang," Annegret Ehmann et al. (ed.), *Juden in Berlin, 1671-1945*: Ein Lesebuch (Berlin: Nicolai, 1988), http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005450

[73] This section relies on two recent interviews of two Berlin politicians of the time, Hanns-Peter Herz and Klaus Schütz. While their recollections, as they acknowledged themselves, were not always entirely clear, and were occasionally contradictory, I have attempted to produce a coherent narrative conveying the general sense of their roles in the beginning of the Berlin visitor program and the various difficulties they faced.

[74] See interviews with Hans Steinitz in Kirchheimer, *We Were So Beloved*, and interview with Hanns-Peter Herz, conducted by Lina Nikou, Berlin: April 8, 2011. Provided to me by Lina Nikou. In an interview with Leo Katcher in the 1960s, Herz, who is a Christian by religion, speaks about his Jewish background and treatment by the Nazis, which had a lasting effect on him: "I had enough of a Jewish background for the Nazis to call me a Jew and send me to a work camp, from which I was liberated by Americans in 1945. The effect of that imprisonment, of my suddenly finding myself included among Jews, has stayed with me." Leo Katcher, *Post-Mortem. The Jews in Germany Today* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1968)

communities in the United States and Israel.[75] Out of this insight, and their mutual and strong interest in German-Jewish understanding, the idea emerged in the late 1960s to invite for a visit—through a formal city program—Berliners who had been forced to leave the city because of Nazi persecution.[76]

Herz also found the support for the idea from the leader of the Berlin Jewish community, Heinz Galinski, with whom he seems to have been friends.[77] In his capacity as speaker of the senate, Herz then brought the idea before his superior, Social Democrat Heinrich Albertz, who was Berlin's mayor from 1966 to 1967. Albertz, a theologian by training, who as a follower of the Confessing Church had himself been arrested several times during the Third Reich, was sympathetic to the idea.[78] Like in Hamburg, however, money was the difficulty. Herz recalls that while he convinced Albertz that such a

---

[75] Interview with Klaus Schütz, conducted by the author, Berlin: January 17, 2012. Schütz recalled that Hanns-Peter Herz had many relationships with former Jewish Berliners because of his family background (his father was Jewish). Schütz also recalled from his later ambassadorship in Israel that refuges were fond of Berlin. See also interview with Hanns-Peter Herz, conducted by Lina Nikou, Berlin: April 8, 2011. Provided to me by Lina Nikou. Herz also wanted Jews to return to Berlin to live there, as he explained in his interview (translation mine): "A city like Berlin needs Jewish people in business and academia and that's why I told myself, do something so people can once again find a home [ihre Heimat] here. And many of those who came here as emigrants subsequently settled here again and we got a lot of artisans, watch makers, who of course call themselves tseigermakher in yiddish, and shoemakers, and other artisans, so that these groups of artisans got a lot of Jewish blood again and these people have become quite happy, I think."

[76] Hans Steinitz, *Der 'Aufbau.' Eine Berliner Zeitung für Deutsche in den USA*, 37f. Both Herz and Steinitz were very proud of this idea in hindsight. See also "Hans Steinitz," Kirchheimer, *We Were So Beloved*, 225f. There does not exist official documentation from the Berlin Senate Chancellery on the origins and early years of the program.

[77] Interview with Hanns-Peter Herz, conducted by Lina Nikou, Berlin: April 8, 2011. Provided to me by Lina Nikou. Galinski was also close to Klaus Schütz.

[78] Heinrich Albertz was governing mayor [*Oberbürgermeister*] of Berlin from December 1966 to October 1967. More detail on him at http://www.berlin.de/rbmskzl/regierender-buergermeister/buergermeister-von-berlin/buergermeistergalerie/artikel.4626.php URL Feb. 27, 2014. It cannot be determined whether Albertz' background was a decisive in his approval of the idea of such a program.

program would be a good idea, Albertz said: "but it cannot cost anything."[79] This did not meet Steinitz and Herz's conception of the program, however, which had included sponsorship for the former Berliners' trips, particularly those who did not have the means to come on their own. This matter of finances was a most delicate one for visitor programs and was an issue for many cities, often significantly delaying the process from the genesis of the idea to its realization. The West Berlin program eventually began in 1969, by which time Klaus Schütz had become the Social Democratic *Oberbürgermeister* [governing mayor] of Berlin. Schütz was a protégé of Willy Brandt's, had worked in the Foreign Office before becoming mayor, and was sensitive to issues of German Jewish relations. Speaking in 2011, he recalled that the financial question was solved with the support of the federal government, on which West-Berlin was financially dependent. In his recollection, the invitation project laid "in a realm for which we did not have difficulties to receive means, because it is partly foreign policy, it has effects also in America and Israel, as such it can even support German foreign policy."[80] According to Hanns-Peter Herz, there were initially some unenthusiastic voices raised in the Berlin Senate, coming mainly from the right wing of the Christian Democratic Party, about the idea of the program inviting former Jewish Berliners in particular. The eventual outcome

---

[79] Interview with Hanns-Peter Herz, conducted by Lina Nikou, Berlin: April 8, 2011. Provided to me by Lina Nikou. Also see section on Hamburg above.

[80] Interview with Klaus Schütz, conducted by the author, Berlin: January 17, 2012. "Dies war so ein Gebiet, wo wir keine Schwierigkeiten hatten beim Bund die Mittel dafür zu kriegen, weil das ist teilweise Außenpolitik, das sind Wirkungen auch in Amerika und in Israel, dadurch, das kann sogar die deutsche Außenpolitik unterstützen." The administrative costs that were connected to the program were covered through the general Berlin household. Schütz held his post as mayor from1967-1977.

of the vote, on June 10, 1969, however, was unanimous.[81] In the end, strategic considerations of how the invitations could "improve the status and prominence of Berlin," as Klaus Schütz put it, were a significant factor for their realization.[82] In the public announcement launching the program, the invitations were framed as a form of *Wiedergutmachung*—making good again—the general German term for restitution.

Considering Schütz's references to the role of positive publicity for Berlin, it is an interesting side note that the Foreign Office, while reaching out to individuals of the German Jewish refugee community in the United States for exactly these reasons of public relations—as I have shown in the previous chapter—initially took a rather hesitant stance when they first heard that the city of Frankfurt published a call to its former citizens in Israel. From the newly established West German Embassy in Tel Aviv—the opening of which had been met with some protest—a representative warned in October 1965 that such a call might be taken as "an unwanted effort of ingratiation" ["unerwuenschter Anbiederungsversuch] and "inappropriate importunity of

---

[81] Der Senat von Berlin: Senatsbeschluss Nr. 1720/69 from June 10, 1969 re. "Einladungen an in der nationalsozialistischen Zeit verfolgte ehemalige Mitbürger," cited in Nikou, "Coming Back Home?" Herz recalled a resistance to the focus on Jews that did not, in his view, derive from Antisemitic attitudes, but because some people thought that Germany had already done a lot for Jews but nothing for other people who had had to leave Berlin. Klaus Schütz remembered no significant resistance: "It is in the nature of things, all things that [have to do] with emigration and Nazi things and Nazi persecution, it goes without saying that one deals with them together with everybody else and from my point of view there was never any fight or difference in opinion over this." German original: "Es liegt in der Natur der Sache, alle Dinge die mit Emigration und Nazisachen und Naziverfolgung [zu tun haben], dass man das gemeinsam mit allen anderen macht ist selbstverständlich und meiner Ansicht nach hat es darüber nie Streit oder Meinungsverschiedenheiten gegeben." In his opinion this was a clear decision also because, as he put it, Berlin was a Social Democratic stronghold and there was no doubt that they were making politics.

[82] Klaus Schütz: "Wir haben uns davon versprochen, dass es den Rang und die Bedeutung von Berlin erhöhen würde." Interview with Klaus Schütz, conducted by the author, Berlin: January 17, 2012.

Israeli citizens" ["untunliche Behelligung israelischer Staatsangehöriger"].[83] After a difficult year of German-Israeli relations, Bonn's concern over public criticism of Germany in Israel was great and even after reports from Tel Aviv that the call had been received positively, officials in Bonn hoped that no other cities would follow Frankfurt's example.[84] It is not clear whether this concern was specific to the Israeli situation at the time or whether the Foreign Office changed its general perspective on municipal outreach but when Hannover issued a call for invitations in 1967, the American Embassy in Washington welcomed that initiative.[85] The argument from Washington was that such an invitation might work effectively in "overcoming the distrust against Germany" that existed within German Jewish refugee circles. In addition, the writer of the letter suggested that: "One might want to consider, if the Deutsche Städtetag [the Association German Cities] should perhaps take the example of Hannover as an occasion to propose similar programs to other German cities." [86] By the time of the realization of the Berlin program then—as of mayor Schütz's comment in regard to its financial support—the supportive stance of the Foreign Office was clear.

---

[83] PA AA B5 F.49: Letter from Tel Aviv Embassy to AA Bonn, Oct. 25, 1965. See George Lavy, *Germany and Israel: Moral Debt and National Interest,* London: Frank Cass, 1996, 130ff.

[84] PA AA B5 F.49: Letter from Deutscher Städtetag to AA, Dec. 28, 1965; Letter from Tel Aviv Embassy to AA Bonn, Jan. 6, 1966

[85] Jenny Hestermann is currently working on a dissertation on German-Israeli diplomatic relations which promises to reveal important insights also for the period after 1965. The working title is: "Hinter den Kulissen: Reisen deutscher Politiker nach Israel in den Jahren 1957-1984"

[86] PA AA B5 F.49: Letter from Washington Embassy to AA Bonn, Feb. 16, 1967. The Association of German Cities represents the interests of German municipalities and municipal self-government vis-a-vis the federal government, the federal council, the federal parliament, the European Union, and other organizations. The role of the Association in the visitor programs has not been sufficiently explored. See Anja Kräutler, "Dieselbe Stadt – und doch eine ganz andere": Kommunale und bürgerschaftliche Besuchsprogramme für ehemalige Zwangsarbeiter und andere Opfer nationalsozilialistischen Unrechts." Fonds Erinnerung und Zukunft der Stiftung Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft: Berlin, 2006, 15; 55

The news about the Berlin invitation program was publicized to former Berliners through German consulates world wide, through refugee publications, and increasingly made its rounds by word of mouth. The first announcement in *Aufbau* appeared in a small article in the June 20, 1969 edition. The author noted that a speaker of the West Berlin Senate had declared that the decision for the invitations was based on the fact that by the end of 1969 a majority of restitution cases would be completed, but that the city of Berlin, "however, would like to carry on the fundamental idea of the West German restitution legislation in a 'meaningful way,' and offer former citizens the opportunity to render their own judgment about the present conditions in the city."[87] It was added that invitations were particularly addressed to former Jewish Berliners and those who were financially not well off. The announcement came to the refugees at a time, and in a context, when, as we have seen, physical ties to Germany and public discourse on travel to Germany were at a heretofore unknown height, and many refugees already had a general interest in travel to Germany. The response to Berlin's invitation was overwhelming. On July 11, 1969 *Aufbau* reported on the great number of letters applying to visit that had reached the Berlin Senate Chancellery from all over the world, which Berlin's Mayor Klaus Schütz interpreted as "impressive evidence for a bond to the old *Heimat*."[88] *Aufbau* also promoted the program by publishing articles, some written by

---

[87] "Berlin will emigrierte Bürger einladen," "Der Westberliner Senat (Stadtregierung) will während der Nazi-Zeit emigrierte Bürger der Stadt zu Berlin-Besuchen einladen. Ein Senatssprecher begründete diesen Entschluss damit, dass bis zum Jahresende die Mehrzahl der Wiedergutmachungs- und Entschädigungsfälle abgeschlossen sei. Die Stadt möchte jedoch 'auf sinnvolle Weise' den Grundgedanken der westdeutschen Wiedergutmachungs-Gesetzgebung weiterführen und ehemaligen Bügern die Möglichkeit bieten, sich ein eigenes Urteil über die gegenwärtigen Verhältnisse in der Stadt zu bilden. Es sei vor allem daran gedacht, jüdische und wirtschaftlich schlecht gestellte ehemalige Berliner einzuladen." *Aufbau* 35 (June 20, 1969)

[88] "Viele Emigranten wollen Berlin besuchen," *Aufbau* 35 (July 11, 1969)

Steinitz and Hanns-Peter Hertz (the former did not mention his personal involvement) that presented the city and the program itself in a very positive light.[89] By February 1, 1970, 11,146 applications for visits had reached Berlin.[90] Many of the applicants wrote that they had long held the wish to see "their Berlin" once more but that they did not have the finances to make the trip.[91] Not all included a reference to their suffering under the Nazis, but some made specific mentioning of Berlin wanting to make a contribution to the *Wiedergutmachung* of past wrongs with the invitations. A typical phrasing was, for example: "You can understand that I have the greatest interest to follow this invitation to my home country. It is precisely the invitation and the return to my home country that will help to heal the wounds that a Hitler afflicted in unfound and unjust ways," wording that appears verbatim in a number of letters from Los Angeles.[92] The overwhelming response was unexpected by the organizers of the program, and it became clear that it would require a permanent administrative structure as well as an ongoing, higher budget for the invitations to continue over many years. Because of the vast number of

---

[89] Between 1933 and 1939, about 80,000 Jews had left Berlin. For more information on the response, see for example, Hans Steinitz, "Berlins zweite Wiedergeburt: West-berlin: 'Boomtown' hinter dem Eisernen Vorhang," *Aufbau* 35 (October 3, 1969), Hanns Peter Hertz in a letter to the editor *Aufbau* 35 (September 19, 1969). See also *Aufbau* 35 (October 17, 1969), and a letter from a refugee from San Diego who was one of the first to go and reported about his positive experiences in Berlin. *Aufbau* 35 (Oktober 3, 1969). The program of the Berlin Philharmonic was also published in September, see above.

[90] Johannes Völckers, "Eine Chronik der Berlin-Besuche emigrierter Mitbürger,"Joachim Nawrocki, Johannes Völckers (eds.), *30 Jahre Wiedergutmachung: Und eine Chronik der Berlin-Besuche emigrierter Mitbürger*, *Berliner Forum* 3 (Berlin: Presse- und Informationsamt des Landes Berlin, 1981), 35

[91] See Joachim Schlör, "In weiter Ferne: Berlin. Bilder der Stadt in den Erinnerungen deutsch-jüdischer Emigranten," *Menora: Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte* 9 (1998): 267-296

[92] "Sie können verstehen, dass ich das allergroesste Interesse habe dieser Einladung in mein Heimatland zu folgen. Gerade die Einladung und die Rueckkehr nach meinem Heimatland wird die Wunde zu heilen helfen, die ein Hitler unbegruendeter und unberechtigter Weise geschlagen hat." Several refugees from Los Angeles used these exact lines in their letters to the Berlin Senate Chancellery in the Fall of 1969. SK (Senatskanzlei) Berlin, Charter und Dankschreiben, Folder: Frühjahr 1973 Charter Amerika Montreal / Los Angeles – Signatur 128

applications, the organizers were forced to rationalize the program and hierarchize the applicants. They decided to grant early invitations based on several criteria: first would be the oldest applicants and those who had been interned in a concentration camp and survived in hiding, and initially only people who had not been back to Berlin after the war on their own would be invited.[93]

The news about Berlin's invitation program spread quickly within the refugee community, which largely perceived it as a generous gesture, and refugees from other cities (as in the example of Hamburg, above) began to use Berlin's example to ask their own towns for invitations. The motivation for many to contemplate returning was born of emotional memories of place and home, of family and childhood, as Liselotte Levy-Weil's letter from Louisiana exemplifies: "My dear sir: I have a very good life here in this 'blessed America' but my thoughts often return to the house in Engerser Street 12 in Neuwied on the Rhine. This is where my parents ran the butchery Levy. Perhaps, I can come to visit one day."[94]

Refugees' Influence on Visitation and Commemoration

The examples of Berlin and Hamburg demonstrate how German Jewish refugees both figured in and influenced city policy decisions through their interest, their individual visits to Germany, their involvement in drawing attention to a lack of care on the part of

---

[93] "Viele Emigranten wollen Berlin besuchen," *Aufbau* 35 (July 11, 1969)

[94] "Mein lieber Herr" Ich habe ein sehr gutes Leben im 'gesegneten Amerika', aber oft gehen meine Gedanken zurück in das Haus an der Engerser Straße 12 in Neuwied am Rhein. Hier führten meine Eltern die Metzgerie Levy. Vielleicht kann ich eines Tages auf Besuch kommen." *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994) 45.

municipalities, their pleading for invitations, and their using the Berlin program as negotiating leverage. Numerous examples from other cities all over West Germany confirm the significant role refugees themselves played in the development of municipal visitor programs. In some places, rabbis who returned were important idea givers. Rabbi Dr. Kurt Metzger, for example, who beginning in 1964 made annual trips to his former hometown of Landau in Rhineland-Palatinate, became an advocate for German Jewish reconciliation and also made a proposal to the city council to invite all former Jewish inhabitants for a visit.[95] Refugee rabbis held a special position of influence on opinion on Germany in their communities and their positive inclination likely encouraged others to allow an interest in Germany or even accept invitations.

The example of Ilse M. Wolfson from North Hollywood who undertook a private trip to her former home of Krefeld, North Rhine-Westphalia in 1971, demonstrates that refugees who did not hold such special positions also contributed to the development of relationships between German towns and their former Jewish citizens. Wolfson reported on her experience of returning to Krefeld for the first time after 32 years in a letter to *Aufbau*. Her letter is a particularly strong example of how Jewish travel affected this process, as it illustrates the relative absence of awareness of, or disinterest in, a Jewish past and its annihilation in many smaller German cities at that time. Further, it shows how, through their travels, individual refugees explicitly and implicitly called attention to

---

[95] *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994): 49. Rabbi Leo Trepp also traveled from California to his former hometown of Oldenburg in Lower Saxony every year starting in 1954. He became also involved in German Jewish reconciliation, something his widow celebrates on a website: URL: http://leotrepp.org/en/

that past, their own presence as former Jewish citizens, and their interest in their former home towns.

> I seethed with indignation when I quickly became aware of the total oblivion to which the Jewish community of the pre-Hitler era was relegated. The site of the burned-out synagogue had been completely swallowed by the renovation of the central city, and nowhere was there any sign that Jewish citizens had ever played an important part in the city's growth. Apathy and defensiveness reigned supreme, even among some of the survivors of the holocaust. I felt compelled to voice my personal feelings and several suggestions at a press conference called for that purpose. The article which ensued seemed to give impetus and courage to those in the community who themselves had suffered from Nazi persecution, and they began to put pressure on the City to implement some of the suggestions. The erection of the 'Mahnmal' [memorial] near the site of the synagogue is a direct result of our continuing effort to prod a very reluctant municipal government into action. Several other suggestions, such as an invitation to a group of former Krefelder Jews and the publication of a history of the Jewish population of that city, also materialized.
>
> I take some pride in having had a hand in this outcome and having spoken up when conscience dictated it. I urge 'Aufbau' readers to follow a similar course in every German city with which they have contact. I realize full well that the only purpose monuments serve is as a historical landmark, a constant reminder of events which tend to get blotted out with time...lest they forget.[96]

Wolfson points out that her visit and initiative eventually led to the invitation of other former Jewish citizens of the town. Her pride in having caused this, and in rectifying the absence of a memory of a Jewish past in that town and filling that memory with new life, and in pushing for a perpetual reminder that Jewish life there was wiped out, signifies the attitude of someone who believed in the importance of educating Germans. While her motivations on the one hand derived from a moral duty to her

---

[96] "Re: 'Mahnmal' in Krefeld," *Aufbau* 34 (October 5, 1973)

ancestors and her community, her words reveal that she also believed it to be significant to incite the Germans in her hometown to engage in morally correct actions.[97]

German Supporters of Visitor Programs

As in the case of Hamburg and Berlin, Wolfson,while speaking of a "total oblivion" in regard to the Jewish past, nevertheless found people in Krefeld who were receptive of her desire to change that. Her allies, similar to those who supported the outreach actions in Hamburg and Berlin, were people who had their own history of persecution by the Nazis. In cities with Jewish communities, this group often became major supporters of invitations to former refugees, sometimes initiating contacts with former residents and making inquiries about whether they would be interested in visits.[98] The initial "apathy" and "defensiveness" of local Holocaust survivors which Wolfson mentions in the case of Krefeld can perhaps be explained by a general attitude of 'laying low' that existed among some Jews in Germany, sensing that their history was likely to meet disinterest, if not rejection. Hanns-Peter Herz in Berlin or Herbert Weichmann in Hamburg also each de-emphasized their Jewish background, while stressing their Social

---

[97] See also the case of James May, who traveled in 1978 from Florida to Heilbronn for a few days to see his former hometown. After his return, he sent a letter to the local newspaper *Heilbronner Stimme* saying that the citizens of Heilbronn "do not want to remember the Jews. They try to sweep the past under the carpet." His letter incited debate within the community and a letter exchange between him and some people in Heilbronn begins, that is published in the newspaper. In 1982, the newspaper begins to publish a series of articles on the Jews of Unterland, apparently inspired by May's actions. A visitor program is established a few years later. *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1997):6. The city of Limburg also initiated their program in 1989 after it was proposed by a Mrs. Putziger who had gone back to the city in 1968. *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994), 24

[98] The Jewish Communities in Konstanz and Weiden, for example. The option to stay with Jews who had made Germany their permanent home made returning easier for some. In Arnsberg, Hesse, the house of a Jewish couple who had returned from Israel in the early 1950s become a central contact point for Jews who came to Germany for temporary visits, often to take care of restitution claims. *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994): 17f.

Democratic identity, which in the 1960s and early 1970s offered a more direct engagement with Germany's Nazi past and its victims as part of its platform. In fact, Social Democrats were, in general, among the most constant supporters of outreach activities to Jews during this time.[99]

The refugees were distinctly conscious of who the people were, in Germany, that supported their interests. The clearest example of this appears somewhat later in a special 1994 edition of *Aufbau* which documented 120 different visitor programs. Reporters paid special attention to emphasizing which groups and individuals within the city governments were for and against the programs. Again and again it is pointed out that members of the CDU, the Christian Democratic Party, and occasionally the FDP, the liberal party, were reluctant to adopt visitation plans, while representative of the SPD and the Green party were usually in favor of such programs.[100]

---

[99] The acknowledgement of Jewish suffering under the Nazis became a feature of postwar Social Democracy under Kurt Schumacher. Schumacher was born in 1895 and was a Social Democratic representative in the Reichstag from 1928-32. He openly opposed the National Socialists and was imprisoned in several concentration camps during the war. After the war, Schumacher became the leader of the Social Democrats and was Adenauer's rival in the first West German chancellor elections. Kurt Schumacher took the position that confronting Germany's responsibility of the murder of the Jews was essential for the development of a democratic system. For him, an active engagement with the past and the memory of the victims was important to prevent history from repeating itself. Schumacher was backed in his position by the majority of the Social Democrats. These politicians were instrumental in pushing for restitution payments in the early 1950s; without their votes Adenauer would not have been able to pass the restitution legislation. With the 1969 election of Willy Brandt as chancellor, a Social Democratic government continued the ideas Schumacher and Theodor Heuss, member of the Liberal Party (FDP) and first president of the FRG, had introduced in the 1950s. Under Brandt, who had left Germany in 1933 and had fought in the resistance, public remembrance of the Nazi past and emphasis on German responsibility and justice for the victims occupied a central position within the discourse of democratic Germany. Willy Brandt's *Kniefall* (genuflection) in front of the Warsaw Ghetto Monument in 1970 was a symbol for this and a demonstration to the world of Germany's willingness to accept responsibility of its past. See, for example, Jeffrey Herf, *Divided memory: the Nazi past in the two Germanys*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997, 245, 284

[100] "Besuch in der alten Heimat" – Eine Dokumentation des AUFBAU über Besuchsprogramme deutscher Gemeinden für ihre ehemaligen jüdischen Bewohner, *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994)

It is notable, particularly because in hindsight and from a removed perspective the invitation programs are identified with the city and its image, that in many cities the supporters of the idea of the visitor program were individuals and small groups outside of the political establishment of the municipal governments. These groups or individuals—in no way representing a majority of the city's inhabitants—were nevertheless, as Wolfson also points out in her letter, instrumental in exerting influence on the city's governments. One group which was frequently involved in the development of visitor programs was the *Gesellschaft für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit* (Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation, GCJZ).[101] The first German chapters of this organization, which already existed in the U.S., Switzerland, Great Britain and France, were founded in 1948-9 with the assistance of the U.S. Occupation Administration which thought it useful for Germany's democratization.[102] Regional chapters all over the FRG followed and lay persons and clerics—both Catholics and Protestants—began in the 1950s to organize regular activities and an annual *Woche der Brüderlichkeit* (Week of Brotherliness) to foster understanding and good relations between German Christians and Jews. Acknowledging "the historic guilt" of Germans and the responsibility for the annihilation of Jewish life in Europe, two major concerns of the society were to bring Nazi perpetrators to trial and to find "adequate *Wiedergutmachung*" for the survivors of the Holocaust.[103] The GCJZ's involvement with the visitor programs were part of this effort

---

[101] See also their involvement in Hamburg, Nikou, *Zwischen Imagepflege*

[102] See the homepage of the Coordination Council of the GCJZ URL: http://www.deutscher-koordinierungsrat.de/ (03/01/2009)

[103] Ibid.

and in some cases they initiated their establishment, since the societies had frequently taken up contacts with emigrated Jews already in the early postwar period. Sometimes, as in the case of Marburg, the local GCJZ chapter even organized and administered the entire program, while the city only covered the finances.[104] While there were certainly many German Christians who held anti-Jewish sentiments, there existed numerous smaller Christian and ecumenical organizations and individuals who engaged in the outreach and support of local visitor programs.

Most important for the development and success of many local visitor programs were the initiatives of teachers, city archivists, local historians, university students and doctoral candidates, who in the 1960s began to be interested in topics related to the Third Reich. The Auschwitz trials from 1963-1965 and public debates about the Statutes of Limitations for German war criminals in the mid 1960s and again in the 1970s contributed to a perspective which brought an increased focus on the Holocaust as a central element of the Nazi past.[105] The Third Reich also became a more important topic in various media representations such as dramas, literature, and, very importantly— because of its reach to larger segments of the population— television programs during this time. While these representations often focused on different actor groups of Nazi perpetrators, the new level of exposure of the topic of the Nazi past in several realms of public life left its mark on wider audiences, particularly younger generations of Germans

---

[104] *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994) 25

[105] Wulf Kansteiner, "Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle: The Legacy of Nazism, World War II, and the Holocaust in the Federal Republic of Germany," in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ed. Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 113.

who had not lived through the Third Reich themselves.[106] In this respect, the American television miniseries *Holocaust*, airing in Germany in January of 1979 and watched by about one-third of the West-German population (and circa half of West German adults), was of great significance in steering attention toward the Jewish victims of the Nazi regime.[107] It was the visual representation of the persecution and extermination of a German Jewish family in particular which made a great impression on people: surveys showed that two thirds of those polled were "deeply moved" by what they had seen and more than one third "were 'appalled that 'we Germans committed and tolerated such crimes.'"[108] In some people, these emotions translated into greater interest in Jewish history and also an interest in reconciliation.

In addition, the time between 1933 and 1945 was instituted as a mandatory part of a regular school curriculum in 1962. This included the Holocaust, and though inevitably not all teachers covered the topic with the same intensity, the annual number of school group visits to the Dachau concentration camp site increased from 471 in 1968 to well over 5000 yearly at the end of the 1970s.[109] In this atmosphere of increased awareness, many history workshops emerged, often centered around *Volkshochschulen* (adult education institutions) and high schools, which sought to investigate everyday life under the National Socialist regime. These frequently researched topics and molded projects

---

[106] See Kansteiner, "Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle," 116ff.

[107] Tom Dreisbach, "Transatlantic Broadcasts: Holocaust in America and West Germany," *Penn History Review* 16:2 (Spring 2009), Article 7:77. Accessed at http://repository.upenn.edu/phr/vol16/iss2/7

[108]Ibid, 89

[109] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 810f

around the Jewish past of their towns and cities.[110] City archivists also often became involved in such research projects which regularly yielded small publications. Visiting refugees often had engaging interactions with these archivists, such as in Soest, where Ernie Sommer was "received with open arms."[111] There, the archivist had published a study on *The Persecution of Our Jewish Co-Citizens in Soest* and Sommer was able to offer a lot of information on the fate of the Jewish community that the archivist had not been able to obtain.

In other cases, archivists, hobby historians, and students—in order to obtain information for their research projects—searched and reached out to surviving members of their town's Jewish community before they had ever traveled to Germany. Sometimes these contacts by German researchers actually renewed interests on the part of the emigrants and refugees to visit their hometowns.[112] For many refugees, such outreach activities were a sign of the existence of people on the German side who were genuinely interested in their very personal histories. While German politicians had publicly communicated a general message acknowledging responsibility and desiring reconciliation since the 1950s and increasingly in the following decades, these researchers were interested in the first place in the refugees as individuals, and in the very personal, detailed, uncomfortable, and sad histories of the refugees themselves and their

---

[110] While the 1970s saw less public and media attention to Nazi topics than the 1960s—partly due to the oil crisis in 1973 and domestic RAF terrorism, in the late 1970s interest in the history of National Socialism once again increased. Kansteiner, "Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle," 121f.

[111] "Ernie Sommer," Wolman, *Crossing Over*, 160

[112] *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994), or, for example, "Das Schicksal der Nauheimer Juden," *Aufbau* 53 (June 19, 1987)

family members and friends. While much of the official communication from politicians to the community was about sending the message that the Germans wanted reconciliation, this was a different, deeper level of engagement, which did not require refugees to absolve the Germans, and as such touched many in a very different way.[113]

In this regard, the emigrants were often most impressed by the attention and curiosity concerning their individual experiences that German high school students showed. It compelled some to re-consider their perspective on Germany, as another example from Krefeld from the early 1980s demonstrates. Here, on the occasion of the 50 year anniversary of the Nazis coming to power, a high school religion teacher encouraged her students to write to the 54 Jewish refugees whose addresses they had been able to obtain. Conceptualized as a form of memorialization of forced emigration, the student's letters read, for example:

> We can imagine that the memories of that time must be difficult for you. (…) However, we would like to make a contribution so your fate will not be forgotten in this year of remembrance. (…) What were your experiences in Krefeld before and after 1933? (…) What were the conditions under which you left the city?[114]

The letters were well received by the addressees and the ensuing relationship inspired the students to support the idea of municipal invitations to these people in order

---

[113] In a conversation with the former city archivist in Rastatt, Hesse, he reported that his early interest in the history of the local Jewish community was not particularly welcomed by the the city government. He reported of his tense relationship with some of the city officials. While he had good contacts with former Jewish citizens of Rastatt, the city was not interested in these or in supporting invitations. Personal conversation with Wolfgang Reiß, July 2012. Kurt Shuler whose experience returning to Germany is documented in the third chapter of this dissertation, has become friendly with the archivist of his home town Nuremberg. Very interested in the history of Nuremberg, Shuler contributed two articles to the series *transit nürnberg*. http://www.rijo.homepage.t-online.de/pdf_2/DE_NU_JU_shuler.pdf.
For another example, see the case of Crailsheim where an initiative from the Volkshochschule and a working group "Jews in Crailsheim" organized preparations for the visits *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994)

[114] *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994): 40-41.

to "not forget Krefeld's Jews." For many refugees, meanwhile, it was the contact with the high school students that convinced them to accept the invitation. Rolf Gompertz, living in North Hollywood, explained that whenever he had in the past heard of Germany or only thought of it, he had automatically started to shudder. This had not changed within the 47 years that had passed since he had left Krefeld as an 11 year old boy. It was the efforts of the young students that "moved him," affected how he felt about Germany, and eventually made him accept the invitation to visit the town of his birth.[115]

Student projects like the one in Krefeld became more frequent in the 1980s, a time which is widely understood to represent "The Climax of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*" (working through the Nazi past) in the FRG.[116] Thirteen years of Social Democratic governments had left their mark on the country's intellectual and educational infrastructure: now people who believed that the Holocaust was to be a significant part of the country's "cultural memory" held positions of influence.[117] When the Christian Democratic Helmut Kohl became chancellor in 1982, this became an issue of political contention played out over various different issues throughout the 1980s, such

---

[115] See Ibid. One visitor said about his visit to Eschwege that he felt that "all the bad things get swept under the carpet" and that the students were the first people who were really interested.

[116] This is part of a subtitle in Kansteiner's 2006 essay. Along with the growing interest of the federal government in furthering a certain memory culture, the German President initiated a research competition on National Socialism for high school students. In such research projects, students investigated the history of the local Jewish community and also asked non-Jewish contemporaries how much they had known and knew about the persecution of the Jews. See Falk Pingel, "From Evasion to a Crucial Tool of Moral and Political Education: Teaching National Socialism and the Holocaust in Germany,"in *What Shall We Tell the Children?: International Perspectives on School History Textbooks*, ed. Stuart J. Foster, Keith A. Crawford (Greenwich, Conn.: Information Age Pub. Inc., 2006), 139. The special visitor edition of *Aufbau* includes reports of several high school projects on Jewish history that won prizes in such competitions, for example Lüdenscheid won the first prize in a state wide competition.

[117] See Michael Meng, *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2011), 197f.

as the Bitburg affair and the *Historikerstreit* to name but two.[118] These debates, while they were primarily led by politicians and intellectuals, received attention across all major media outlets and created an atmosphere in which the Holocaust became a topic of public interest. Also under the Kohl government, the Third Reich as a whole became subject to federally directed memory politics. While local historical and educational initiatives as well as grassroots movements engaged in research and artists created memorials in different communities throughout the 1980s, the FRG government planned a more centralized memory policy.[119] Prior to this move, conservatives had typically been inclined to steer attention away from the Nazi past, but under the Kohl government it became "not just a factor to be reckoned with but an opportunity to create a new, positive German historical consciousness."[120] Initiatives such as the building of museums and the support for the planning of a central Holocaust memorial involved ideas of public remembrance and official contrition, and were targeted to create an atmosphere combining "reconciliation and normalization."[121] In this climate of a federally prescribed

---

[118] See, for example,Frei, Norbert, *1945 und wir: das Dritte Reich im Bewusstsein der Deutschen* (München: C.H. Beck, 2005). Hajo Funke, "Bitburg, Jews, and Germans: a Case Study of Anti-Jewish Sentiment in Germany during May, 1985" *New German Critique*. (1986): 57-72. Peter Baldwin, ed., *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust and the Historians' Debate* (Boston: Beacon, 1990), Jacob S. Eder, "Ein 'Holocaustsyndrom?' Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen der Bundesrepublik und amerikanisch-jüdischen Organisationen in den 1980er Jahren,"*Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 52 (2012): 646-657;

[119] See Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 20.

[120] Kansteiner, "Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle," 126.

[121] Ibid, 127 and Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, 199. It is important to note that this attempt at "normalization" was not only of interest within the confines of the West German state but also with regard to Germany's place on the international scene. Kohl wanted to escape the special position [Sonderrolle] that the FRG still held because of its National Socialist past and the atrocities of the Second World War. See Eder, "Ein 'Holocaustsyndrom?'" 634 and the extensive literature he cites on this larger topic.

Holocaust awareness with a purpose, many more cities instituted visitor programs for their former Jewish citizens. Frequently, as we have seen in the case of Hamburg, the establishment of such a program had been considered for quite some time, brought up and supported by people outside of the municipal governments. While cost and organizational efforts were certainly factors that influenced the decision for or against a visitor program, an analysis of various cities reveals that the question of the *value* of the program was paramount in many cases.[122] This idea of value was in the first place evaluated from the perspective of city officials. If they were of the persuasion that the city's residents "do not want anything to do with the whole shebang [meaning the Nazi past] anymore," as the CDU mayor of the city of Oldenburg believed in 1985, then they saw no obvious value to be found in establishing one of these programs.[123]

Even in such cases, however, pressure from the political left and from citizens and interest groups led some city governments to eventually establish programs in spite of popular opposition or apathy. In addition, an increasing motivation that aided in the realization of invitation programs in many cities during the 1980s was the concern not to be seen as a 'Nazi town.' The strategic value that conducting an invitation program carried for a town's image became ever more important, not only from a foreign political perspective, as it had been for those supporting the early programs in Munich and Berlin, but also in terms of inner German pressure. From an outside international perspective, municipalities which established visitor programs increasingly conformed to the larger

---

[122] *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994)

[123] *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994) 33.

discourse of "reconciliation and normalization" that was being adopted nationwide. In some cities, however, public statements and speeches given by mayors and other city officials revealed a lack of understanding of the Jewish experience, as examples below illustrate. On the other hand, because of a heightened awareness in general and the influence of a new generation of Germans who were sensitive to this issue in a different way than their forebears had been, there were also more people who supported these initiatives for moral reasons.[124] Ultimately, the experiences of Jewish visitors on their invited trips depended heavily on the motivations and characters of the individuals involved in the programs on the side of the German cities. The next section will give an insight into these experiences.

Invitations and Pre-visit Perspectives

In order to evaluate the effects of invitation programs on the broad population of German Jewish refugees, it is necessary to take a brief look at the response rate. While the response to the Berlin call for invitations was overwhelming in the eyes of its organizers, no numbers are available to determine how many people chose to not respond because they did not want to go. In Hans Steinitz's opinion it was "only a very small circle" of people who held deep seated resentments that prevented them from wanting to go.[125] One refugee living in Massachusetts who had accepted the invitation to Berlin in

---

[124] Along with the growing interest of the federal government in furthering a certain memory culture, the German President initiated a research competition on National Socialism for high school students. In such research projects, students investigated the history of the local Jewish community and also asked non-Jewish contemporaries how much they had known and knew about the persecution of the Jews. This created certainly even more awareness by young Germans. See Pingel, "From Evasion to a Crucial Tool of Moral and Political Education," 139.

[125] "Hierauf kann jeder Mithelfer stolz sein," *Aktuell* 23 (September 1977)

1972, had his own thoughts concerning the attitudes German Jewish refugees in the U.S. held toward Germany. In a letter to the Senate Chancellery, he wrote that he believed that the German Jews in the US could be divided into three different groups when it came to their perspective on Germany. In contrast to Steinitz, he thought that there existed actually a "rather large" group of people who would not follow an official invitation to their German hometown because they still hated Germany. A second, "rather small group," among which he counted himself, comprised people who accepted the invitation because they believed that the majority of the German population of the 1970s had "absolutely nothing to do with the Nazi ideology anymore." The third and largest group he characterized as being made up of people who did not really know "where they stand." For them, the invitation of the Senate could really make a difference, the man wrote encouragingly in his thank you letter to Berlin: "I believe that with the invitation to Berlin and the subsequent opportunity to come into contact with Germans again, you will be able to influence a fraction of these people in a positive way and lead them back to a normal thinking toward Germany."[126] Interestingly, this refugee thinks that a "normal" relationship with Germany was possible and favorable, something that, as we have seen, *Aufbau* had to some degree begun to promote as well.

By 1994, Henry Marx, Steinitz's successor as *Aufbau*'s editor in chief, believed that 'by far the greatest part of those invited" had accepted the invitations to their cities. However, numbers from smaller cities, which often sent out invitations directly to former citizens, suggest that there were in fact many people who did not accept them. The city of

---

[126] Original letter in German, August 10, 1972 to SK Berlin, Dankschreiben 1975-76 (L-W)

Stuttgart, for example, reported that 30 to 40 percent of those who received invitations declined them.[127] In Ulm, Baden-Württemberg, 78 of 127 people accepted, in Fürth, near Nuremberg, 120 out of 350 people accepted, and in Laupheim, 19 out of 60 went when the city sent out invitations on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the destruction of the synagogue.[128] In most cases we do not know why people decided not to come. Outraged rejection letters referring to German crimes were either rare or were just not archived by the cities. In the northwestern city of Aurich, however, city officials preserved such a letter. Rosel Sievs, living in Ireland, responded to the mayor with the following words:

> ...I have to tell you that I do not have the wish to ever return to Aurich or to ever set foot on German soil again— because my memories are very, very sad and bitter. My whole family was annihilated in Auschwitz, Buchenwald and Theresienstadt, only my sister survived after terrible suffering in the extermination camps. She had become a total physical wreck. ... My family, my youth, and my education were taken from me, and by God, why should I return to Aurich? (...) Have things really changed? I have abandoned this idea [Ich bin davon abgekommen], Mr. Mayor. 63 members of my family died by the hands of the Nazis, and you invite me to return? No, sir, I will never return.[129]

While the majority of the rejection letters I have been able to view stated that the refugees would not come because they were too old or in poor health, we know, mostly from interviews, that many refugees felt like Rosel Sievs and never wanted to return to

---

[127] Wolfgang Benz, "Rückkehr auf Zeit. Erfahrungen deutsch-jüdischer Emigranten mit Einladungen in ihre ehemaligen Heimatstädte," *Exilforschung* 9 (1991), 201.

[128] *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994)

[129] Rosel Sievs lived in Ireland and wrote this letter in English. It was subsequently translated into German and upon the initiative of the city's public relations officer published not only in the commemoration brochure for the invitation program but also in the local newspaper. The invitation program in Aurich was carried out in 1992. *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994)

the 'country of the murderers.' They either found it too painful to visit their former hometown in particular (see the example of Anneliese Bunzel above), or felt that going on this trip would send the wrong message to the Germans. A man living in Buenos Aires expressed this latter opinion. Unsure whether he should accept the invitation, he wrote to his former home town of Neuss that "it is not my desire to make those citizens feel better, who have not cleansed their souls or who view the acceptance of the invitation as a concession that everything is forgotten and forgiven."[130] Larry Greenbaum, who settled in San Diego, also pointed out that he did not want to accept the free trip and then have to be grateful to and shake hands with people who had kicked him and his family out. In an interview, Greenbaum said that he did not need the Germans to pay for him to go to his town and see what they wanted him to see.[131] He did, however, visit the city on his own terms with his wife and another refugee couple when he was on a European tour.

The voices of these people who did not want to go and never took part in these official visits must be kept in mind when analyzing the responses of those who went, particularly because of the uncertainty over how many refugees rejected invitations. Often, people who were younger when they left Germany were more critical of the idea and less enthusiastic about going than were older people, who, as mentioned above, had many more reasons to go. Older refugees often felt more connection to Germany because living under Nazi rule had only made up a small part of their life there. For some, this made a difference, even though in other cases this short time period and its gravity

---

[130] *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994)

[131] Interview with Larry Greenbaum, conducted by the author, San Diego: February 16, 2014

blended all other good memories of Germany out. Also, with age, people frequently develop a nostalgia for their youth and past places.[132] In addition, it is more likely that refugees who had arrived in the U.S. at an advanced age and did not adjust to life in the US as successfully as younger ones—i.e. those who had never become quite comfortable in the United States—were more enticed by the idea and prospect of traveling to Germany.

Those refugees who were interested in accepting the invitations often felt that they were entitled to receive this more or less financially covered visit to their former home town. Correspondence between refugees in the United States and the Berlin office responsible for that city's invitation program makes clear this sentiment of strong interest, echoing the initiatives of those refugees who participated in constructing the programs in the first place. Because of the many applications to visit Berlin and the long waiting list, some refugees who were most keen on going sent several letters asking to finally be considered, often stating that if they would not get an invitation soon, they might never see Berlin again because before long they would either be too old or even dead.[133] Many refugees were particularly sensitive to how Berlin handled their cases, protesting when

---

[132] Future work will delve into a more thorough discussion of the meanings of nostalgia. See, for example, Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), and Peter Fritzsche, "How Nostalgia Narrates Modernity," in *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture,* ed. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 2002

[133] Different letters sent to the Berlin Senate Chancellery. One typical example reads as follows: "In the meantime I had heart surgery and my health is not the best. Since, as of today, I unfortunately still have not received an invitation, I would be very grateful if you could make it possible that I can once more see my old home town before it will be too late." In the original German: "In der Zwischenzeit hatte ich eine Herzoperation und meine Gesundheit ist nicht die beste. Da ich leider heute noch keine Einladung empfangen habe, wäre ich Ihnen ja doch sehr dankbar, wenn Sie es möglich machen können, das ich noch einmal meine alte Heimatstadt sehen könnte, bevor es zu spät wird." Letter from January 1987, SK Berlin, Folder 1988 (S)

they felt they had unjustly been waiting for too long. In some instances, they pointed out people they knew, who had already received invitations, even though they were younger than themselves. The program's manner of prioritizing the invitations was confusing to the applicants at times, as the Berlin office could frequently not make predictions as to when applicants could expect to receive a date for their trip. When receiving a generic letter to a very specific question about the timing of his trip, one man answered disapprovingly:

> ... I assume that you were not very interested in my letter and I do not really feel like coming to Berlin only with the help of bureaucracy, I thought this would be a bit more personal. So many thanks for your answer but I think I will postpone my trip for a while.[134]

Responses like this illustrate the sensitive nature of the invitations and the process surrounding them. They also show that the refugees took Berlin's outwardly projected goal of *Wiedergutmachung* [making good again] very seriously. 'Making good' could not happen if there were not people in Berlin who also took this matter very seriously and who were morally invested in it. Certainly, communications that made the refugees feel unwanted, burdensome, or otherwise uncomfortable, were not conducive to creating an atmosphere that would make people want to go back to a place that they had been forced to leave. Yet, through their expressions of criticism and suspicion as to the virtuousness of German motivations, some refugees also made it clear that they would hold the people of Berlin accountable, and would not accept an functionalist bureaucratic approach to

---

[134] "Darum nehme ich an dass Sie an meinem Brief nicht sehr interessiert waren und nur mit Hilfe der Buerokratie wieder nach Berlin zu kommen habe ich eigentlich keine Lust, ich dachte es waere ein wenig persoenlicher. So vielen Dank fuer Ihre Antwort aber ich denk ich verschiebe meinen Besuch fuer eine Zeit." Letter from March 20, 1983, SK Berlin, Folder 1983 (L)

their visits. The administrators in the Berlin office, which employed between one and three permanent staff at various times, were indeed sensitive to the emotional context that the invitation process meant for many former Jewish Berliners. While the great volume of requests and limited manpower made it difficult for the staff to avoid using form letters, they generally seem to have made an effort to be personable and not too bureaucratic. This was particularly the case with certain employees with whom refugees built up most friendly relationships that were sometimes even continued after the visits.[135] In order to foster the positive relationships between Berlin and the visitors and also to keep those who were still waiting for their invitation informed and positively inclined—the Berlin organizers after all wanted to present a positive image to the wider world—the Berlin Press and Information Office (under Hanns-Peter Herz) published the magazine *Aktuell,* beginning in 1970. The magazine, which appeared between one and four times a year, reported organizational information on the visitor program and publicized its success by regularly printing thank you letters from participants. Beyond that, it always included a greeting by a politician or official, reports about Jewish life in Berlin and articles on cultural, economic, political, and historical topics connected to Berlin. The magazine was well received by many emigrants and prompted some to communicate their views on it to Berlin. After its first appearance, one man living in New York wrote to Berlin:

> May I congratulate you to this paper and its idea and thank you for it! For all of us—inveterate Berliners—these articles, information, and images

---

[135] In Berlin we see this in particular with Brigitte Roeper. When she died, rather young, in 1996, one former visitor wrote an obituary for her, which was published in *Aktuell* 58 (1996).

> [...] are a source of greatest delight, because we are and will remain Berliners, no matter how many decades separate us from this city.[136]

This statement of endorsement was published in *Aktuell* as well, declaring to the wider readership that the city of Berlin, with its intention to keep the refugees connected to the city, was doing a great job. Endorsements by refugees were certainly the best advertisements for Berlin, and this was, as mayor Klaus Schütz had stated, one result the city had hoped for: to receive good publicity abroad. While, surely, not all those who received the magazine were so unprejudiced toward Berlin, voices critical of the manner in which Berlin reached out to the emigrants through this magazine and its visitor program were almost completely absent from the publication.[137]

Berlin Program Structures

Traveling to Berlin as part of a large group was the most common visitor experience for refugees, even though in some years individually traveling guests made up about one third of the visitors.[138] In the 1970s, the Berlin Senate organized multiple charter and group flights from destinations in Israel, North and South-America, South-

---

[136] Originally written in German: "Darf ich Ihnen zu diesem Blatt und dessen Idee herzlich gratulieren und danken! Uns allen—eingefleischten Berlinern—sind diese Artikel, Informationen und Bilder (besonders das mit den nicht mehr ganz taufrischen aber dafür strahlenden Besuchern im Boot auf der Spree), eine Quelle größter Freude, denn wir sind und bleiben Berliner, egal wieviel Jahrzehnte uns von dieser Stadt trennen" *Aktuell* 2 (June 1970)

[137] One example of slight criticism that appeared in its pages in 1971 came from a man from London, who wrote that he was particularly invested in Berlin's and Germany's standing in the world. He believed that it would be a mistake to have the magazine focus too much on Jewish topics because the felt that "today's generation cannot be made responsible for the Hitler madness any longer." *Aktuell* 6 (June 1971) The Senate Chancellery not infrequently received letters from people indicating their interest in the publication; they complained that their *Aktuell* had not reached them or asked to be included in the mailing list after they had been introduced to the publication by friends.

[138] This was the case in 1972 and in the mid-1980s. "Bilanz," documents provided by Rüdiger Nemitz, SK Berlin

Africa, and Australia. From the United States group flights departed from New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

In an effort to convey goodwill, remembrance and acknowledgment of the Jewish sufferings, and make an attempt at reconciliation, program organizers tried to make the visits as pleasant and comfortable as possible. Invitations from Berlin included the costs of travel, accommodation in first-rate hotels, pocket money, and a program of informative and cultural events. During their one week stay, the visitors—generally the emigrants and their spouses—would have an official reception with the mayor, meet other Berlin politicians, go on sight-seeing tours, often with specific stops at the (former) synagogue or memorials dedicated to victims of Nazi oppression (in later years, specifically dedicated to Jewish victims), have a boat tour on the Spree or Havel river, and meet representatives of the local Jewish community. In the program's early years the farewell reception would even be held at the Jewish community center. In addition, there would be tickets to the opera or the theatre, a cabaret or a concert. People were also given the opportunity to visit the Weissensee cemetery in East Berlin.[139] Visitors who came as individuals, rather than as part of a group, whether they paid for their own travel or not (paying for one's own travel was sometimes a way gain an invitation outside of the group visits, but was still subject to the priority list of age etc.) would also receive free accommodation and tickets for cultural events.

---

[139] Because documents about the development and administrative side of the Berlin program do not exist anymore, it is difficult to trace the decision making process over what the officials thought the visitors should see. Overall, the Berlin program was very similar to that of most other cities. They all aimed to familiarize the visitors with the city again. Thus, they took them to famous sites and places the refugees would have known before they left. They also aimed to show that the city and its population had not forgotten their Jewish population or memorials.

Reactions to the Visits

The visits to Berlin—whether the refugees took part in one of the larger group visits or came as individual guests—were hailed as a success in press outlets reporting about the trips—*Aufbau*, *Aktuell* and Berlin newspapers, and occasionally a local American paper—and this perspective is frequently supported by personal testimonies from emigrants who participated.[140] While many of these testimonies began with a few lines about the mixed feelings that accompanied the decision to go to Berlin, the next few lines would explain that these fears and uncomfortable feelings quickly subsided upon arrival and were outshone by more positive experiences. The letter one of the first visitors in 1970 sent to Berlin is representative for many that followed:

> To be honest, I returned with reservations and inhibitions to my home town after 31 years. Because of the kindness, graciousness and especially the good will from all participants to make this stay pleasant and informative in every way, many memories of sad times in the past were alleviated. While one says that it is difficult to forget and forgive, one should not hold a new generation and decent people responsible for past sins.[141]

---

[140] The 1994 special edition of *Aufbau* also includes critical voices but the main tone by editor in chief Henry Marx was positive. See Henry Marx, "Fast 120 deutsche Städte laden ein," *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994):1

[141] "Ich bin—ehrlich gesagt—mit Vorbehalt und Hemmungen in meine Heimatstadt nach 31 Jahren zurückgekehrt...Durch die Liebenswürdigkeit, Zuvorkommenheit und besonders den Willen von allen Beteiligten, den Aufenthalt erfreulich und informativ in jeder Beziehung zu gestalten, sind viele Erinnerungen an vergangene traurige Zeiten gemildert worden. Man sagt zwar, es ist schwer zu vergessen und zu vereben, man sollte aber auch nicht eine neue Generation und anständige Menschen für vergangene Sünden verantwortlich halten." *Aktuell* 4 (December 1970)
See also this excerpt from a letter sent by a man and a woman who were Holocaust survivors and who also both lost their families in the Holocaust: "These days will always stay in our memory and will help to forget the terrible times under Hitler, and we will make an effort to tell all our friends and acquaintances about the new democratic spirit that reigns in Berlin." "Diese Tage werde fuer immer in unserer Erinnerung haften bleiben und werden dazubetragen, die grauenhaften Zeiten unter Hitler zu vergessen, und wir werden bemueht sein, allen unseren Freunden und Bekannten von dem neuen demokratischen Geist zu berichten, der in Berlin herrscht." SK Berlin, 1970 (N)

Aufbau, in particular, with its editorial stance of reconciliation and bridge building, welcomed such positive impressions of the visitor program and changed perspectives on Germany.

Voices that were more critical of such change of heart, meanwhile, seem to have been rare, or not openly publicized, but they did exist, as one example from Los Angeles demonstrates. There, Walter Bucky, a very active member of the Jewish Club of 1933 complained that the people who had returned from their 1971 trip were quasi "brainwashed." An excerpt from an interview with Bucky reveals this sentiment:

> Interviewer (I): What is your attitude towards Germany? Do you have any connections with the Germans here?
>
> Walter Bucky (WB): I tell you, I had bad, bad experience with the last trip of the 175 people invited from Berlin.
>
> I: Were you there?
>
> WB: No, for heavens sake not [in an agitated, angry voice]. It was all [not comprehensible] and they came back 100 *Prozent* brainwashed. They came to me, on Saturday we have our Kaffeeklatsch in the, we have a daycare center in the Jewish Community Center [...] and there we have every two weeks a Kaffeeklatsch, or Chanukka Feier.
>
> [...]
> I: Yeah, well is there anything, do they think a lot about Germany?
>
> WB: People came back brainwashed. One woman came back, you know, with an *Aktenmappe* [folder] full of papers and pictures, and we should love them and they gave us the red carpet treatment and we shouldn't say no, and I told them she wanted to have my mic, and I said you can't get my mic. You can't get my, we have no right to hate them, but you have no obligation to love them.
>
> I: What do you mean get your mic?
>
> WB: She wanted to talk with the people! Propaganda! They were, they were brainwashed!

I: What is your feeling about the Germans?

WB: That's what I tell you. I have no right to hate them but I don't need to love them.

I: Yes.

WB: You know, but I can forgive them but I don't have to forget. That is my standpoint.[142]

For those people who Bucky characterized as brainwashed, the trip to Berlin had done exactly what the organizers had wished for: the visitors enjoyed overwhelmingly positive experiences which changed their attitude toward Germany, or at least Berlin more particularly, and they were eager to spread this message upon their return home. Frequently, emigrants were eager to share this enthusiasm with the organizers of the program in Berlin, and letters like the following example from a couple in Florida were not unusual. After writing that the their trip had left "a very good and unforgettable impression on them, they went on to assure the Berlin organizers: "We told our children and grandchildren, all friends and acquaintances about the exceedingly nice visit in Berlin. About the enormous efforts of the Senate so that everything went so well and beautifully. We are your ambassador for the new Berlin."[143] With letters such as this, their writers expressed not only their approval of the Berlin of the present, but also made clear that they felt included in the project of making Germany a better place—part of which, as

---

[142] Walter Bucky had himself been back to Germany three or four times. To the question how long he stayed, he answered "two weeks, three weeks, until my restitution was settled, you know." His trips to Germany were then about taking care of Nazi consequences but not about a pleasant trip or even reconciliation. Interview with Walter Bucky, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles: January 2, 1972, LBI NY, AR 25385, Digibaeck, URL: http://www.lbi.org/digibaeck/results/?qtype=pid&term=1326552

[143] SK Berlin, Letter from August 13, 1979

they made clear, was to give it what they thought was its due reputation. At least one refugee remarked that it "pained" her to only ever hear about Germany in negative terms in the United States.[144]

The organizers in Berlin, for their part, appreciated such messages. In an *Aktuell* article in 1976, Johannes Völcker, for a long time the main administrator responsible for the program in the Senate, explained that these messages, which suggested there existed a generally increasing readiness of the visitors to renew or create personal relationships with Berlin, filled him with "thankful gratification."[145] These attitudes on the part of both visitors and organizers show a mutual interest in the relationship, in being connected and in gaining something valuable out of this connection. Before going into what this means for each, one needs to ask why the visitors had such good experiences. What made the Berlin program so successful?

Positive Experiences

Thank you letters some refugees sent to the organizers of the Berlin program reveal that, while they appreciated the care that had been put into the organization of these events and activities, what left the biggest impression on them were the ways that the German organizers welcomed and interacted with the them. The letters overflow with references to the warmth and cordiality with which the emigrants were welcomed by the

---

[144] After the *Aktuell* office sent out four little publications on the topic of persecution and resistance in Berlin, one woman from Berkeley wrote that she hopes that they would receive much publicity. SHe and her daughter would make sure to pass them around in their circles because she found it painful that it is always only the image of the bad Germany that gets publicity. "Wir werden unser Teil tun und sie herumreichen. Er schmerzt, wenn hier im Ausland immer nur das 'böse' Deutschland gezeigt wird…"*Aktuell* 37 (November 1983)

[145] *Aktuell* 21 (Oktober 1976)

organizers and the volunteers, who accompanied the groups to most of the events and throughout their stay. This warm care of the organizers did not only make the biggest impact on visitors to Berlin, but did so in programs all over the country. In Freiburg, for example, some visitors observed that "Never in our lives have we been sheltered and protected in such a way, and not because the ladies felt obligated—no, one could feel their warm affection."[146] This feeling that German organizers treated them with utmost sincerity, "coming from the heart," was important in the visiting refugees' evaluation of the programs as an authentic act of morality, something that was of highest significance to them.[147] In this regard, a Berlin visitor wrote "...what touched me personally most was the atmosphere. All speeches to us reflected dignity, non-concealment of what happened in the past—and a serious, warm willingness and empathy for a new present and future."[148]

In addition to the recognition of the past through words, the refugees were also impressed—and often quite surprised—by the existence of memorials to the atrocities of the National Socialist past. In Berlin, sight-seeing tours for the visiting emigrants included the memorial in Plötzensee (the prison and execution center for opponents of the Nazis) and, increasingly, other memorials that emerged in the city and were dedicated to commemorating the Nazi past and particularly its Jewish victims.[149] In smaller cities, the

---

[146] *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994)

[147] Ibid, 8.

[148] "aber was mich persönlich am meisten berührte war die Atmosphäre. Alle Reden an uns spiegelten wider eine Würde, ein Nichtverhehlen was geschehen in der Vergangenheit—und eine ernste warme Bereitschaft zur neuen Gegenwart und Zukunft." SK Berlin, Letter from July 1, 1974, (T)

[149] On the memorial landscape in Berlin see Till, *The New Berlin:*

emigrants visited the synagogue, or its former site, which generally had a plaque commemorating the events of the November Pogrom of 1938 or the town's Jewish community. Whereas Jews on personal visits had often found the synagogue or the Jewish cemetery in poor condition in the 1950s and 60s and early 1970s, through the initiatives of such visiting refugees or civic interests groups—and a decree of 1956/7 stipulating that federal and state institutions would take over half of the costs necessary for upkeep of Jewish cemeteries—by the end of the 1970s this situation had improved in most places. In any case, many cities made sure that there was some recognition of Jewish sites before an official visit of former Jewish citizens. In several cities, the visitor programs were even planned around the renovation of a synagogue, and some municipalities staged exhibits in which they presented the history of the Jews of that particular town.[150] Sometimes cities also decided to name streets and squares after Jewish places or individuals, frequently before or on the occasion of the official invitations.[151] As such, the restoration of such places was to serve as an indicator that the cities valued and remembered their former Jewish citizens, something that was, when well done, very well received by the visitors.[152]

Negative Experiences

---

[150] For example in Aschaffenburg, see *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994)

[151] *Aufbau*, 60 (October 28, 1994)40, 33.

[152] With reference to the tradition of remembrance in the Jewish religion and the story telling of Passover in particular, Jack de Löwe spoke in the city of Norden (Lower Saxony) about the importance of public remembrance in order to avoid future tragedies. He commended his former hometown's efforts "to create memorials, to keep the memory of the pure martyrs alive, to seek ways to prevent repetition." *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994), 33.

Actions, events and memorials which seemed to signify an authenticity of feeling figured most significantly in positive experiences of the refugees' visits. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that it was the absence of authentic cordiality and appropriate acknowledgment of responsibility for the wrongs of the past that produced the most ill feeling. While it is difficult to find reference to such occurrences in the letters collected at the Berlin Senate Chancellery, the special edition of *Aufbau* documenting 120 different visitor programs features a number of critical voices.[153] In some cities, refugees realized from public statements and speeches given by mayors and other (sometimes church) officials that despite the existence of the visitor program, there were individuals in influential positions in Germany who held a less than condemnatory, or otherwise unsettling, outlook on the National Socialist past. This became particularly apparent when speakers neglected to address the fact that it was the government and citizens of their towns that had actively participated in the discrimination against and persecution of Jews during the Third Reich. The mayor of Crailsheim, for example, in his speech at the Jewish cemetery in 1987 explained: "Not buried here are 50 Crailsheimers who during the years 1939-1945 were somewhere in the world, disdained by a misguided ideology and killed, driven by a terrible world war."[154] In Aurich, the mayor's speech similarly revealed his complete lack of understanding of history when he explained that Jews had

---

[153] It is interesting that critical voices appear in a Jewish source but are largely absent from the collection of correspondence between visitors and the Berlin organizers. This is also the case for Hamburg in the 1980s (Nikou, *Zwischen Imagepflege*, 57ff). It appears as if the visitors did not share their criticism necessarily with the German organizers of these programs.

[154] "Nicht hier begraben sind 50 Crailsheimer, die in den Jahren 1939-1945 irgendwo in der Welt von einer verirrten Ideologie miβachtet und einem furchtbaren Weltkrieg gelenkt umgebracht wurden." *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994) 5.

been persecuted because they were "*andersartig*" (of a different kind) and "different minded" than other Germans.[155] In response to this, one refugee stood up and, to the applause of the attendees, corrected the mayor's statement. Still, such comments, distancing the crimes of the war from the people, showed the visitors—and show us—that despite official narratives of German responsibility, more sinister popular narratives and stereotypes concerning Jews were persistent. Such situations demonstrated to the refugees that some Germans did not in every sense take on a more personal and local responsibility. The existence of visitor programs alone, then, did not necessarily lead people to actually engage in a critical look at history, themselves, and a serious effort at understanding what had happened to these Jewish visitors. Especially in the 1980s and 90s, they had become the politically correct thing to do, and standard practice of many municipalities. Inevitably, some participants engaged in them without serious consideration for their meaning, while others, who participated for one civic or bureaucratic necessity or another, even held personal beliefs that were antithetical to the ostensible aims of the programs. Nevertheless, in spite of these dubious examples and the ill will they engendered, existence of the programs contributed to the general restructuring of German society. In this way Germans were still learning to be citizens of a country that took responsibility for its past.

A criticism perhaps related to that of German rote participation in visitor program events, was the absence of spontaneous contact with regular Germans during visits. Some

---

[155] The example from Aurich actually dates from a visit in 1992. I use it because it illustrates my point of the divergence of official narratives and the persistence of more sinister ones very well. Even after Holocaust consciousness had become so central in public discussions and particularly in the context of German unification of 1990, the mayor still held this particular outlook.

refugees criticized their cities' programs because they were often so tightly packed with activities that the visitors felt there was no time to meet "normal" inhabitants, which put them in doubt about the extent to which the warmhearted engagement and interest of those directly involved in the programs was representative of the broader population.[156] In smaller towns, on the other hand, meeting "ordinary" citizens—often people the refugees had known before the war—was frequently unavoidable and created a different, more difficult atmosphere than in large cities such as Berlin. While, generally, refugees appreciated it when Germans paid attention to their history of persecution, some visitors were put off by too much sudden focus on it. Ann Ikenberg recalled in an interview that during her visit to her home town of Wuppertal: "... we went to a meeting in the city hall and met with a council man who wanted to know the story of my family, about what my parents did for the city. It got to be too much." At another point of the interview she found in the outreach activities of the city too much "greasy sweetness." While on the one hand, people's insensitivity to the Jewish persecution history, or the sense that they were merely fulfilling a duty in acknowledging it, caused revulsion in some refugees, on the other, philosemitism, or a sense of it, did not sit well either.[157]

---

[156] As *Aufbau*'s commentator characterized the Nuremberg visitor program, for example: "No evenings dedicated to meeting the general public, no discussions in schools. It is, as if any contact with Nurembergers outside of the circle of the official participants, that may complicate the stay, is being avoided." ("Keine Begegnungsabende mit der Bevölkerung, keine Diskussionen in Schulen. Es ist, als ob jeder den Aufenthalt verkomplizierende Kontakt mit heutigen Nürnbergern, der über den Betreuerkreis hinausginge, vermieden würde.") *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994):15

[157] "Ann Ikenberg," Wolman, *Crossing Over*, 113, 104. In regard to outreach from her community, Ikenberg also said at another time during her interview that "[o]ther people from my hometown started writing, asking what happened to us. I got these letters to a nauseating degree." Ibid, 106

Finally, another, related, point of criticism was raised by refugees when they felt that the German efforts were so focused on making their stay a pleasant experience that they neglected the deeper emotional context these trips held for the visitors. Even if the German participants were doing and saying all 'the right things,' facing the old hometown, and the memories connected with it, in itself required courage and was difficult and painful to varying degrees.[158] One visitor said of her trip to Laupheim, for example, that the reporting about the program made it seem like "everybody simply had fun." She explained that in her case, she had had to leave the town for Switzerland after two and a half days because she could no longer bear looking at her childhood home which lay directly across from her hotel window.[159] Some refugees criticized that the "*Vergangenheitsbewältigungsjargon,*" the jargon that Germans had developed for the discourse on "mastering the past" and which became filled with words like bridge building and reconciliation, plastered over the horrific nature of the very events that made these visits necessary. In some cases, refugees felt that the German satisfaction over the good deed of inviting the refugees to their city was greater and more real than the realization of the broader context of forced emigration and genocide.[160]

Impacts—The Meaning and Value of the Visits

---

[158] Almost all reports include a reference to the difficulty. See, for example, report "Ein Besuch in Lahr," *Aufbau* 53 (July 31, 1987)

[159] "Laupheim," *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994):11

[160] See Ibid, for example

In their original conception of the visitor programs, those who created and ran them intended them to be an important event for the refugees, a contribution to German Jewish understanding and reconciliation. What then did the visitors draw from these experiences? What were the actual, and long-term, effects of these visits on the (Jewish) participants, on their identity, and on the German Jewish relationship? It seems clear that, in general, positive experiences on the visitor programs improved the relationship to Germany of those that experienced them, while negative ones tended to confirm suspicion and dislike of the country. This was not always the case, however, and an overview of different reflections and emotional reactions to the visits shows the complexity of the impact they made on people.

As with reactions to the invitations, experiences and reactions frequently differed among different age groups. For older people, who had spent a great portion of their lives in Germany, and who, as we have seen, often responded enthusiastically to the invitation programs, returning to Germany was one of the most important events of their later lives, as they frequently asserted. Forced emigration had been a painful experience, and for many older people, especially if they did not have a fulfilling life in the U.S., their life in Germany remained an important reality and reference point to them. While they suffered from the rejection and persecution they had experienced in Germany, they nevertheless often sorely missed the familiar places and circumstances of their former home. This ambivalence or contradiction of feelings was not an easy one to bear, especially when the predominant discourse concerning Germany in the greater American Jewish community of which they were a part was one of utter rejection or at best intense criticism that

tended to not leave any place for nostalgia. Visiting and seeing that their former hometown was a place in which one could feel safe and good again legitimated their longing for the place in their own eyes, as well as to some degree in the eyes of the larger community. In the thank you letters to Berlin, many of the older refugees testified to their feelings of being at home in Berlin during their visit and the continuity of the beauty of the city.[161]

For many visitors, then, their trip to Germany reconciled their painful experiences with their love for their former city or country. One couple described how going to Berlin —that they "used to love so much"—and seeing it in a positive light, cared for by well-meaning Germans "put balsam on [their] still burning wounds." This description of the healing effect of the visitor program, while it simultaneously suggests that the trauma of Nazi persecution can never really be cured or forgotten, is representative of many responses the refugees shared with the German organizers.[162] Having been treated well by Germans was not only an important experience during the visit, however. As the couple's letter implies, their visit produced a more general feeling that they could take back to their home: "it did us so much good to be able to believe that there still existed human

---

[161] Frequently letter used popular phrases such as "Ich bin ein Berliner" or " I still have a suitcase in Berlin" to express their bond with the city. One woman from New York expressed in a letter to Berlin, seemingly without any resentment: "I myself am 85 years old today and my thoughts are often in my beautiful Berlin. I am happy that Berlin is so beautiful again and has blossomed through the fabulous government. I wish my old Germany only the very best." Letter from March 20, 1976 from New York to Berlin Senate, SK Berlin, Dankschreiben, 1977-1978 L-W

[162] Based on my research in Berlin and from *Aufbau.*

love in Germany."[163] For many, to be able to relate to their former home as a place that they had most recently experienced as "good," was soothing.

The personal interactions with morally decent and warm-hearted Germans that made the biggest impact on the refugees also had their therapeutic effects in a different way. Ruth Wertheimer-Shurman's words exemplify the transformation that numerous other participants of the visitor programs experienced: "The open conversations have released us from the hate that we had carried within us for so long."[164] While one intention of the German visitor programs had been just that—to deconstruct negative feelings for Germany in the visitors and contribute to German-Jewish reconciliation—the revelation for the refugees that there existed moral goodness in Germans created also a reconciliation with their own history in Germany. Wertheimer-Shurman's words show that the hatred of Germany had sat hard with her and it was a relief to be able to release this emotion and let it fade. The visits thus allowed for some refugees to look at Germany, and also their own German Jewish past prior to the Nazis, with more positive eyes.

Even good visits, however, did not always lead to good feeling. For most older refugees, the renewal of a positive connection to Germany did not mean that they wanted to return to Germany permanently, as they felt that their place and future, and that of their families, was now in the United States. For some, however, especially those who had not

---

[163] "Die Reise, die wir Ihnen und dem Senat zu verdanken haben, war liebevoll geplant in der Hoffnung uns auch einmal wieder die sonnige Seit von unsrem einstmals so geliebten Berlin zu zeigen. Und—das ist Ihnen gelungen. Unsre noch immer brennende Wunden wurde mit Balsam versehen und es tat so gut, dass man doch noch an menschliche Liebe in Deutschland glauben kann."Letter from November 10, 1979 from New York to SK Berlin, Dankschreiben 1979

[164] *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994): 13.

adjusted well to life in the United States, returning to the old places, seeing them in beautiful shape and being cared for by nice people to whom one could relate effortlessly, both linguistically and culturally, increased the pain over having lost that place. One woman wrote to the Berlin Senate that while she had enjoyed the visit, it left her husband, who had originally asked for the invitation, "very sad."[165] Two years after his return to the U.S., this man again wrote to Berlin, asking to be invited a second time. Referring to Germany as his beloved fatherland, he stated: "Life here is very hard. I beg you to give me the opportunity to let me see my fatherland again... I did not file restitution many years back..."[166] The collection held at Berlin's Senate Chancellery includes other similar letters from people whose good experiences on their official visit incited or increased homesickness for Germany but who could not afford to return again either temporarily or permanently. For them, the Senate had no solution to offer, just apologetic words. Even though in their speeches and press outreach the politicians and administrators in Berlin communicated the message that they considered the refugees still as part of the city, as belonging to Berlin—by calling them co-citizens or fellow Berliners, for example—they nevertheless remained only virtual, or imagined Berliners. The exclusion of the past remained the reality of the present and the Senate was not in the position to change that in

---

[165] Letter to SK Berlin from 1983, SK Berlin, Folder 1983 (W)

[166] Das Leben hier ist sehr schwer. Ich bitte Sie vielmals mir die Gelegenheit zu geben mein Vaterland wieder zu sehen... Ich habe keine Wiedergutmachung eingereicht viele Jahre zurück." Letter to SK Berlin from November 21, 1985, SK Berlin, Folder 1985 (W)
Though not from refugees who had gone to the United States, this is another example of how visiting Berlin, reinforced pain. Michael Salas and his wife write from Buenos Aires to Berlin that their trip was a "grand experience [...] yet it unfortunately also brought up a deep pain that we were forced to leave this unique, beautiful city many years ago and look for a new liveliness in foreign countries. We apologize that these memories bring up these bitter feelings! We nevertheless know with confidence that you, dear Mister Mayor and your generation is not guilty but that you on the contrary regret and condemn these past events!" Translation mine.Letter from June 22, 1975 to SK Berlin, Folder: Dankschreiben 1975-76

practice: Only those who could afford to come back by themselves could potentially make that change.[167]

Similarly, the losses that the refugees endured could not be repaired, even if the visits were "good." The story of a couple from Orange County, south of Los Angeles, also exemplifies this. When they received an invitation to Nuremberg, the woman, even though she had worked in a travel agency for many years that specialized in trips to Germany—and was also frequented by many German Jewish refugees for that reason—hesitated to accept the invitation. The couple eventually did go and Lisa, the German born (non-Jewish) owner of the travel agency, recalled a visit by her employee's husband after the couple had returned. He brought with him a book of photographs of Nuremberg before the war that the couple had been given during their trip. But he had found looking at these photographs was too painful for him and did not want the book in his house. Knowing that Lisa was from Southern Germany as well, he brought it for her as he thought she would cherish it.[168] The assumption on the side of the organizers that such a book would bring joy to the refugees to look at these pictures, was mistaken in this case.[169] These examples clearly show the limitations of these programs: that though they may sometimes have ameliorated pain or hatred in refugees, they could not make good

---

[167] Only very few people did return after visiting Germany. The story of Margot Friedlander, who returned to Berlin when she was in her late 80s, has received quite a lot of publicity. There is a film about her first trip to Berlin "Don't Call it Heimweh" (2005) and her story of return has received much press coverage in Germany, particularly in Berlin. About her return, see Thomas Lackmann, "Ein Leben im Zwischenraum," article in *Jüdische Allgemeine*, April 1, 2010,URL: http://www.juedische-allgemeine.de/article/view/id/7182/page/1

[168] Conversation with Lisa Schmitt, Los Angeles: February 7, 2014.

[169] On the other hand, there are a great number of refugees to whom such pictures are very dear. The homes of refugees I've visited often display historic images of German cities. Also, refugees often expressed their joy over receiving an issue of *Aktuell* that featured photos of historic Berlin.

again, could not give back what had been taken and destroyed, and could not restore those who had been killed. In this way, reconciliation with Germans of the present was one thing, but such outreach did not always lessen the pain and loss that refugees carried with them.[170] For some people, in fact, the program did not offer any lasting solace but rather renewed or extended their pain. In fact, the programs owe their overwhelming success in the first place to the strength of the refugees in confronting their losses, and this should be kept in mind when considering the more positive impacts the programs made on people, as they are described in the following sections.

For refugees who had been younger when they left Germany, positive experiences in Berlin often meant a connection to their parents and families' past that had frequently not received much attention during their life after emigration. In their efforts to Americanize, many younger people did not want to have much to do with Germany and a generally critical attitude dominated their perspective on the country. Even in cases where the parents were more positively inclined toward Germany, children frequently either had no interest in this heritage or held a strongly critical attitude of rejection toward the country. Germany's democratization process, restitution in particular, and more personal acknowledgements of guilt and a public desire to atone, permitted a reasonable interest in Germany, but for many, a visit at the invitation of their former hometown was not the result of the same sort of heartfelt desire as it was for older people.

---

[170] Another letter, though again not from the United States, makes this very clear: "I rarely met real Berliners but those I got into contact with were friendly and courteous. Despite all of this, I could not block my memories of my parents, my little sister, and my other relatives out of my thoughts, who were murdered so brutally and inhumanely." In the original German: "Echte Berliner traf ich kaum, aber die, mit denen ich in Kontakt kam, waren freundlich und zuvorkommend. Trotz allem konnte ich nicht meine Erinnerungen an meine Eltern, meine kleine Schwester und meine anderen Verwandten aus meinen Gedanken verdrängen, die so grausam und unmenschlich ermordet wurden." J.H., Tel Aviv, *Aktuell* 34 (April 1982)

However, with age, and aging or dying parents, family connections became more important to some and their interest in their past increased. For Albrecht Strauss, for example, going to Marburg and staying in touch with people in the city was significant for him and made him "happy and proud," as it meant keeping up a "direct connection with my father's and grandfather's Marburg."[171] For many refugees, while it was a melancholy trip to visit the city where they had spent wonderful time with their parents, they nevertheless cherished the memories of family that their trip brought back to them.[172] Such memories had sometimes faded over time and were overshadowed by the dominating public memory of Nazi persecution and the Holocaust. The testimonies of many refugees reveal that personal experiences in these towns and the retrieved positive memories that resulted could, in turn, ameliorate the larger, more impersonal discourse. This, also in turn, (re)created a personal connection to the city, which frequently extended to an overall more positive evaluation of the present Germany.

Furthermore, encountering the places of the past did not only invoke memories of the past, but also that of past selves.[173] While this, as we have seen in the examples

---

[171] Albrecht Strauss from the University of North Carolina wrote to Marburg on August 18,1985, one and a half years after his visit. In German: "In aller Eile aber doch die erneute Versicherung, daß ich froh und stolz bin, ein Mitglied dieser Gellschaft sein zu können und auf diese Weise die direkte Verbindung mit dem Marburg meines Vaters and Großvaters aufrecht zu erhalten." *Aufbau* 60 (October 28,1994): 25

[172] "Es war eine experience die ich nie vergessen werde. Ich muss sagen, ich hatte viele Gefühle bis ich dort ankam, und es fiel mir schwer alles wieder zu sehen. Ich dachte an meine Eltern, die leider diese Reise nich machen könnten [sic]. Aber alle Muesum [sic] erinnerten mich, dass meine Eltern dort immer mir mir waren. Auch mein Deutsch ist wieder besser geworden, und ich bemühe mich es nicht wieder zu vergessen. Sie tuen mit diesen Einladungen viel Gutes." SK Berlin, letter from August 21, 1979 (F)
Another man, from Switzerland, wrote that he thought after all these years he would encounter Berlin as a foreign city, "[b]but suddenly the gap seemed to have been bridged. And all the impression from my youth I thought had been long forgotten came back to light..." the original German reads: "Aber plötzlich schien alles überbrückt. Und die lüangste vergessen gegglaubten Eindrücker aus der Jugend kamen wieder zum Vorschein ..." R. K. *Aktuell* 44 (August 1986)

[173] See Till, *The New Berlin,* 15.

above, could for some translate into very painful experiences of loss—of the person one had been before the Holocaust (with a family etc.)—for other refugees this could mean the retrieval of something they had missed. Discussing this, one visitor, a professor of psychology at the University of California at Berkeley, articulated: "the honesty with which [the] citizens [of Nidderau] sought to approach the past made it possible for me to rediscover my German-Jewish roots."[174] Thus, for some refugees the trip brought a renewed identification with their German-Jewishness. For one woman this manifested itself in a new embracing of the German language and her remark in a letter to Berlin, that she would make an effort to not forget it again, reveals the value this held for her.[175]

For people who had left Germany as very small children and who retained very few memories of the place, the effects of their travels to Germany on their own identity could be even more surprising. Hannah Goldrich who had left Germany in 1937 as a two-year old child had for the longest time refused to travel to Germany. Her parents, on the other hand, had been back several times, something she could never really understand, as her relationship to Germany was predominantly shaped by the very German-critical New York Jewish environment she surrounded herself with. However, when she returned from having finally taken part in an organized visit to Heilbronn, she wrote:

> It was good for me that I went in 1985 because I now do not have the feeling anymore that all Germans are bad and this is a lot for me. I had an extremely strong feeling of peace after the trip. […] First of all, I found out that I am German … It still seems weird when I say that, but I felt at ease there. [...] Until about five years ago I did not know that I had scars, which is interesting. I grew up with lots of Jewish cultural connections,

---

[174] Letter from Hilde Burton to the mayor of Nidderau, *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994): 26.

[175] August, 21, 1979 SK Berlin (F)

> but I did not give my children Jewish schooling. Now I think the reason was my feeling that being Jewish would mean to be killed. I know that war influences children in many respects and I know that these years of my life really had influence on me. The results of this stupid war reach for generations into the future. To have made this trip does not take away from this but it helps. It helps to heal.[176]

Interesting in this case is that Goldrich had, prior to her trip, a comfortable relationship with neither her German nor Jewish background. For her, both Germanness and Jewishness existed primarily in the context of the Holocaust. However, her positive experiences in Germany did not only allow her to better understand her parents—something that was a sensation many young refugees felt was really important to them—but also allowed her to engage with her own heritage of being German *and* Jewish, which in turn created a new understanding of self.[177]

How intimately this discovery was linked to being in Germany and how powerful and transforming it could be is further exemplified by the following description of a man who returned to Berlin with his mother:

---

[176] "Es war gut für mich, daβ ich 1985 gefahren bin, weil ich jenes Gefühl, daβ alle Deutschen schlecht sind, nun nicht mehr habe und das ist sehr viel für mich. Ich hatte hinterher ein extreme starkes Friedensgefühl. […] Zunächst einmal fand ich heruas, daβ ich Deutsche bin… Es scheint mir immer noch komisch, wenn ich es sage, aber ich fühlte mich wohl dort [...] Ich wußte bis vor etwa fünf Jahren nicht, daß ich Narben hatte, was interessant ist. Ich wuchs mit vielen jüdischen kulturellen Bindungen auf, aber ich gab meinen Kindern keine jüdischen Unterweisungen. Nun glaube ich, Grund war das Gefühl jüdische zu sein bedeute getötet zu werden. Ich weiß, das [sic] Krieg Kinder in vieler Hinsicht beeinflußt und ich weiß, daß jene Jahre meines Lebens wirklich Einfluß auf mich hatten. Die Ergebnisse dieses dummen Krieges reichen noch Generationen weit in die Zukunft. Die Reise gemacht zu haben, nimmt nichts davon weg, aber es hilft. Es hilft zu heilen."*Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994):6f.

[177] Darlene Leiser-Shely also wrote about how her experience of going to Berlin helped her understand and relate to her father who had had "a lingering affection for a city from which he'd escaped a certain death." She explains that: "[a]t the end of the trip [she went to Berlin] I concluded that in his memories life was clearly divided into the 'before' and 'after.' I accepted that there had been happiness before the horror, and that he could both love and hate the place he'd been born." On her trip Darlene also met many other ex-Berliners and "They also gave me insight into the fact that my father was not alone in his fondness for the Berlin of his childhood." "Courage," *Newsletter of the Benefactors of the Jewish Club of 1933* (September/October 2008)

> ...when we drove to East-Berlin something very odd, something very surprising happened: There the former Jewish quarter was shown to me, I saw the synagogue, where our family had prayed, and the street and the house where my grandparents had lived [...] Then something became clear to me that I had not understood my entire life: The stories about Berlin were not fairytales, because this is the place where I am from. We were no refugees or vagrants as people had seen us but we were part of a family with an old rich Jewish culture. What I am today I owe to those who did not survive the hell; but their spiritual and cultural heritage resisted the brutal annihilation. My deep gratitude to the Senate of Berlin for the opportunity of this special, touching experience. We had to and could again step on German soil so that I could see with my own eyes where my roots are. With my strong Jewish self-esteem I can say: the human bridge between Jews and Germans is perhaps still delicate and frail, but it holds.[178]

As this example showed, for young German Jewish refugees and children of refugees, the places of the past were often very abstract and their own identity as German Jews beset with negative connotations. In this light, going to the actual places that one's families had left behind and seeing how they and German Jewish culture was now a

---

[178] In the German original:"... als wir nach Ost-berlin fuhren, geschah etwas ganz Eigenartiges, etwas ganz Überraschendes: Dort wurde mir die ehemalige jüdische Gegend gezeigt, ich sah die Synagoge, wo unsere gesamte Familie gebetet hatte, die Straße und das Haus, wo meine Großeltern gewohnt hatten […] Dann wurde mir etwas klar, was ich mein ganzes Leben nicht verstanden hatte: Die Geschichten von Berlin waren keine Märchen gewesen, weil dies hier der Platz ist, woher ich stamme. Wir waren keine Flüchtlinge oder Landstreicher, wie man uns betrachtet hatte, sondern wir waren einer Familie mit einer alten reichen jüdischen Kultur angehörig. Das, was ich heute bin, habe ich denen zu verdanken, die die Hölle nicht überlebten; aber ihre geistige Erbschaft widerstand der grausamen Vernichtung. Mein inniger Dank an den Senat Berlins für die Gelegenheit dieses besonderen, für mich rührenden Erlebnisses. Wir mußten und konnten wieder deutschen Boden betreten, damit ich mit eigenen Augen sehen konnte, wo meine Wurzeln sind. Mit meinem ausgeprägt jüdischen Selbstbewußtsein kann ich sagen: Die menschliche Brücke zwischen Juden und Deutschen ist vielleicht noch zart und anfällig, aber sie trägt." *Aktuell* 44 (August 1986)

matter of interest to Germans could be life changing for some people.[179] This kind of acknowledgement of a German-Jewish heritage, a positive one, in people who had theretofore neglected it was particularly resonant in a self-proclaimed nation of immigrants like the United States, where one's background and heritage is accorded much public interest. Because of this, for many refugees, especially those who did not marry other German Jews, it was important then to not only connect with their past, but also to include their partners and children in this personal history, and while most German visitor program invitations included the refugee's spouse or partner, many refugees also requested that they be able to bring their children or later grandchildren too.[180] Visitor programs were often unable to accommodate this wish, but in Berlin, people who paid for their own airfare and came outside of a group often brought their children. In this way the effects of the invitation programs extended their influence into the future and fostered a relationship between Germany and a generation of people who had often had few connections to the country or their parents' or grandparents' heritage.

Even when children did not go on the trip themselves, parents often related their positive experiences in Germany to their families. That some felt this connection to

---

[179] Marianne Spitzer's concept of 'Postmemory' is related to this in some respect: "Postmemory describes the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before-to experiences they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory´s connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation." (Marianne Spitzer on her website: URL: http://www.postmemory.net/) In this case, however, it is often not the parents' memory but the wider memory culture on Germany, German Jewish refugees, and the Holocaust in certain circles that affected the memory and identity of these people who left Germany as young children.

[180] In her letter to Berlin asking to be invited, one woman said that besides the bad memories of the time of persecution, she also remembered many nice things, such as "the Zoo, the Pergamon Museum... the blooming fruit trees in Werder, the Wannsee and the beautiful royal Berlin porcelain. All this I would like to show my husband and, if possible, also my three sons." Letter to Berlin from Sept. 1,1976 SK Berlin (F)

Germany should live on in the future becomes apparent in Lore Rasmussen's letter to Germany, which assured the friends she had met and made in her native Lampertsheim during her visit that: "These ten days will remain among the deepest memories of my life and will continue to live on in our children and grandchildren."[181]

Bearing Witness to German Youth

The future oriented connection that sometimes resulted from these visits did not only apply to the offspring of Germany-Jewish refugees, but also extended to German children. Like those refugees who had been interested in setting up visitor programs and had initiated the restoration of Jewish cultural sites in the spirit that this was not only important for their ancestors' sakes and themselves but also to teach Germans, some refugees who came through visitor programs also wanted to engage in such education efforts. As in the example of a Krefeld school above, teachers were among the first groups who believed that German Jewish refugees would be good mediators of the past. Before visiting Berlin through the visitor program in 1983, Gerald Jeremias sent a letter to his former school indicating that he was interested in seeing it again during his upcoming trip. The school headmaster's response was to invite Jeremias to speak to the students about his experiences.[182]

For some people, like the Grünbergs, who visited a high school in Leer (East Frisia), it was speaking to students that made coming to Germany possible and

---

[181] "Diese zehn Tage werden unter den tiefsten Erinnerungen meines Lebens bleiben und auch weiterhin in unseren Kindern und Enkeln leben." Excerpt from a letter by Lore May Rasmussen, *Aufbau* 60 (October 28,1994): 22.

[182] *Aktuell* 37 (November 1983)

worthwhile. During their official visit to their home town, Mr. Grünberg told the students about his imprisonment in Auschwitz. Upon the students' question of how the couple was able to return to Germany after that experience, Mrs. Grünberg answered that it had been a difficult decision but that they had accepted the invitation "because they owed it to their children to do everything in order to prevent their own history being repeated."[183] Going back to talk to young Germans was one way many refugees felt that goal could be accomplished. In this way, some German Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors viewed and portrayed Germany's integrity and future as intrinsically connected to their own and their families' future. This stake in Germany made their presence in the country crucial and also justifiable—to themselves and to potential critics. For some, it was a way to combine their interest in, or fondness for, their hometown, or Germany more generally, and their feeling of somehow belonging to that place with a critical and empowered position of authority on the German past and future.

The case of one woman, Gerda Lowenstein, who had lived in the U.S. for 35 years before returning to Germany for the first time in 1971 exemplifies this investment particularly well, even though she is exceptional given the extent of her dedication.[184] In the school years 1975/76 and 1979/80 she worked as a governess, upon invitation of the headmaster, at the "Max-Rill" girl's boarding school near Bad Tölz. At this school, Lowenstein found her "mission" of "educating and speaking about the time of horror,

---

[183] *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994), 32

[184] Gerda Lowenstein is not the woman's real name but an alias I invented

which back then was still gladly left out of history education."[185] It was her conviction that "we Jews who emigrated can offer today's youth so incredibly much. Not only in the realm of culture but also as personal witnesses of a time which has now become history."[186] For the 16 and 17 year old girls at the school, Lowenstein was the first Jewish person they ever saw, and her becoming something of a "substitute mother" was an important revelation for them. Deep connections developed between her and the girls and Lowenstein was proud to have "built a small bridge" and to have "opened many young people's eyes to an unfathomable chapter of German history."[187]

Increasingly in the 1980s and 1990s, both refugees and Holocaust survivors acted as similar witnesses of the past and many visitor programs arranged or included the opportunity to speak to German youths.[188] After a trip to Germany in the late 80s, Hans Sahl, writer, critic and regular contributor to *Aufbau*, praised the zeal with which young Germans were interested in the "authentic" experience of the Nazi past and hinted that

---

[185] "... meine 'Mission' war die Aufklärung und das Sprechen über die Zeit des Grauens die, damals sogar gerne aus dem Geschichtsunterricht ausgelassen wurde." Letter to Eberhard Diepgen, September 1, 1986, SK Berlin 1987 (B-C)

[186] "Wir ausgewanderte Juden haben der Jugd von heute unglaublich viel zu bieten. Nicht nur auf kulturellem Gebiet, sondern auch als persönliche Zeugen von einer Zeit die nun in die Geschichte eingegangen ist." Letter to SK Berlin, March 17, 1979, SK Berlin 1987 (B-C)

[187] "eine kleine Brücke gebaut, vielen jungen Menschen die Augen geöffnet für ein unbegreifliches Kapitel der deutschen Geschichte." Letter to Eberhard Diepgen, September 1, 1986, SK Berlin 1987 (B-C)

[188] Upon her return to Berlin, Margot Friedlander's main mission has been to serve as a witness to the past. She regularly gives talks about her life and holds readings of her books in different settings, including high schools. On November 9, 2011, she received the Order of Merit of the FRG.(Interview with Margot Friedlander, conducted by the author, Berlin: January 18, 2012.) Some refugees, like Hilda Fogelson from Los Angeles, have also been invited by Aubrey Pomerance, the chief archivist of the Jewish Museum Berlin/the Berlin Leo Baeck Institute, to give talks. (Interview with Hilda Fogelson, conducted by the author, Los Angeles: February 28, 2012) There are also of course other German Jews who have lived in Germany for a long time and have shared their experiences in books and schools. One of them is Inge Deutschkron, who survived the war in hiding and after some time abroad returned to Germany as a journalist for the *Jerusalem Morning Post*. For a more general overview of the phenomenon of the historical witness [Zeitzeuge], see Martin Sabrow and Norbert Frei (eds.), *Die Geburt des Zeitzeugen nach 1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2012)

there was a duty to make it available to them: "[the youth] are on a quest for authenticity and this authenticity is a human being. They are looking for an answer; one cannot forsake them again, one has to bear witness."[189]

While bearing witness was certainly not an easy task, many refugees were proud of this role they acquired in educating Germany's youth. When mayor Eberhard Diepgen acknowledged this involvement of refugees in *Aktuell* in 1986, Gerda Lowenstein sent him a letter reporting her own very early experiences in this regard. Upon reading that and about her plan to return to Germany in 1987 to meet some of her former students and to visit her hometown Berlin, Diepgen invited her to be a guest of the city's 750th anniversary celebration the following year, an invitation which she gladly accepted.

Thus, by the 1980s, there existed a sense of a mutually felt responsibility among some German citizens and German Jewish refugees to remember and teach the National Socialist past, often with the belief that this would prevent a repetition of such atrocities in the future. In the same vein, Diepgen wrote an article on the occasion of Berlin's anniversary entitled "Berlin—History for the Future," which told of the memorials and projects that had been set up in the city and the great democratic and peace loving city that Berlin had become. Addressing the article to former Jewish citizens of Berlin, he continued on to say that he was hoping to greet many more of them during the anniversary year so they could witness the city's transformation and, at the same time,

---

[189] "Sie ist auf der Suche nach dem Authentischen, und das Authentische, das ist der Mensch. iIe sucht nach einer Antwort; man darf sie nicht wieder im Stich lassen, man muss die Auskunft geben." Hans Sahl, "Hier wächst eine Jugend heran, die sich nichts vormachen lässt." *Aufbau* 53 (December 18, 1987)

strengthen it through their presence.[190] Indeed, the budget for Berlin's visitor program in 1987 was the highest ever, signaling a particular effort to include those who had been victims during Berlin's darkest years in the celebration. That year brought 1,800 visitors, the highest number ever for a single year, and the twenty-thousandth guest to the city.[191] 1988, meanwhile, the 50th anniversary of the Pogrom of November 9, 1938, saw a significant rise in the number of programs in Germany country-wide, with 40 cities inviting their former Jewish citizens for the first time.

Final Considerations

Fifty years after the Pogrom that forced many German Jews into the decision to emigrate, a significant number of them either had been or were back in their hometowns, which had invited them in commemoration of the events. Most German Jewish refugees, while embarking on the trips with mixed emotions, returned to their countries of residences or new homelands with a stronger connection to Germany and to their own German Jewish heritage and identity. For the organized refugee community in the USA, this reorientation toward a German Jewish identity was significant. As this work has shown, the majority of German Jewish refugees had become well integrated into American life, seeing themselves as Americans first. Many of the older refugees had by the 1980s passed away and the younger generation had less of a connection to their heritage, often precisely because Americanization and disassociation from Germany had been core principles of the community for a long time. The interest from Germany in

---

[190] *Aktuell* 46 (February 1987)

[191] "Bilanz" and "Etat," documents provided to me by Rüdiger Nemitz, SK Berlin

German Jewish refugees, I contend, which was mainly expressed through the visitor programs, contributed to a boost in individual and communal German Jewish identities in the United States in the 1970s and particularly the 1980s. For the organized community, people working for *Aufbau*, for example, who had an interest in keeping this community together and strong, the visitor programs then were significant as modes of promoting and preserving German Jewish identity and an interest in this heritage.[192] *Aufbau* articles reporting on the trips appeared regularly, portraying German ambitions to commemorate the past and honor its Jewish victims. The discourse in *Aufbau* was not one of victimhood, in a lachrymose sense, however, but rather focused on the German Jewish refugees as witnesses, as experts on the past, who had an important message to spread and heritage to preserve.[193] The time of great outreach from Germany cities coincided also with a general rise in public interest in the Holocaust in the United States and a reformulation of an American Jewish identity, in which the Holocaust was a defining (and uniting) element.[194] While their particular history had been a topic of interest to the German Jewish refugee community ever after their arrival, it was in the context of these

---

[192] In regard to the second generation of German Jewish refugees, Henry Marx writes in 1994: "There would be thousands of people who one must bring to look with pride at their German Jewish heritage. The german cities should make themselves acquainted with such a task—a mission for the 21st century, through which German could win new friends, which it urgently needs." The German original: "Hier wären Tausende von Menschen, die man dazu bringen muß, mit Stolz auf ihre deutsch-jüdische Abstammung zu blicken. Mit einer solchen Aufgabe sollten sich die deutschen Städte vertraut machen—eine Aufgabe für das 21. Jahrhundert, durch die Deutschland neue Freunde gewinnen könnte, die es dringend braucht." "Fast 120 Städte laden ein," *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994):2

[193] At the same time, efforts in the preservation of the German Jewish heritage increased within the community. While there was interest in this history coming from Germany, there was scholarly interest from people from the community, like Herbert A. Strauss of the Research Foundation for Jewish Immigration, who together with colleagues conducted over a hundred interviews. Also, Michael A. Meyer, born in Berlin and immigrants to Los Angeles, became one of the leading historians of German Jewish history.

[194] See Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 207-238

larger developments of a Holocaust discourse that an interest in their specific history of persecution and efforts at the preservation of the German Jewish heritage increased.[195] As the Holocaust story in the United States was predominantly about "survivors—"those who had survived concentration and extermination camps—the refugees' story was one on the sidelines.[196] Partly as a consequence of this, they valued a reestablished connection to Germany. This was so particularly in light of some German citizens increasingly valuing their particular knowledge of the Nazi past, and their roles as witnesses to it, something that emerges most distinctly in the visitor programs on occasions when refuges were invited to speak to students. As such, being a German Jewish refugee held positive connotations of being a person who held the ability to educate, to make a positive change in the world, particularly in relation to Germany.[197]

While the connection to Germany was important for individuals and the community to varying degrees then, for Germans, the visitor programs and their connections to German Jewish refugees was also exceedingly, perhaps even more, important. In an individual and communal search for disassociation from the Nazis and their atrocities—for moral or political reasons, or both—acknowledgment of this past and its events, demonstration of contrition, and desire for reconciliation were primary

---

[195] On the rise of Holocaust consciousness in the United States, see ibid, Hasia R. Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence After the Holocaust, 1945-1962* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), Henry Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1998)

[196] It would be interesting to study how the German Jewish refugees positioned themselves in this greater Holocaust discourse in the United States and to what degrees their stories differed or perhaps adapted to these more prominent story of survival.

[197] This is only strengthened with German unification, when the recognition of a "historical responsibility" became a founding principle of the united Germany and particular commitment to Jews around the world.

expressions. In the 1980s, the Holocaust was evolving as the focal point of West German memory culture in relation to the National Socialist past. National and international events such as the Auschwitz and the Eichmann trials of the early and mid 1960s, the Arab-Isreali War of 1967, Willy Brandt's genuflection honoring the victims of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1970, and the airing of the American miniseries "Holocaust" in 1979 had brought public attention not only to perpetrators but also to Jewish suffering.[198] As a consequence of this confrontation with Jewish pain and the horror of the German crimes, certain people—I have pointed out several groups—and especially the younger generation, longed for reconciliation with Jews. Notwithstanding what was frequently a genuine personal desire for reconciliation, with the intensification of Holocaust discourse, it also became a pressing concern to avoid being identified with the Nazis. Doing good things for Jews and having good connections with Jews, particularly those who had been wronged in the past, was a good way to know and show that one was neither a Nazi nor an anti-Semite. Hence the increased efforts in the 1980s to make it possible for the German Jews to visit their native hometowns, to "send a signal of remembrance and acknowledgment of their [Jewish] suffering in an attempt for reconciliation."[199] Part of these efforts was to show the visitors that towns had changed.[200] Whether they were motivated primarily morally or politically, many German municipalities attempted to represent a 'transformed town' engaged in active memory

---

[198] Judt, *Postwar*, 811. See the last chapter "From the House of the Dead: An Essay on Modern European Memory" in *Postwar* for a more detailed but still concise overview.

[199] Kräutler, 18-19.

[200] See Ibid, 34.

creation. They did this by removing physical traces of the violent Nazi past and rebuilding demolished synagogues and cemeteries, thus referring back to a time when Jewish life had existed in those towns. In synagogues and cemeteries, Jewish visitors could either remember or develop (depending upon their age) a sense of a good life in Germany before the rise of Nazism and also potentially, if there were Jews in these places, in the present. Where there was an absence of Jewish buildings and Jewish communities, as in many locations, additional efforts were required to present a positive image of the cities during the 1980s. Through memorial ceremonies and exhibits, the Nazi past was publicly condemned and distance was established between the Germans who had carried out and supported the persecution of the Jews and the current populations of towns—even though among the current population were still many who had lived under the Third Reich, albeit as children. Thus were bad and painful memories associated with Germany or a specific town marginalized, to be replaced by new memories which were actively created by German preservation and restoration of Jewish structures and construction of places of remembrance, on the one hand, and refugee presence and witnessing (and its local support) on the other. The naming of streets after native Jews was another attempt to combine an honoring of these individuals with the offering of this honoring to Jewish visitors. In these ways the identity and memory of the towns and the people who lived in them were redefined in the eyes of their own citizens, and presented to the refugees and the world at large as good places in which lived good

Germans.[201] While these actions of memorialization cannot be detached from certain political interests and particular ulterior motives of image and representation for German cities and their inhabitants, and while the presence of such material sites cannot be understood to translate directly into moral understanding, these memorials and their associated meanings were lasting.[202] In this way, the the German Jewish past of these towns was visible and no longer hidden. By comparison to children growing up in the 1970s, German children in the 1980s were much more likely to become aware at some point in their school life—likely at an event to commemorate the November 9 Pogrom of 1938— whether a Jewish community had existed in their towns and where the synagogue had been, if the town had had one. In these transformed local geographies of towns all over Germany, which were partly a result of the visitor programs, and the changed meanings and understandings they reflect, we see another example of how German Jewish refugees' affected German identity construction.

In the efforts some German citizens undertook in making these changes and raising more awareness for the German Jewish past, it was frequently very important for them that these were seen and acknowledged by Jewish visitors. After all, the idea was that it was the Jewish presence and acknowledgment that would validate the German

---

[201] This renaming of streets and other city features has been referred to as "naming as geography" by Joseph Massad.Albeit Massad speaks of how this process is used to exclude certain groups and I am using it to include people. Joseph Massad, "The "Post-Colonial" Colony: Time, Space, and Bodies in Palestine/ Israel," in *The Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies,* ed.Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshradi-Crooks (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 315.

[202] While yearly ceremonies commemorating events such as the November Pogrom are generally held, the question remains, however, how much of an impact they have on the average German and what they really "do." For a discussion of ideas of national redemption through reconstructions of Jewish sites and resulting passivity and ignorance to present problems, see Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, 163ff.

efforts, absolve the people of the crimes of the past (or their parents' past), purging from them the guilt of the perpetrators, and approve their democratic and tolerant identity.[203] Observing the language with which German officials addressed Jewish visitors in *Aktuell* in the late 1980s and increasingly in the 1990s reveals a transformation in the discourse concerning the visitors, one which shows that Jewish connections had become ever more important. In previous years, the German message had been one of wanting to make up for the past and offering something good to the Jewish refugees: to invite them back, make it possible for them to see their former home town, in an attempt for reconciliation. Increasingly, official addresses to Jewish visitors, for example in *Aktuell* or in letters or speeches from mayors, expressed a sense of intense German need for the visitors, a plea to come and gratitude when they did.

This intensification of German Jewish interactions on the local level, and the rising pressure for them across this time, must also be understood in the context of an intensification of national memory politics, which was partly influenced by American developments. In the 1980s, West German diplomats in the United States worried that the popular attention the Holocaust was receiving would influence American public opinion negatively toward Germany.[204] That this had been an ongoing concern for the German diplomats I have shown previously. It did now, however, reach a new height and

---

[203] German Jewish refugees who were very open to reconciliation were usually welcomed and sometimes received great honors. See, for example, the stories of how Bert and Siegfried Kirchheimer were invited and hosted by Bremerhaven and Saarbrücken on several occasions. Kirchheimer, *We Were So Beloved*, 181ff.

[204] Jacob S. Eder, "Ein 'Holocaustsyndrom?' Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen der Bundesrepublik und amerikanisch-jüdischen Organisationen in den 1980er Jahren,"*Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 52 (2012): 633

Germany responded to it in a familiar way, by fostering good connections with Jews. What, on the federal level, was an extended visitor program and relationships between the government and American Jewish organizations, was carried out on the local level between refugees and their former towns and citizens.[205] Thus, with increasing Holocaust consciousness, nationally and internationally, the relationship with German Jewish refugees played an increasingly important role for Germany's image, and image of itself, while for German Jews it, in many cases offered a new understanding of both Germany and of themselves.[206]

---

[205] See Ibid. for a detailed account the federal relationships.

[206] A memoir that gives a powerful account on the complexity of problems and emotions that a refugee's return to her/his former home town caused not only for the refugee, but for his daughter and the Germans involved in the program, is Ruth Schumer Chapman's *Motherland: Beyond the Holocaust: A Daughter's Journey to Reclaim the Past* (New York: Viking, 2000)

Conclusion

Germany on their Minds?

This phrase, barring the question mark, is a chapter title in a recent work by Hasia Diner that tells the story of the centrality of the Holocaust in the consciousness of American Jews after the Second Word War. In their postwar discourse on the Holocaust, American Jews not only remained conscious and vocal about the murder of six million Jews but also about the role of Germany and the Germans as the perpetrators. The Germany that the majority of American Jews had on their minds was the ultimate villain. For the many Jews from Germany who had fled the country before the outbreak of the war and settled in the United States, however, the image of their former home was more complicated. Whether Germany should be on the minds of German Jewish refugees at all was itself not given, but was a highly contentious and often debated subject among them. Could one engage with things German without losing Jewish self-respect? Could one be a good American while adhering to German culture or taking an interest in the country's postwar political direction? If so, how should one balance these things?

The German Jewish refugee relationship to Germany, then, had to do with who the refugees imagined themselves to be in the aftermath of Nazi oppression and flight, and it was a major factor in how they identified themselves and their community.[1] Yet as

[1] For American Jews this was similar in that the way they spoke about Germany was a "memorial obligation." Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love*, 217

both the relationship and their identity were being contested, tensions bore on them from a variety of directions. Germany was not 'on their minds' and agendas so frequently simply because they particularly wanted to engage with it, or not, but often because broader political circumstances somehow dictated that engagement, or because Germany initiated contact, or both. Because of the close and strategically important postwar relationship of the United States to Germany, German Jews who came to America faced many situations in which they were confronted with Germany directly or indirectly, and the relationship of the United States to Germany was always a significant factor which influenced the refugees'own relationship and interaction with Germany. This becomes particularly apparent when the refugees were classified as enemy aliens after the entrance of the United States into the war. During that time, their German background was the basis for their legal classification as German enemy aliens and they were thus forced to engage with their German identity. In response to this, many, especially those politically active on the West Coast, politicized and foregrounded their particular German Jewish identity and connection to Germany—that of victims of Nazi persecution and prime enemy—in order to construct themselves as loyal to the United States. During this time then, due to external pressures which differed from the East to West coasts, where the enemy alien act was far more stringently applied, the community drew closer its identity as German Jews, paradoxically in order to make themselves better candidates to become Americans.

When changes in the enemy alien classification allowed it, German Jewish refugees supported the Allied military campaign against the Nazis as soldiers in the US

Army and on the home front. For the refugee soldiers this position of belonging to the United States radically changed their position toward the Germans they encountered because they now were in a position of power. Refugees on the home front meanwhile engaged in slightly less immediate questions of retribution for Nazi crimes and were able to bring to bear some of their knowledge of these crimes on the perpetrators through various channels of the U.S. government. In these ways, belonging to America transformed their identity from being only victims of the Nazis into one in which they had some direct or indirect empowerment in relation to Germany and were able, for those who wanted it, to "settle" with the Germans, gain some level of satisfaction, or simply fight (and win) against their former oppressors.

Throughout the end of the war, as German Jewish refugees joined discussions of the larger American organizations on the topics of reparation and restitution, they once again foregrounded their German Jewish identity. Instead of blending in with greater American Jewry, which some refugees hoped to do, leaders of the community projected a German Jewish voice within the larger community in order to advance their specific claims against Germany, and their moral authority to make them. With the formulation of these demands, and the projection of this identity and its associated moral authority, a postwar engagement of Jewish refugees with Germany was foreseen, given a successful outcome to the war. However, there was no agreement over what the character and extent of this engagement should be and in their participation in the public debate in America during 1943 and 1944 over what should be done with Germany after the war, the Jewish refugees did not present a unified voice. The common denominator in their stance,

however, was that the only legitimate engagement with Germany on their part was one that was in the Jewish interest.

Under this presupposition, the German Jewish refugee press watched developments in Germany during the early postwar years with argus eyes. While the same may be said about the broader American Jewish press, German Jews took a particular interest in detail, looking at developments on the federal and the local level, and judging with an expertise born of close acquaintance and inside knowledge. They were not slow to voice their displeasure whenever the new German government mis-stepped or mis-spoke.

Nor was the German government deaf to the criticism. The western Allies had made it clear that one manner in which postwar Germany would be judged was by the way it dealt with the group of people it had so recently tried to exterminate. Also, the new West German government sought to secure a solid position in the West and a close bond with the United States in particular. This, combined with more general public relations and an antisemitic narrative of great influence of Jews on United States policy, caused the German government to take the opinions of the American German Jewish community very seriously. While a major change in the relationship took place at that time because Germany was pressured to change, I hope to have demonstrated that the refugees contributed to this change. The critical perspective from outside was an important factor in the Federal Republic's reengagement with German Jews. And it is at this point that one could argue that the relationship first became mutually constitutive in the postwar period. This is so when one looks at German government decisions that are made with German

Jewish positions and reaction in mind, and even with the input of German Jewish refugees. In the pursuit of good relations, the West German Foreign Office made appointments of officials who represented the projected ideal of a new Germany in areas where there were great Jewish and particularly German Jewish constituencies, and these appointments consequently contributed to change in the Foreign Office itself.

For German Jewish leaders who had demanded restitution, the West German restitution legislation, while not without its difficulties, was an acceptable point of engagement with Germany, being directly in the refugee interest. It is through this engagement and the interactions surrounding restitution, however, that fundamental change in the relationship took place. Those German government officials who were interested in making restitution work not only for the sake of promoting a positive image of Germany, but to make up for the past and for the sake of the people it was intended to help, effectively communicated to the refugees that they mattered to Germany. In the interactions that developed in the 1950s, then, we see the development of a relationship in which both sides looked to each other and affected each other's self understanding. The contact allowed the refugees, in a discourse of alternating praise and criticism (as they saw fit to comment on German actions and policies) to see themselves as moral guides as regarded Germany and be acknowledged in this role. On the German side, the sensitivity to the Jewish refugee position, even if only represented in select individuals, contributed to a more accepting political climate and facilitated subsequent further improvement in the relationship.

The postwar relationship between German Jewish refuges and Germany was initially driven significantly by pragmatism then, but also by the existence of leaders from both sides who did not want to see the Holocaust as the endpoint of relations and desired reconciliation. The re-establishment of trusted relationships, which had survived the Holocaust, between individual German Jewish refugees and Germans was of the utmost importance in facilitating a dialogue and in promoting that dialogue in the respective communities. Many of those who drove the relationship had been politically active together before the war and some on the non-Jewish German side had also suffered under the Nazis. From the German Jewish community, rabbis were frequently important mediators, as they were often knowledgeable about German conditions, having been invited to Germany by the Jewish community in their former hometown or, as we have seen, by the German government.[2] The influence of *Aufbau*, however, was indubitably highly influential in this process of 'bridge building,' and also in its publishing of personal recollections from ordinary refugees who visited Germany.

While only small numbers of refugees visited Germany in the 1950s and came into contact with Germans working in the country's diplomatic missions in the United States, the relationship between the majority of German Jewish refugees and Germany was for the most part mediated by proxies until at least the 1960s: People who had interactions with Germans or traveled to Germany reported about it, and developments in Germany were observed and debated from the United States. Beginning in the 1960, the

---

[2] Cornelia Wilhelm is currently researching the history of German Jewish (refugee) rabbis in the United States and her work promises further insight into their role in this process.

visitor programs changed this and brought more immediate contacts for many more German Jewish refugees with Germany and Germans. This major change in the relationship resulted initially from the initiative of the few German Jewish refugees who had connections to and an interest in Germany on the one side and proposed such visits, and Germans who had an interest in reconciliation on the other. Important drivers in this process were teachers and local historians as well as members of Christian reconciliation movements, in particular the society for Christian Jewish cooperation, and Social Democrats.

The visitor programs must be understood as both motor and symptom of German processes of confronting their Nazi past. Propelled by a growing climate of Holocaust memorialization nationally and internationally, they became most widespread in the late 1980s. During this period, the drive for change in the German Jewish relationship came primarily from Germany, motivated by attempts to come to terms with the Nazi past, to demonstrate their good will, and to behave as 'good Germans.' The refugee contribution to this effort, as survivors and witnesses of Nazi persecution, cannot be overestimated.

For visiting refugees, as we have seen, the visitor program deeply affected and intensified their German Jewish identity, though in highly variable and not always positive ways. While the German organizers' goal was to reconcile and reach a good relationship with refugees, some visitors suffered from homesickness, regret or anger at what was destroyed in Nazi Germany. Reconciliation with Germans of the present, even if it happened, could not make what was done undone—repatriation for refugees that might want it was not possible unless they could pay for it themselves and visits were

limited and short, the dead could not be brought back to life, and terrible memories sometimes overpowered good ones.

However, most refugees seemed to have accepted the visits as "gestures of reconciliation."[3] In their reports visitors said that it provided them with a sense of closure, was therapeutic, brought back positive memories, and often gave their past a meaning when they were able to bear witness to younger generations of Germans. While individual reactions varied, the organized community broadly welcomed these programs, as one of their strongest consequences was an intensified connection to the refugees' German Jewish heritage. At the 1956 annual meeting of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, chairman Max Gruenewald had lamented the fading group identity of the German Jewish refugees:

> What brought us together, what ought to keep us together, is the common heritage and our sharing in a historical experience of ghastly proportions. In a very short time this joint experience has lost much of its suggestive power, and the stock of common thoughts and joint memories has been all but spent. The talent of assimilation, one of the characteristics of German Jews, has developed in this country into an artistry of forgetting what lies behind us.[4]

It was through their relationship with Germany that their consciousness of common heritage was in significant ways revived among German Jewish refugees.

One cannot understand the history of German Jewish refugees in the U.S. without looking at their relationships with Germany, nor that of Germany without looking at their relationship with German Jewish refugees—each contributed significantly to the other.

---

[3] Henry Marx, "Fast 120 Städte laden ein," *Aufbau* 60 (October 28, 1994): 2

[4] Max Gruenewald, "Opening Address," *Annual Meeting...Reports and Addresses* (New York City: American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, Inc., 1965), 9

The relationship shifted as Germany changed, but I hope I have shown that the refugees played an important part in effecting that change. Because it was based on a history of persecution and murder, the relationship was never a happy or uncomplicated one, but though it was constantly questioned and fragile, the relationship between German Jewish refugees and Germany remained, continually entangled, for good or ill, each affecting the other.

Bibliography

Unpublished Sources

American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio
Max Nussbaum Papers

Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin
Cornelius Schnauber Collection

Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, University Southern California Libraries, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California
Felix Guggenheim Papers
Marta Mierendorff Papers

Leo Baeck Institute New York
American Federation of Jews from Central Europe
Council of Jews from Germany
Erich Elow Collection
Newsletter, Benefactors of the Jewish Club of 1933, 1990-present
The oral history collection of the Research Foundation for Jewish Immigration

Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes Berlin
Bestand B 5, Bestand B 8, Bestand B 11, Bestand B 2l, Bestand B 31, Bestand B 32, Bestand B 85, Bestand B 92

Senatskanzlei Berlin
Bestand Berliner Besuchsprogramm
Aktuell

Private Collection of Alvin Barbanell
Chronicle of the Jewish Club of 1933

Oral History Interviews (not archived)

Alexander, Josi. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Los Angeles: November 18, 2005

Barbanell, Al. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Beverly Hills: December 6, 2005

Barbanell, Marianne. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Beverly Hills: December 6, 2005

Bloch, Walter. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Los Angeles: February 27, 2012

Boehm-Tettelbach, Barbara. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Berlin: January 5, 2012.

Bunzel, Annelise. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Los Angeles: February 4, 2005.

Corson, Connie. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. New York: October 7, 2010

Fogelson, Hilda. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Los Angeles: February 28, 2012

Frankel, Brittney. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. New York: September 22, 2010.

Frankel, Brittney. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. New York: September 22, 2010.

Friedlander, Margot. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Berlin: January 18, 2012

Greenbaum, Larry. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. San Diego: February 16,

2014 Herrmann, Kurt. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Los Angeles: November 16, 2005

Herz, Hanns-Peter. Interview with Lina Nikou. Berlin: April 8, 2011.

Hoffmann, Penina. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. New York: October 4, 2010.

Koh, Ruth. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Whittier: February 29, 2012.

Lehrecke, Sigrid. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Berlin: March 19, 2011.

Mücke, Margit. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Berlin: October 8, 2011.

Nemitz, Rüdiger. Interview with Lina Nikou. Berlin: August 12, 2011.

Orbach, Manfred. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Los Angeles: May 6, 2012.

Ostroff, Steffi. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. New York: October 1, 2010

Rothholz, Barbara. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Santa Monica: February 28, 2012.

Rothholz, Peter. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Santa Monica: February 28, 2012.

Tugend, Tom. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Los Angeles: April 28, 2012

Shuler, Kurt. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. San Diego: February 25, 2013

Simon, Hermann. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Berlin: January 5, 2012

Schütz, Klaus. Interview with Anne Clara Schenderlein. Berlin: January 17, 2012.

Other Unpublished Sources

Meyer, Michael A. Conversation with the author. Cincinnati, OH: September 5, 2012.

Reuss, Ralph (alias). Email to the author. September 18, 2009

Schmitt, Lisa. Conversation with the author. Los Angeles: February 7, 2014.

Nikou, Lina. Paper Draft “Coming Back Home? Berlin Presents Itself to Refugees of the Nazi Regime Living Abroad.” Second International Graduate Students’ Conference on Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Strassler Center of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Clark University, Worcester (2012)

Fischer, Stefanie.“Entangled Transnational Relationships: Former Jewish and Non-Jewish Neighbors in the Postwar Era.” German Studies Association Paper Presentation, Denver: October 2013.

Films

Bauer, C. “The Ritchie Boys.” (2004)

Karras, S. “About Face: The Story of Jewish Refugee Soldiers of World War II.” (2006)

Lee, M. S. “The Real Inglourious Bastards.” (2012)

Tarantino, Q. “Inglourious Basterds.” (2009):

Newspapers/Magazines

Aktuell
AJR Information
Aufbau
B’nai B’rith Messenger
Neue Welt/New World, Mitteilungsblatt, Newsletter of the Benefactors of the Jewish Club of 1933
The Los Angeles Times
The New York Times

Primary Sources

American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, Inc., *Annual Meeting, Reports and Addresses*, New York City: 1956.

American Friends Service Committee, *Refugee Facts: A Study of the German Refugee in America*, Philadelphia, PA.: America Friends Service Committee, 1939

American Jewish Yearbook 1939-40. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1939

American Jews in World War II: The Story of 500,000 Fighters for Freedom. Vol. 2, National Jewish Welfare Board, 1947

Annual Meeting ... Reports and Addresses. New York City: American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, 1942.

Baer, John A. *Witness for a Generation*. Santa Barbara: Fithian Press, 1997.

Belt, Nathan. *Fighting for America: An account of Jewish men in the armed forces—from Pearl Harbor to the Italian Campaign*. New York City: American Jewish Welfare Board, 1944,

Barṭov, Ḥanokh. *The Brigade*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

Ruth Borchard, *We are Strangers Here: An 'Enemy Alien' in Prison in 1940*, London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008

Bourne, Sam. *The Final Reckoning*. London: Harper, 2008.

Chapman, Fern S. *Motherland: Beyond the Holocaust : a Daughter's Journey to Reclaim the Past*. New York, N.Y: Viking, 2000.

Friedlander, Margot, and Malin Schwerdtfeger. *"Versuche, dein Leben zu machen": Als Jüdin versteckt in Berlin*. Berlin: Rowohlt, 2008.

Friedlander, Margot, *Endlich legen wir in New York an. Erinnerungen von 1946 bis heute.* Eine Freundesgabe von André Schmitz und Thomas Sparr zum 5. November 2011.

Grebler, Leo. *German-Jewish Immigrants to the United States During the Hitler Period: Personal Reminiscences and General Observations*. [Los Angeles?]: Grebler, 1976.

Habe, Hans. *All my Sins. An Autobiography*. London: G.G. Harrap, 1957,

Katcher, Leo, *Post-Mortem. The Jews in Germany Today*, New York: Delacorte Press, 1968

Mühlfelder, Ludwig. *Weil ich übriggeblieben bin: Ein jüdisches Überlebensschicksal aus Suhl in Thüringen und Amerika, 1924-1994*. Eberhard Roy Wiehn (ed.), Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre Verlag, 1995

Proclamation 2526 of December 8, 1941, U. S. Code Congressional Service, 77. Cong., 1st Session.

National Defense Migration. Hearings before the Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration. House of Representatives, Seventy-Seventh Congress, Second Session, Pursuant to H. Res. 113, Parts 29, 30 & 31. Problems of Evacuation of Enemy Aliens and Others from Prohibited Military Zones. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1942. Reprint Edition, New York: Arno Press, 1978.

Sack, John. *An Eye for an Eye*. New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1993.

Steinitz, Hans. "Der 'Aufbau.' Eine Berliner Zeitung für Deutsche in den USA," *Berliner Forum 5*, Berlin: Presse- und Informationsamt des Landes Berlin, 1989

They Can Aid America: A Survey of Specialized Personnel, New York City: National Refugee Service, Inc., 1942.

Völckers, Johannes. "Eine Chronik der Berlin-Besuche emigrierter Mitbürger," Joachim Nawrocki, Johannes Völckers (eds.), *30 Jahre Wiedergutmachung: Und eine Chronik der Berlin-Besuche emigrierter Mitbürger*, *Berliner Forum* 3 Berlin: Presse- und Informationsamt des Landes Berlin, 1981

U.S. Code Congressional Service, 77th Congress, First and Second Session. U. S. Department of Justice, *Regulations Controlling Travel and Other Conduct of Aliens of Enemy Nationalities*, Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1942.

U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. LIV, Part 1.

Secondary Sources

Administration, Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration. "Los Angeles in the 1930s: the WPA Guide to the City of Angels." (2011):

Allen, James Paul, and Eugene Turner. *The Ethnic Quilt: Population Diversity in Southern California*. Northridge: Center for Geographical Studies, California State University, Northridge, 1997.

Alpers, Benjamin Leontief. "This is the Army: Imagining a Democratic Military in World War II." *Journal of American History* (1998): 129–63.

———. *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture: Envisioning the Totalitarian Enemy, 1920s-1950s*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Anderson, Mark M. *Hitler's Exiles: Personal Stories of the Flight From Nazi Germany to America*. New York: New Press, 1998.

Antze, Paul, and Michael Lambek, eds. *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* New York: Routledge, 1996.

Appelius, Claudia. *"Die schönste Stadt der Welt": Deutsch-jüdische Flüchtlinge in New York*. Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2003.

Arad, Gulie Ne'eman. *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.

Aschheim, Steven E. *Beyond the Border: the German-Jewish Legacy Abroad*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Aschheim, Steven E. *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews*. Madison: Univ of Wisconsin Press, 2001.

Backhaus, Fritz, Dmitrij Belkin, and Raphael Gross, eds. *Bild Dir Dein Volk!: Axel Springer und die Juden [Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung im Jüdischen Museum Frankfurt am Main vom 15. März bis 29. Juli 2012].* Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012.

Bahr, Ehrhard. *Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

Bahr, Ehrhard., and Carolyn. See, eds. *Literary Exiles & Refugees in Los Angeles : Papers Presented at a Clark Library Seminar, 14 April 1984* Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles, 1988.

Baldwin, Peter, ed. *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust, and the Historian's Debate.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1990.

Barḳai, Avraham, and Michael A. Meyer, eds. *German-Jewish History in Modern Times* New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Barkai, Avraham. *Branching Out: German-Jewish Immigration to the United States, 1820-1914*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1994.

Barth, Lewis M., and Ruth Nussbaum, eds. *Max Nussbaum, From Berlin to Hollywood: a Mid-century Vision of Jewish Life.* Malibu: Joseph Simon/Pangloss Press, 1994.

Bauer-Hack, Susanne. *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau und die Wiedergutmachung*. Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1994.

Beagelhole, Ann. "'Locked Up and Guarded 'lest [they] Escape to Help Their Mortal Enemies': Jewish Internees in New Zealand During the Second World War," In *National Socialism in Oceania: a Critical Evaluation of Its Effect and Aftermath*, edited by E. Turner-Graham, and C. Winter, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010.

Becker, Ernst Wolfgang, Martin Vogt, and Wolfram Werner, eds. *Theodor Heuss, Der Bundespräsident, Briefe 1949-1954.* Berlin: De Gruyter, 1012.

Bendersky, Joseph W. *The" Jewish Threat": Anti-semitic Politics of the US Army*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

Bendix, Reinhard. *From Berlin to Berkeley: German-Jewish Identities*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1986.

Benz, Wolfgang, ed. *Das Exil der kleinen Leute: Alltagserfahrung deutscher Juden in der Emigration.* München: C. H. Beck, 1991.

———. "Rückkehr auf Zeit—Erfahrungen deutsch-jüdischer Emigranten mit Einladungen in ihre ehemaligen Heimatstädte." *Exilforschung* 9 (1991): 196–207.

———. *Deutsch-jüdisches Exil—das Ende der Assimilation?: Identitätsprobleme deutscher Juden in der Emigration*. Berlin: Metropol-Verlag, 1994.

———. "Exile Studies: Development and Trends," In *German-speaking Exiles in Ireland 1933-1945*, edited by Gisela Holfter, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006.

Benz, Wolfgang, Arnold Paucker, and Peter G.J. Pulzer, eds. *Jüdisches Leben in der Weimarer Republik.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998.

Berger, M., and Gideon Römer-Hillebrecht, eds. *Jüdische Soldaten-Jüdischer Widerstand: in Deutschland und Frankreich.* Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2012.

Berghahn, Marion. *Continental Britons: German-Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany*. Oxford: Berg, 1988.

Bergmann, Werner, and Rainer Erb. *Anti-Semitism in Germany: the Post-Nazi Epoch Since 1945*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997.

Bettzuege, Reinhard. "Auswärtiger Dienst," In *Handbuch Zur Deutschen Außenpolitik*, edited by Siegmar Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, and Reinhard Wolf, 226–45. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007.

Biess, Frank. *Homecomings: Returning Pows and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Biess, Frank, and Robert G. Moeller, eds. *Histories of the Aftermath: the Legacies of the Second World War in Europe* New York: Berghahn Books, 2012.

Bodnar, John. *The "Good War" in American Memory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.

Borch-Nitzling, Alexander. *(Un) Heimliche Heimat: Deutsche Juden nach 1945. Zwischen Abkehr und Rückkehr*. Oldenburg: Paulo Freire Verlag, 2007.

Bornemann, John, and Jeffrey M Peck. *Sojourners: the Return of German Jews and the Question of Identity*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

Boyers, Robert. *The Legacy of the German Refugee Intellectuals*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972.

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.

Breitman, Richard, and Alan M. Kraut. "American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945." (1987): viii, 310.

Brenner, Michael. *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

———. *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Brenner, Michael, and Derek Jonathan Penslar. *In Search of Jewish Community: Jewish Identities in Germany and Austria, 1918-1933*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.

Bronson, David, ed. *Jews and Germans from 1860 to 1933: the Problematic Symbiosis.* Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1979.

Budde, Gunilla, Sebastian Conrad, and Oliver Janz, eds. *Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010.

Bunzel, Annelise. "The Jewish Club of 1933, Inc.: A German-Jewish Presence in Los Angeles." *Western States Jewish History* 29 (1997): 111–16.

Caestecker, Frank. "Jewish Refugee Aid Organizations in Belgium and the Netherlands and the Flight From Nazi Germany, 1938-1940," In *"Wer bleibt, opfert seine Jahre, vielleicht sein Leben": Deutsche Juden 1938-1941*, edited by Susanne Heim, Beate Meyer, and Francis R. Nicosia, 166–91. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010.

Cazden, Robert E. *German Exile Literature in America 1933-1950: A History of the German Press and Book Trade*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1970.

Christgau, John. *"Enemies": World War II Alien Internment*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1985.

Cogan, Sara G, and Moses Rischin. *The Jews of Los Angeles, 1849-1945: an Annotated Bibliography*. Berkeley: Western Jewish History Center, Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, 1980.

Confino, Alon. “Remembering the Second World War, 1945–1965: Narratives of Victimhood and Genocide.” *Cultural Analysis* 4 (2005): 46–75.

———. *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Confino, Alon, and Peter Fritzsche, eds. *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002.

Conrad, Sebastian. *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Conze, Eckart, Norbert Frei, Peter Hayes, and Moshe Zimmermann. *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik*. München: Karl Blessing Verlag, 2010.

Coser, Lewis A. *Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and Their Experiences*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

Curti, Giorgio Hadi. “From a Wall of Bodies to a Body of Walls: Politics of Affect, Politics of Memory, Politics of War.” *Emotion, Space and Society* 1 (2008): 106–18.

Daniels, Roger. *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993.

———. *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2004.

Daniels, Roger, and Otis L Graham, eds. *Debating American Immigration, 1882–Present* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.

Davie, Maurice R. *Refugees in America, Report of the Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration From Europe*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1947.

Diefendorf, Jeffry M., ed. *Lessons and Legacies VI: New Currents in Holocaust Research* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2004.

Diner, Dan. “Negative Symbiose. Deutsche und Juden nach Auschwitz.” *Babylon* 1 (1986):

Diner, Hasia R. *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

———. *We Remember With Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence After the Holocaust, 1945-1962*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

Domm, Ashley A. "The Enemy Alien Program At Ellis Island During World War Ii: the German Experience, 1941-1948," diss., State University of New York College at Oneonta, 2009.

Dreisbach, Tom. "Transatlantic Broadcasts: Holocaust in America and West Germany." *Penn History Review* 16 (2009): 7.

Eder, Jacob Sebastian. "Ein 'Holocaustsyndrom?' Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen der Bundersrepublik und amerikanisch-jüdischen Organisationen in den 1980er Jahren." *Archiv Für Sozialgeschichte* 52 (2012): 646–57.

Ehmann, Annegret, Rachel Livné-Freudenthal, Monika Richarz, Julius H. Schoeps, Raymond Wolff. *Juden in Berlin: 1671-1945; Ein Lesebuch*. Berlin: Nicolai, 1988.

Eisenberg, Ellen. *The First to Cry Down Injustice: Western Jews and Japanese Removal During WWII*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008.

Eisenberg, Ellen, Ava Fran Kahn, and William Toll. *Jews of the Pacific Coast: Reinventing Community on America's Edge*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009.

Eley, Geoff. "How and Where is German History Centered," In *German History From the Margins*, edited by Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

Feinberg, Anat. "Leopold Jessner: German Theatre and Jewish Identity." *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 48 (2003): 111–33.

Feingold, Henry L. *The Politics of Rescue: the Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970.

———. *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995.

Feld, Susanne. "American Federation of Jews from Central Europe.' Von der Landsmannschaft deutsch-jüdischer Einwanderer zur amerikanischen Organisation." *Menora: Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte* 7 (1996): 132–45.

Fields, Harold. *The Refugee in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Fink, Carole. “Turning Away From the Past: West Germany and Israel, 1965–1967,” In *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975*, edited by Philipp Gassert, and Alan E Steinweis, New York: Berghahn Books, 2006.

Fischer-Hübner, Helga, and Hermann Fischer-Hübner, eds. *Die Kehrseite der “Wiedergutmachung:“ Das Leiden von NS-Verfolgten in den Entschädigungsverfahren.* Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1990.

Foster, Stuart J, and Keith Crawford, eds. *What Shall We Tell the Children?: International Perspectives on School History Textbooks.* Greenwich: Information Age Publishing, 2006.

Fox, Stephen. *The Unknown Internment: An Oral History of the Relocation of Italian Americans During World War II*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990.

Franklin, Joshua. “Victim Soldiers: German-Jewish Refugees in the American Armed Forces During World War II,” Diss., Clark University, 2006.

Frei, Norbert. “Die Deutsche Wiedergutmachungspolitik gegenüber Israel im Urteil der öffentlichen Meinung der USA,” In *Wiedergutmachung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, edited by Ludolf. Herbst, and Constantin. Goschler, 218. München: R. Oldenbourg, 1989.

———. *Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge Der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit*. München: CH Beck, 1996.

———. *1945 und wir: Das Dritte Reich im Bewusstsein der Deutschen*. München: C.H. Beck, 2005.

Frei, Norbert, José Brunner, and Constantin. Goschler, eds. *Die Praxis der Wiedergutmachung: Geschichte, Erfahrung und Wirkung in Deutschland und Israel* Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag GmbH, 2009.

Frey, Erich A. “Thomas Mann and His Friends Before the Tolan Committee (1942),” In *Exile, the Writer’s Experience*, edited by John M. Spalek, and Robert F. Bell, 207. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

Friedlander, Saul. *Nazi Germany and the Jews: the Years of Persecution: 1933-1939*. New York: Harper, 1997.

Fritzsche, Peter. “How Nostalgia Narrates Modernity,” In *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, edited by Alon Confino, and Peter Fritzsche, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002.

Funke, Hajo. “Bitburg, Jews, and Germans: A Case Study of Anti-Jewish Sentiment in Germany during May, 1985.” *New German Critique* (1986): 57–72.

Gassert, Philipp, and Alan E Steinweis, eds. *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975* New York: Berghahn Books, 2006.

Gay, Peter. *Weimar Culture: the Outsider as Insider*. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.

———. “Moritz Fröhlich–Morris Gay: A German Refugee in the United States.” *Monna and Otto Weinmann Lecture.*Washington, D.C. : Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1999

Geller, Jay Howard. “Das Bild Adenauers vom Judentum und seine Beziehungen zu Vertretern jüdischer Organisationen,” In *Adenauer, Israel und Das Judentum. Rhöndorfer Gespräche*, edited by H.J. Küsters, and D. Wilms, Bonn: Bouvier, 2004.

Gillis, John R. *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Goldschmidt, Hermann Levin. *The Legacy of German Jewry*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.

Goschler, Constantin. *Wiedergutmachung: Westdeutschland und die Verfolgten des Nationalsozialismus (1945-1954)*. München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992.

———. “German Compensation to Jewish Nazi Victims,” In *Lessons and Legacies VI: New Currents in Holocaust Research*, 400. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2004.

———. *Schuld Und Schulden: die Politik der Wiedergutmachung für NS-Verfolgte seit 1945*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2005.

Grab, Walter, Julius Hans Schoeps, and Avraham Barkai. *Juden in der Weimarer Republik*. Stuttgart: Burg Verlag, 1986.

Greenspan, Henry, and Robert Coles. *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998.

Gregor, Neil. *Haunted City: Nuremberg and the Nazi Past*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008.

Gregor, Neil, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman, eds. *German History From the Margins.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

Grossmann, Atina. “German Jews as Provincial Cosmopolitans: Reflections from the Upper West Side.” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 53 (2008):

———. *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

———. “Family Files: Emotions and Stories of (Non)-Restitution.” *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 34 (2012): 61.

Gruber, Ruth Ellen. *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe*. Berkeley: Univ of California Press, 2001.

Gumprecht, Holger. *“New Weimar” Unter Palmen: Deutsche Schriftsteller im Exil in Los Angeles*. Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch, 1998.

Hall, Stuart. “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” In *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, edited by Jana Evans Braziel, and Anita Mannur, Malden: Blackwell, 2003.

Hane, Mikiso. “Wartime Internment.” *The Journal of American History* 77 (1990): 569–75.

Hansen, Niels. *Aus dem Schatten der Katastrophe: Die deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen in der Ära Konrad Adenauer und David Ben Gurion: Ein dokumentierter Bericht*. Düsseldorf: Droste, 2002.

Hartwig, Thomas, and Achim Roscher. *Die verheißene Stadt: Deutsch-jüdische Emigranten in New York: Gespräche, Eindrücke und Bilder*. Berlin: Arsenal, 1986.

Heilbut, Anthony. *Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America, from the 1930s to the Present*. New York: Viking Press, 1983.

Heim, Susanne, Beate Meyer, and Francis R. Nicosia. *“Wer bleibt, opfert seine Jahre, vielleicht sein Leben”: Deutsche Juden 1938-1941*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010.

Heineman, Elizabeth. “The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany’s” Crisis Years” and West German National Identity.” *The American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 354–95.

Herbert, Ulrich. *Wandlungsprozesse in Westdeutschland: Belastung, Integration, Liberalisierung 1945-1980*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2002.

Herbst, Ludolf., and Constantin. Goschler, eds. *Wiedergutmachung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* München: R. Oldenbourg, 1989.

Herf, Jeffrey. *Divided Memory: the Nazi Past in the Two Germanys.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Hermand, Jost. "Juden in Der Kultur Der Weimarer Republik," In *Juden in der Weimarer Republik*, edited by Walter Grab, Julius Schoeps, and Avraham Barkai, 9–37. Stuttgart: Burg Verlag, 1986.

Hertz, Deborah S. *How Jews Became Germans: The History of Conversion and Assimilation in Berlin*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

Higham, John. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. New York: Atheneum, 1963.

Hindenburg, Hannfried, and Michael Wolffsohn, eds. *Demonstrating Reconciliation : State and Society in West German Foreign Policy Toward Israel, 1952-1965.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2007.

Hirshler, Eric E. *Jews From Germany in the United States.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1955.

Hockerts, Hans Günter. "Anwälte der Verfolgten. Die United Restitution Organization," In *Wiedergutmachung in Der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, edited by Ludolf. Herbst, and Constantin. Goschler, 249–71. München: R. Oldenbourg, 1989.

———, and Christiane Kuller, eds. *Nach der Verfolgung: Wiedergutmachung nationalsozialistischen Unrechts in Deutschland?* Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003.

———, Claudia Moisel, and Tobias Winstel. *Grenzen Der Wiedergutmachung: Die Entschädigung für NS-Verfolgte in West-und Osteuropa 1945-2000*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006.

Jarausch, Konrad. "Critical Memory and Civil Society: the Impact of the 1960s on German Debates About the Past," In *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975*, edited by Philipp Gassert, and Alan E Steinweis, New York: Berghahn Books, 2006.

Jarrell, C Jackman, and Carla M Borden, eds. *The Muses Flee Hitler. Cultural Transfer and Adaptation 1930-1945* Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983.

Jarrell, C. Jackman. "German Emigres in Southern California," In *The Muses Flee Hitler. Cultural Transfer and Adaptation 1930-1945*, edited by C. Jackman Jarrell, and Carla M. Borden, Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983.

Jersch, Thomas, and Steffi Jersch-Wenzel. “Zur Geschichte Der Jüdischen Gemeinde in Berlin,” In *Wegweiser durch das jüdische Berlin*, Berlin: 1987.

Jochem, Gerhard. “Fallbeispiel III: Kämpfer für die Ehre und Freiheit des Menschtums: Nürnberg-Fürther jüdische Emigranten in den Armeen der Alliierten 1939-1945,” In *Jüdische Soldaten-Jüdischer Widerstand: in Deutschland und Frankreich*, edited by M. Berger, and Gideon Römer-Hillebrecht, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2012.

Judt, Tony. *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*. New York: Penguin, 2005.

Jungmann, Alexander. *Jüdisches Leben in Berlin: Der aktuelle Wandel in einer metropolitanen Diasporagemeinschaft*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2007.

Jürgens, Franz J. *Wir waren ja eigentlich Deutsche: Juden berichten von Emigration und Rückkehr*. Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 1997.

Kansteiner, Wulf. *In Pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics After Auschwitz*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006.

———. “Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle: the Legacy of Nazism, World War Ii, and the Holocaust in the Federal Republic of Germany,” In *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, edited by Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu, 102–46. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Kaplan, Marion A. *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

———. *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2005.

———. “Changing Roles in Jewish Families,” In *Jewish Life in Nazi Germany: Dilemmas and Responses*, edited by Francis R Nicosia, and David Scrase, Berghahn Books, 2013.

Karpf, Maurice J. *Jewish Community Organization in the United States: An Outline of Types of Organizations, Activities and Problems*. New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1938.

Karras, Steven. *The Enemy I Knew: German Jews in the Allied Military in World War II*. Minneapolis, MN: Zenith Press, 2009.

Katz, Barry M. “The Criticism of Arms: The Frankfurt School Goes to War.” *The Journal of Modern History* 59 (1987): 439–78.

Kenkmann, Alfons, Christoph Spieker, and Bernd Walter. *Wiedergutmachung als Auftrag: Begleitband zur gleichnamigen Dauerausstellung: Geschichtsort Villa ten Hompel*. Essen: Klartext, 2007.

Kent, Donald Peterson. *The Refugee Intellectual: the Americanization of the Immigrants of 1933-1941*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1953.

Kipen, David, and Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration Administration. *Los Angeles in the 1930s: The WPA Guide to the City of Angels*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011

Kirchheimer, Gloria DeVidas, and Manfred Kirchheimer. *We Were So Beloved: Autobiography of a German Jewish Community*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997.

Kirk, Tim. *Nazi Germany*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Klein, Anne, and Jürgen Wilhelm, eds. *NS-Unrecht vor Kölner Gerichten nach 1945* Köln: Greven Verlag, 2003.

Kobrin, Rebecca. *Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Kohn, Jerome, and Ron H. Feldman, eds. *The Jewish Writings* New. York: Shocken Books, 2007.

Kolinsky, Eva. *After the Holocaust: Jewish Survivors in Germany After 1945*. London: Random House, 2004.

Kotas, Beatrice L. "Financially Dependent Jewish Emigres as Job-seekers in Los Angeles." Diss., University of California, Los Angeles School of Social Welfare, 1950.

Kotowski, Elke-Vera, ed. *Aufbau: Sprachrohr, Heimat, Mythos; Geschichte (n) einer deutsch-jüdischen Zeitung aus New York 1934 Bis Heute* Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2011.

Kramer, Alan. *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

Krauss, Marita. "Eroberer oder Rückkehrer? Deutsche Emigranten in der amerikanischen Armee." *Exil* 13 (1993): 70–85.

———. *Heimkehr in ein fremdes Land: Geschichte der Remigration nach 1945*. München: CH Beck, 2001.

Kräutler, Anja. *Dieselbe Stadt – und doch eine ganz andere": Kommunale und bürgerschaftliche Besuchsprogramme für ehemalige Zwangsarbeiter und andere Opfer nationalsozialistischen Unrechts*. Berlin: Fonds Erinnerung und Zukunft der Stiftung Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft, 2006.

Kümper, Michal, Barbara Rösch, Ulrike Schneider, and Helen Thein, eds. *Makom: Orte und Räume Im Judentum; Real. Abstrakt. Imaginär; Essays* Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2007.

Kushner, Tony, and David Cesarani. *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain*. Portland (Or.): Frank Cass, 1993.

Küsters, HJ, and D Wilms, eds. *Adenauer, Israel und das Judentum. Rhöndorfer Gespräche* Bonn: Bouvier, 2004.

Lambach, Frank. *Our Men in Washington: From the first Prussian Minister Resident to the Ambassadors of the Federal Republic of Germany*. Köln: Druckhaus Rudolf Müller, 1976.

Lamberti, Marjorie. "German Antifascist Refugees in America and the Public Debate on "What Should be Done with Germany after Hitler," 1941–1945." *Central European History* 40 (2007): 279–305.

Langkau-Alex, Ursula, and Thomas Michael Ruprecht, eds. *Was soll aus Deutschland werden?: Der Council for a Democratic Germany in New York 1944-1945: Aufsätze und Dokumente* Frankfurt: Campus Verlag GmbH, 1995.

Lapp, B. "The Newspaper Aufbau, its Evolving Politics, and the Problem of German-Jewish Identity, 1939-1955." *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 58 (2013): 161–74.

Laqueur, Walter. *Generation Exodus: the Fate of Young Jewish Refugees From Nazi Germany*. Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, Published by the University Press of New England, 2001.

Lavsky, Hagit. "The Impact of 1938 on German-jewish Emigration and Adaptation in Palestine, Britain and the USA," In *"Wer bleibt, opfert seine Jahre, vielleicht sein Leben": Deutsche Juden 1938-1941*, edited by Susanne Heim, Beate Meyer, and Francis R. Nicosia, 302 pages. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010.

Le Espiritu, Yen. *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*. Berkeley: Univ of California Press, 2003.

Lebow, Richard Ned, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu, eds. *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Lehrer, Erica. “Bearing False Witness? ‘Vicarious’ Jewish Identity and the Politics of Affinity,” In *Imaginary Neighbors: Mediating Polish-Jewish Relations after the Holocaust*, edited by Dorota Glowacka, and Joanna Zylinsk, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.

Levine, Rhonda F. *Class, Networks, and Identity: Replanting Jewish Lives From Nazi Germany to Rural New York*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001.

Levy, Daniel, and Natan Sznaider. “Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory.” *European Journal of Social Theory* 5 (2002): 87–106.

———. *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006.

Liebner, Petra. *Paul Tillich und Der Council for a Democratic Germany (1933 bis 1945)*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001.

Limberg, Margarete, and Hubert Rübsaat, eds. *Germans No More: Accounts of Jewish Everyday Life, 1933-1938* New York: Berghahn Books, 2006.

Lipstadt, Deborah E. *Beyond Belief: the American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945*. New York: The Free Press, 1986.

Lissner, Cornelia. “‘In der Justiz lebe ich wie im Exil’: Zur Rückkehr jüdischer Juristen und Juristinnen,” In *NS-Unrecht vor Kölner Gerichten nach 1945*, edited by Anne Klein, and Jürgen Wilhelm, 75–88. Köln: Greven Verlag, 2003.

———. *Den Fluchtweg Zurückgehen: Remigration nach Nordrhein und Westfalen 1945-1955*. Essen: Klartext, 2006.

Lourié, Anton. “Social Adjustments of German Jewish Refugees in Los Angeles,” diss., University of Southern California, 1953.

Löw, Andrea. “Die frühen Deportation aus dem Reichsgebiet von Herbst 1939 bis Frühjahr 1941,” In *“Wer bleibt, opfert seine Jahre, vielleicht sein Leben”: Deutsche Juden 1938-1941*, edited by Susanne Heim, Beate Meyer, and Francis R. Nicosia, 59–76. Götingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010.

Lowenstein, Steven M. *Frankfurt on the Hudson: the German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933-1983, Its Structure and Culture*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989.

———. “Women’s Role in the German-jewish Immigrant Community,” In *Between Sorrow and Strength: Women Refugees of the Nazi Period*, edited by Sibylle Quack,

Washington, D.C., Cambridge: German Historical Institute, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Luebke, Frederick C. *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I*. De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974.

Lühe, Irmela von der, Axel Schildt, and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum. *"Auch in Deutschland waren wir nicht mehr wirklich zu Hause": Die Remigration Vertriebener Juden nach Deutschland*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008.

Massad, Joseph. "The "post-colonial" Colony: Time, Space, and Bodies in Palestine/ israel," edited by Fawzia Afzal-Khan, and Kalpana Seshradi-Crooks, 311–46. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.

Mendes-Flohr, Paul. "Between Germanism and Judaism, Christians and Jews," In *German-Jewish History in Modern Times, Vol. 4: Renewal and Destruction, 1918-1945*, edited by Michael A. Brenner Meyer, Michael, 157–69. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

———. "Jews Within German Culture," In *German-Jewish History in Modern Times, Vol. 4: Renewal and Destruction, 1918-1945*, edited by Michael A. Brenner Meyer, Michael, 170–94. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Meng, Michael. *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Meyer, Michael A., and Michael Brenner. *German-Jewish History in Modern Times, Vol. 1: Tradition and Enlightenment, 1600-1780*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

———. *German-Jewish History in Modern Times, Vol. 2: Emancipation and Acculturation, 1780-1871*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

———. *German-Jewish History in Modern Times, Vol. 3: Integration in Dispute, 1871-1918*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

———. *German-Jewish History in Modern Times, Vol. 4: Renewal and Destruction, 1918-1945*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Middell, Eike, and Alfred Dreifuss, eds. *Exil in den USA Mit einem Bericht "Schanghai —eine Emigration am Rande"* Frankfurt am Main: Röderberg–Verlag, 1980.

Mirel, Jeffrey. *Patriotic Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Moeller, Robert G. “War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany.” *The American Historical Review* 101 (2001): 1008–48.

Moore, Deborah Dash. *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.a.* New York: Free Press, 1994.

———. *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004.

Moore, Michaels Hoenicke. *Know Your Enemy: the American Debate on Nazism, 1933–1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Morris, Leslie, and Jack Zipes. *Unlikely History: the Changing German-jewish Symbiosis, 1945-2000*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

Moses, Dirk. *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Müller, Michael G., and Cornelius Torp. “Conceptualising Transnational Spaces in History.” *European Review of History—Revue européenne d’histoire* 16 (2009): 609–17.

Müller, Tim B. *Krieger und Gelehrte: Herbert Marcuse und die Denksysteme im Kalten Krieg*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, HIS Verlag, 2010.

Nachama, Andreas, and Ulrich Eckhardt. *Jüdische Orte in Berlin*. Berlin: Nicolai, 2005.

Nachama, Andreas, Julius H. Schoeps, and Hermann Simon. *Jews in Berlin*. Berlin: Henschel, 2002.

Nicosia, Francis R, and David Scrase, eds. *Jewish Life in Nazi Germany: Dilemmas and Responses*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2013.

Niewyk, Donald L. *The Jews in Weimar Germany*. Transaction Publishers, 2001.

Nikou, Lina. *Zwischen Imagepflege, moralischer Verpflichtung und Erinnerungen: Das Besuchsprogramm für jüdische ehemalige Hamburger Bürgerinnen und Bürger*. München: Dölling und Galitz Verlag, 2011.

Novick, Peter. *The Holocaust in American Life*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999.

Olick, Jeffrey K. *The Politics of Regret: on Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Miquel, Marc. “Explanation, Dissociation, Apologia: the Debate Over the Criminal Prosecution of Nazi Crimes in the 1960s,” In *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German*

Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975, edited by Philipp Gassert, and Alan E Steinweis, 58. New York: Berghahn Books, 2006.

Paulmann, Johannes, ed. *Auswärtige Repräsentationen: Deutsche Kulturdiplomatie nach 1945.* Köln: Böhlau, 2005.

———. *Die Haltung Der Zurückhaltung: Auswärtige Selbstdarstellungen nach 1945 und die Suche nach einem erneuerten Selbstverständnis in der Bundesrepublik: Kaisen-Lesung am 22. Mai 2005 Im Rathaus zu Bremen*. Bremen: Kaisen-Stiftung, 2006.

Peck, Abraham J, and Theodore Wiener. *The German-Jewish Legacy in America, 1938-1988: From Bildung to the Bill of Rights*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989.

Peck, Abraham J, and Uri D Herscher. *Queen City Refuge: an Oral History of Cincinnati's Jewish Refugees From Nazi Germany*. West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1989.

Penkower, Monty Noam. "American Jewry and the Holocaust: From Biltmore to the American Jewish Conference," In *American Jewish History, Vol. 7*, edited by Jeffrey S. Gurock, 95–114. New York: Routledge, 1998.

Petersen, Walter F. "Das Umfeld: Die Vereinigten Staaten und die Deutschen Emigranten," In *Was soll aus Deutschland werden?: Der Council for a Democratic Germany in New York 1944-1945: Aufsätze und Dokumente*, edited by Ursula Langkau-Alex, and Thomas Michael Ruprecht, 70. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag GmbH, 1995.

Peukert, Detlev. *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1992.

Pingel, Falk. "From Evasion to a Crucial Tool of Moral and Political Education: Teaching National Socialism and the Holocaust in Germany," In *What Shall We Tell the Children? International Perspectives on School History Textbooks*, edited by Stuart J. Foster, and Keith Crawford, 131–53. Greenwich, Conn.: Information Age Pub., 2006.

Presner, Todd Samuel. *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

Quack, Sibylle. *Between Sorrow and Strength: Women Refugees of the Nazi Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Radkau, Joachim. *Die deutsche Emigration in den USA: Ihr Einfluss auf die amerikanische Europapolitik 1933-1945.* Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1971.

Remy, Steven P. “Deutsche-jüdische Flüchtlinge in der US-Armee,” In *Heimat und Exil : Emigration der deutschen Juden nach 1933*, edited by Stiftung Jüdisches Musuem Berlin und Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 201–204. Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2006.

Roden, Johanna W. “Der ‘Jewish Club of 1933, Inc.’—ein Deutsches Kulturzentrum am Pazifischen Ozean.” In *Deutschsprachige Exilliteratur seit 1933*, edited by John M Spalek, Konrad Feilchenfeldt, and Sandra H Hawrylchak, 482–494. Bern: KG Saur, 2002.

Roemer, Nils H. *German City, Jewish Memory: the Story of Worms*. Waltham, Mass. Hanover: Brandeis University Press Published by University Press of New England, 2010.

Sabrow, Martin, and Norbert Frei, eds. *Die Geburt des Zeitzeugen nach 1945.* Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2012.

Sagi, Nana. *German Reparations: a History of Negotiations*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986.

Schaber, Will, and Hans Steinitz, eds. *Aufbau Reconstruction: Dokumente einer Kultur im Exil.* New York: Overlook Press Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1972.

Schenderlein, Anne Clara. “Zwischen-Orte: Dimensionen Von Identität deutsch-jüdischer Migranten,” In *Makom: Orte und Räume im Judentum; Real. Abstrakt. Imaginär; Essays*, edited by Michal Kümper, Barbara Rösch, Ulrike Schneider, and Helen Thein, 311–20. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2007.

———. “German Jewish Refugees in Los Angeles: a Jewish Club and the Americanization Process From 1938-1943.” MA Thesis, California State University, Northridge, 2005.

Schildt, Axel, Detlef Siegfried, and Karl Christian Lammers, eds. *Dynamische Zeiten. Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften.* Hamburg: Christians, 2000.

Schlör, Joachim. “In weiter Ferne: Berlin. Bilder der Stadt in den Erinnerungen deutsch-jüdischer Emigranten.” *Menora: Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte* 9 (1998): 267–2996.

Schmidt, Siegmar, Gunther Hellmann, and Reinhard Wolf, eds. *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007.

Schmitz, Eric John. “Enemies Among Us: the Relocation and Repatriation of German, Italian and Japanese Americans During the Second World War.” Diss., The American University, 2007.

Scholem, Gershom. “Wider den Mythos vom deutsch-jüdischen Gespräch,” In *Auf gespaltenem Pfad Festschrift für Margarete Susman,* edited by Manfred Schlösser, Darmstadt: Erato*,* 1964

———. “Against the Myth of the German-Jewish Dialogue,” In *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis: Selected Essays*, 61–64. New York: Schocken Books, 1976.

Shafir, Shlomo. *American Jews and Germany after 1945: Points of Connection and Points of Departure*. Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1993.

———. *Ambiguous Relations: the American Jewish Community and Germany Since 1945*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999.

Siegfried, Detlef. “Zwischen Aufarbeitung und Schlußstrich. Der Umgang mit der NS-Vergangenheit in den beiden deutschen Staaten 1958-1969,” In *Dynamische Zeiten. Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften*, edited by Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried, and Karl Christian Lammers, Hamburg: Christians, 2000.

Siu, Lok. *Memories of a Future Home: Diasporic Citizenship of Chinese in Panama*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Sonnert, Gerhard, and Gerald Holton. *What Happened to the Children Who Fled Nazi Persecution*. New York: Palgrave, 2006.

Spalek, John M, Konrad Feilchenfeldt, and Sandra H Hawrylchak, eds. *Deutschsprachige Exilliteratur seit 1933.* Bern: KG Saur, 2002.

Spalek, John M., and Robert F. Bell, eds. *Exile, the Writer’s Experience.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

Spernol, Bori, and Matthias Langrock. “Amtliche Wirklichkeit: Die Praxis der Entschädigung aus behördlicher Binnenperspektive,” In *Die Praxis der Wiedergutmachung: Geschichte, Erfahrung nnd Wirkung in Deutschland und Israel*, edited by Norbert Frei, José Brunner, and Constantin. Goschler, Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag GmbH, 2009.

Stern, Frank. *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany*. Oxford: Published for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem by Pergamon Press, 1992.

Stern, Guy. “In the Service of American Intelligence: German-Jewish Exiles in the War against Hitler.” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 37 (1992): 461–77.

———. “The Jewish Exiles in the Service of US Intelligence: The Post-War Years.” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 40 (1995): 51–62.

Lowenstein, Steven M. “Jewish Participation in German Culture,” In *German-Jewish History in Modern Times, Vol. 3: Integration in Dispute, 1871-1918*, edited by Michael A. Brenner Meyer, Michael, 305–36. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Stiefel, Ernst C., and Frank Mecklenburg. *Deutsche Juristen im amerikanischen Exil (1933-1950)*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991.

Deutschland, Stiftung Jüdisches Musuem Berlin und Stiftnung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik, ed. *Heimat und Exil : Emigration der deutschen Juden nach 1933* Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2006.

Strauss, Herbert Arthur. “Jewish Emigration from Germany: Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses.” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* XXV (1980): 313–61.

———. “Jewish Emigration from Germany: Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (II).” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 26 (1981): 343–409.

———. *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA, Vol. 6: Essays on the History, Persecution, and Emigration of German Jews*. München: K.G. Saur, 1987.

Strauss, Herbert Arthur, Henry Friedlander, and Steven W. Siegel. *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA, Vol. 2: Classified and Annotated Bibliography of Books and Articles on the Immigration and Acculturation of Jews From Central Europe to the USA Since 1933*. München: Saur, 1979.

———. *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA, Vol. 5: the Indivindual and Collective Experience of German-jewish Immigrants 1933–1984*. München: Saur, 1984.

Strauss, Herbert Arthur, and Norbert Kampe. *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA, Vol 4: Jewish Emigration From Germany 1933-1942*. K. G. Saur Verlag, 1992.

Strauss, Herbert Arthur, and Joan C. Lessing. *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA, Vol. 3: Guide to the Oral History Collection of the Foundation for Jewish Immigration, New York*. New York: K. G. Saur, 1982.

Strauss, Herbert Arthur, and Steven W. Siegel. *Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA, Vol. 1: Archival Resources*. München: Saur, 1979.

Taylor, John Russell. *Strangers in Paradise: the Hollywood Emigrés, 1933-1950*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1983.

Terkel, Studs. *"The Good War": An Oral History of World War II*. New York: The New Press, 1984.

Till, Karen E. *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Turner-Graham, Emily, and Christine Winter. *National Socialism in Oceania: a Critical Evaluation of Its Effect and Aftermath* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010.

Ullman, Michaela. "Felix Guggenheim." *Immigrant Entrepreneurship: German-American Business Biographies, 1720 to the present*. (2014): Online–Ressource., http://www.bibliothek.uni-regensburg.de/dbinfo/frontdoor.php?titel_id=11465 http://www.immigrantentrepreneurship.org/index.php.

Van Rahden, Till. *Jews and Other Germans: Civil Society, Religious Diversity, and Urban Politics in Breslau, 1860-1925*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.

Volkov, Shulamit. *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

von Wahl, Angelika. *Zwischen Heimat und Holocaust: Das Deutschlandbild der Nachkommen deutscher Juden in New York*. Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1992.

Vorspan, Max, Lloyd P Gartner, and E Henry. *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*. San Marino: Huntington Library, 1970.

Waldinger, Roger, and Mehdi Bozorgmehr. *Ethnic Los Angeles*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996.

Webster, Ronald. "Jüdische Rückkehrer in der BRD nach 1945: Ihre Motive, ihre Erfahrungen." *Aschkenas* 5 (1995): 47–78.

Weiner, Deborah R., Anita Kassof, and Avi Y. Decter, eds. *Lives Lost, Lives Found: Baltimore's German Jewish Refugees, 1933–1945.* Baltimore: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2004.

Weitz, Eric D. *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy*. Princeton: Princepton University Press, 2007).

Wilhelm, Cornelia. “Introduction and Acknowledgments,” In *German Jews in the United States: A Guide to Archival Collections, Reference Guide No. 24*, 2. Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 2008.

Wilson, Karen, ed. *Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.

Winstel, Tobias. “Über die Bedeutung der Wiedergutmachung im Leben der Jüdischen NS-Verfolgten. Erfahrungsgeschichtliche Annäherungen,” In *Nach der Verfolgung: Wiedergutmachung nationalsozialistischen Unrechts in Deutschland?*, edited by Hans Günter Hockerts, and Christiane Kuller, Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003.

———. *Verhandelte Gerechtigkeit: Rückerstattung und Entschädigung für jüdische NS-Opfer in Bayern und Westdeutschland*. München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006.

Wolffsohn, Michael. *Eternal Guilt?: Forty Years of German-Jewish-Israeli Relations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

Wolman, Ruth. *Crossing Over: An Oral History of Refugees From Hitler's Reich*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996.

Wyman, David S. *Paper Walls; America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968.

———. *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941–1945*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

Zimmermann, Mosche. *Deutsche gegen Deutsche: Das Schicksal der Juden 1938-1945*. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2008.