

GHI RESEARCH

SUFFERING, TOLERANCE AND THE NATION: ASYLUM AND CITIZENSHIP POLICY IN WEIMAR GERMANY

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Several events occurred between 1917 and 1919 that radically altered the literal and symbolic geography of Germany.¹ 1) *Territorial transfer*. After the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Germans began making plans for the annexation of wide swaths of territory in Eastern Europe. A mere few months later, after its defeat in the West, Germany was forced to cede territory to France, Poland, and Denmark, as well as give up its expected gains in the former Czarist territories. 2) *The Russian Revolution*. Prior to the revolution, it was possible to look at Europe as constituted by various nationally determined entities as well as increasingly anachronistic multinational empires. With the Russian Revolution and the arrival of an explicitly international (and modern) state, this paradigm was unsettled. And, the result of these two developments was: 3) *Refugee crisis*. The end of the war was accompanied by massive movements of population, an event that has been termed the “first modern refugee crisis.”² In this paper, I briefly explore one specific case: asylum and citizenship policy during the early Weimar period.³

Hannah Arendt called the interwar refugees the “most symptomatic group in current politics.”⁴ The existence of these migrants, she argued, had important consequences for the order of the postwar world. For one, the willingness of states to forcibly deport anyone of a different ideology or nationality was a harbinger of increasing totalitarianism.⁵ Secondly, the failure of states to deal adequately with the refugees who streamed into their countries, either through repatriation or naturalization, led to a diminished toleration of the right of asylum and indeed the rights of foreigners more generally.⁶ Ultimately, however, what Arendt saw as the most harmful effect of statelessness during the interwar period was the way that these stateless people were entirely governed by the police because they did not stand to benefit from the protection of any state.⁷ For the stateless, the host country was, quite literally, a “police state” in which they were under police control, unmediated by any laws guaran-

teeing their rights. Arendt's argument extends beyond the plight of the refugee, as she also claims that the existence of the stateless had an extremely important effect on the states themselves. She contends, "the higher the ratio of potentially stateless and stateless to the population at large . . . the greater the danger of a gradual transformation into a police state."⁸

Arendt makes a serious charge here, one that is exceedingly difficult to prove—what exactly is the "danger of a gradual transformation into a police state" and how would one measure this danger?—but suggestive nonetheless. In early 1920s Germany, the police were indeed charged with controlling stateless persons, to whom the state was reluctant to grant citizenship or protection. But there were also serious debates about asylum, citizenship, and the role of the state within all levels of the German government that belied any simple claim about the "transformation" of Germany into a police state during this period. The refusal to grant most stateless persons citizenship combined with a willingness to grant some of them government assistance and a more widely-held tolerance of their right to be in the country were all important aspects of Germany's relationship to the stateless persons living in Germany in the first years of the Weimar Republic.

In the following remarks, I will look more closely at the way in which Germany dealt with the refugee crisis, paying attention to both those aspects that seem to confirm Arendt's argument and those that seem to diverge from it. I identify a nascent discourse of asylum used by German defenders of the refugees and discuss its consequences. This asylum discourse relied on a language of victimization. This language had a powerful claim during this period but also easily led to resentments in a state and society where belonging was still defined along quite different criteria. The disjuncture between the logic of citizenship and the logic of asylum spoke to a wider conflict in German society during the Weimar Republic.

There were two issues at stake within the postwar period. The first concerned the territory of Germany, with some Germans arguing that German territory was only for those persons defined as part of the German nation. As a result of the increased attention paid to foreign Germans during World War I, proponents of this position defined the German nation in substantially broader terms than had been the case for any but the most committed Pan-Germans prior to the war. Others argued that German territory should also be a haven for those suffering in other parts of the world—such as Jews from Eastern Europe. The holders of the second position emphasized the suffering and victimhood of these refugees, which was in contrast to otherwise prevailing norms of German policy towards foreigners, which privileged their utility as a justification

for allowing them to stay in Germany. This conceptualization of Germany as a land of asylum was a precursor to post-World War II German asylum policy. At the same time, the discursive framework set up by this debate was one in which Germans only accepted a responsibility for or interest in immigrants so long as they were seen as victims. Within this framework, there was no way of positively conceiving of immigrants as potential members of the German national community or worthy participants in German society.

The second debate in Weimar Germany at this time concerned the nature of the German community itself. Some argued for a German nation defined along racial lines, while others maintained that the German nation should be defined more by a shared culture. In my dissertation, I show that *pace* Brubaker, culture, and not necessarily biological race, was an important feature of German citizenship policy and practice.⁹ Moreover, arguments about citizenship during this period served a highly symbolic function. As I will discuss later, when Germans argued about citizenship during this period, they were also debating about who should be part of the German community in an ideal situation. Citizenship served to recognize those people who had already become “appropriately” German. Importantly, citizenship policy was also a regulatory ideal; it was, quite literally, about defining an *imagined* community—one that bore little resemblance to the heterogeneous population living within the territorial borders of the state.¹⁰

It is exceedingly difficult for modern historians to ascertain the number of refugees who came to Germany during and after World War I. John Hope Simpson claimed that there were nearly ten million refugees on the European continent as late as the mid-1920s.¹¹ Approximately 1 million refugees came to Germany, half of whom were of non-German descent.¹² This figure, while dwarfed by the migrations that occurred after the Second World War, was well beyond anything that had previously been experienced in the West. The massive and unprecedented size of this migration taxed the moral and financial capacity of both Germany individually, and the world community at large. These new refugees were also qualitatively different from their nineteenth-century precursors. Passports and visas came into widespread use for the first time after World War I, and so citizenship and statelessness had a different and more tangible quality than prior to the war.

Looking back on the immediate postwar years, the German Minister of the Interior, Rudolf Oeser, spoke of a “flooding of the territory of the Reich with foreigners.” Oeser saw this flood as part of a “massive migration of foreign elements from the East,” which had begun during the war but achieved “vigorous” (*rege*) proportions during 1919.¹³ In 1920, the German Society for Population Policy (Deutsche Gesellschaft für

Bevölkerungspolitik) wrote to the Reich interior ministry about the deleterious effects this migration would have on the German population. "Since the end of the war, a great migration (*Abwanderung*) from Russia and the former Russian section of Poland to Germany has begun. From month to month, this migration is becoming culturally and economically more dangerous for the German people."¹⁴

Despite the fact that the number of Jews immigrating to Germany (70,000)¹⁵ was a small percentage of the total number of refugees immigrating from the East (at least 500,000), it was an accepted, although obviously untrue, fact that the majority of the immigrants that came to Germany after the end of the war were Jews.¹⁶ The words *Ostjuden* and *Ostausländer* were often used as synonyms, and the Eastern Jew served as the model for the entire migration from the East. Usually this was done unthinkingly by bureaucrats, who acted as if the entire migration from the East was made up of Eastern European Jews. Descriptions of the migration from the East and the difficulty of border controls often shaded quickly into diatribes against the horrors of Eastern European Jewry that used stereotypes about Jews that long predated the current refugee crisis. Many Germans were convinced that migrants from the East were to blame for the German people's many hardships—a worsening of the housing shortage, an increase in the pressure on the food supply, economic difficulties created by unscrupulous merchants, and the importation of Bolshevik ideas.¹⁷ German efforts to limit the size of the foreign population concentrated on trying to enact an effective border control, but as the flurry of laws and regulations makes clear, because of both the lack of personnel and the size of the refugee population, the ability to actually enforce such control remained a mirage. Faced with what they believed was only the beginning of a massive invasion of Bolsheviks and Jews, some officials argued that the border needed to be completely closed. A Prussian *Erläss* from January 27, 1919, immediately after the cessation of hostilities, attempted to seal the border in both directions for all those who could not prove their German identity beyond doubt.¹⁸ But this proved impossible, as a report of a meeting at the *Auswärtiges Amt* made clear: "Experience shows that despite the closing of the border, foreigners crossed in droves."¹⁹

Despite attempts to end corruption at the border and increase the number of soldiers assigned to border patrol, officials were aware that "it was impossible to seal the border without any holes." Thus they turned to other strategies, arguing that it was necessary to place the Eastern border under strict surveillance.²⁰ Of course, such supervision proved to be no more possible than sealing the border, and the files of the Prussian and national interior ministries and border police are filled with accounts of frustrated officials who could not even manage to count the people

they saw streaming across the border. As one border guard wrote, “. . . the stream [of people] from the East continues without hindrance.”²¹

The German and Prussian governments attempted to steer a middle course in responding to this immigration. While they wanted to stop immigrants from getting in, they rarely did anything to those who made it past the border. Their hesitation to take truly drastic steps against immigrants (such as expulsion or internment—both of which were discussed and implemented in limited ways) was due to three reasons. First, and probably most importantly, finding and expelling or interning illegal immigrants would have cost resources that were well beyond the capacity of either the Prussian or national state in this period. Second, German officials were afraid of the effect that such radical measures would have on the international image of a weakened Germany. During a meeting about the possible expulsion of the Jews, one official noted that they had decided not to expel them because “American sympathies for Germany have recently grown, and it is important in this regard to keep the support of the Jews there who have an undeniable influence on American politics.”²² Similarly, another official noted that the Prussian government could not support the internment of Jews because of the “dangerous influence such a measure would have on public opinion [in other European countries].”²³

It is also important to note that many members of the German government shared the concerns of the world community for the fate of the Jews. After all, these Jews had been subject to horrible persecution in Russia and Poland, and it appeared to some unconscionable to send Jews back to face more of the same. An *Erlass* from Prussian Interior Minister Carl Severing in November 1919 looked at the problem of Jewish immigration. On the one hand, Severing noted that many immigrants, if perhaps not all, were prompted by legitimate reasons; “they didn’t just leave, but were driven out under the pressure of the political situation that in Poland led to pogroms and comprehensive military recruitment.”²⁴ At the same time, Severing explained that Germany was by no means in a position to easily accept these refugees, suffering as it was from unemployment and food shortages. Severing then concluded that the suffering of the Jews in a sense trumped that of the Germans. “Despite the suffering of the German population, for human rights reasons, it is impossible to forcibly deport the *Ostjuden* currently living in Germany, even when they have snuck across the border and do not possess legitimation papers. This is because the situation in their homelands presents a danger to their lives.”²⁵ Severing went on to state that these immigrants possessed a lower level of culture, that their immigration should not be encouraged, and they should be kept separate from Germans whenever possible; nonetheless, except in cases where they committed crimes, these Jews had

to be tolerated.²⁶ A *Vorwärts* article from October 22, 1921 also counseled patience with regards to the Eastern Jews in Germany. The author pointed out that many of these Jews had come to Germany as a result of German attempts to recruit workers for its munitions industry during the war.²⁷ Secondly, it remarked, many of them were refugees from pogroms and other repressive measures. In both cases, the author argued, Jews could not be forced to return to the lands from which they had fled.

There are several interesting things to note about both the Prussian *Erläss* and the *Vorwärts* article that constructed arguments in support of the Jews as legitimate asylum seekers. On the one hand, they do so only by conceding large parts of their opponents' arguments. They do not try to say that the Eastern Jews were the equals of Germans, nor do they answer accusations about the unsuitability of the Jews for life in Germany or the danger they supposedly posed to hard-working but destitute Germans. Just as other officials tried to blame the German toleration of Eastern Jewish immigrants on the grounds of international pressure, even those who were clearly sympathetic to the *Ostjuden* accepted that they were a burden on Germany at a time when the beleaguered German nation could ill afford any additional strain. Yet, while they concede these parts of the argument to their conservative opponents, they make their case on the basis of an appeal to the suffering that these Jews have faced. Rather than arguing from the perspective of the public utility of the Jews, an argument that would appear plausible considering the fact that utility was the main criteria for the toleration of immigrants prior to 1914, as I'll discuss shortly, both of these texts appealed instead to their vulnerability. By phrasing their arguments in this way, the *Vorwärts* author and the Prussian government were appealing to the undeniable hold that metaphors of suffering and victimization had for the German public at this time.

Indeed, Weimar German culture can be read in many ways as a culture of victimization and martyrdom. One of the most resonant founding myths of the German Republic, the stab-in-the-back story told by German conservatives to justify their defeat in the war, was a story of betrayal, suffering, and victimization.²⁸ As I discuss in my dissertation, Freikorps soldiers easily expanded this story to explain the failure of their campaign in the Baltics and they also told stories about how much they had suffered and identified themselves as martyrs. Robert Whalen, Richard Bessel, and Deborah Cohen, looking at returning soldiers, show how eager they were to believe that they had suffered, despite the fact that they had actually met a respectful, if not necessarily rapturous, reception in most towns, and most of them had found jobs quickly upon their return.²⁹ Karin Hausen has shown how war widows also successfully used a rhetoric of victimization and sacrifice to articulate their claims.³⁰

The potency of claims to victim status has been shown in diverse arenas. Greg Eghigian has recently attempted to “resuscitate the now somewhat unfashionable notion of ‘resentment’” as a category for understanding the Weimar years.³¹ He further argues that different groups (including the Central Association of German Invalids and Widows and the International League of Victims of War and Work) expressed

their values in a mythic narrative of injury and unredeemed suffering that bred a resentment for which something must be done. In all the versions of this myth, *Opfertum*—simultaneously connoting injury, victimhood, and sacrifice—was the linchpin . . . The rich, polyvalent trope of sacrifice provided a compelling heuristic by which perceived injuries and pains were able to be translated into a set of moral terms and claims.³²

Altogether, in the competition for limited resources during the Weimar Republic, representations of suffering and victimization held a powerful sway. Something about these stories of vulnerability and sacrifice spoke to Germans suffering from economic dislocation and a vague sense of humiliation stemming from the defeat and its consequences.³³

This emphasis on the suffering of the *Ostjuden* was quite different from the priorities that had previously driven German policy towards foreigners. Looking primarily at the Wilhelmine period, Jack Wertheimer contends that “the German approach to aliens was exploitative, not only did Germans not conceive of their homeland as a haven for the persecuted and needy, they evaluated foreigners solely on the basis of their utility.”³⁴ This utility argument is also used by other scholars such as Ulrich Herbert and Saskia Sassen.³⁵ Clearly, Wertheimer’s thesis is not borne out by the German response to the refugee crisis in the early Weimar Republic.³⁶ Those who supported the tolerance of foreigners in Germany did so not on the basis of utility, but on the grounds that they faced life-threatening danger. Those who opposed such tolerance also did not refer to the Jews and other refugees of non-German descent as not useful, rather they emphasized far more issues of deception and/or scarcity.

Yet, this emphasis on the suffering of Jews had its own problems. While Jews and other refugees might be tolerated so long as this sort of danger existed, they could not use this tolerance as a stepping-stone to actual participation in the German community, as the citizenship policies that I will discuss later make clear. In order for (most) German officials to tolerate these refugees, they needed to see them as weak. Indeed, the more an official defended *Ostjuden* and other immigrants, the more he was likely to emphasize their weakness. There was no room within German discourse on foreigners at this time to see immigrants as positive contributors to Germany. This emphasis on the weakness of the refugees,

especially the Jews, had complicated effects at a time when Germans were hyper-aware of their own weakness. It is difficult to find hard evidence to support this point, but one can imagine the complex of sympathy and resentment, identification and disavowal taking place as Germans looked at the refugees.

The logic of citizenship policy worked along quite different lines. Citizenship policy in all of the *Länder* oscillated between an emphasis on German descent and German cultural belonging. In my dissertation, I also make the argument that for Prussia, the state with by far the highest percentage of foreigners, cultural concerns tended to be accorded more weight than purely racial considerations. Regardless of which criterion was deemed more important, however, citizenship policy during this period was highly symbolic, one might even argue utopian, in nature. Citizenship, I argue, was about who, in an *ideal* world, *should* be included and *should* be public. Those who held to a notion of citizenship solely defined by descent and those who articulated a notion that was about a potentially acquired connection to the German nation were arguing about this ideal vision of who should constitute the German national community and what their connection to one another should be. In this debate about symbolism and ideals, questions of sacrifice and suffering, so important to the discussion of asylum, did not play a role.

The 1923 case of Aron Genkin, a Jewish Ukrainian doctor who intended to marry a German war widow, provides an example of this. Genkin wanted to become a German citizen in order to become licensed to practice medicine in Germany and thus better support his fiancée and her three children. The application was initially made in Thuringia and the Thuringian government was quickly advised by the Bavarians that they did not intend to support the application because Genkin belonged to a “racially and culturally foreign nation (*fremdstämmige und kulturfremde Nation*).”³⁷ Genkin’s fiancée, Maria Berenz, hearing of the possible rejection of his application, appealed directly to Ebert to intervene:

I have struggled most terribly for eight years [since the death of her husband in 1914 on the front] and I am both spiritually and physically at the end of my strength. Herr Dr. Genkin, a noble man who is respected by all who know him and a selfless friend to my children, has come and wants to help us, four victims of the war. . . . Shouldn’t the German state give this man citizenship so that he can fulfill the responsibilities that he has already taken upon himself with the engagement, and that he finds sacred? Here the state can also fulfill its sacred duty towards four war victims who would otherwise be doomed . . .³⁸

Despite Berenz's passionate appeal, there is no evidence that Ebert actually intervened. Instead, at the first vote in the Reichsrat, his citizenship application was denied by a vote of 5–4, with Prussia voting with the Bavarians against granting him citizenship. According to the Bavarian representative to the Reichsrat, the reason that the application was denied was that Genkin's stated intent of helping his wife and her family was noteworthy, but that these sorts of private interests had to be considered secondary to national concerns.³⁹ For the Bavarians at least, the link between the suffering of the Berenz family and the duties of the state that Berenz had tried to establish was unconvincing. Genkin's desire to help a German war widow, and the suffering of the Berenzes was secondary to the need to establish a German community solely comprised of those people who possessed the appropriate degree of German cultural capital.

Shortly afterwards, the Thuringian representative, with the support of Prussia, brought the case back to the Reichsrat. Berenz again wrote a letter, this time to the Thuringian representative to the Reichsrat in support of her fiancé's application. In this letter, Berenz changed her tactic. Instead of emphasizing the suffering of her family, she talked about how great a provider he had been, ending by noting "it is not Herr Dr. Genkin's fault that he is of Jewish descent. He has a very noble-minded disposition and is a true friend of Germany."⁴⁰ In this later vote, the decision was made that the fact that Genkin intended to support his wife and his family and had been deemed sufficiently worthy to be admitted to the exam to get a German medical license did actually make him worthy of being granted citizenship.⁴¹

What is noteworthy about this case is how Berenz's appeal based on the suffering of her family was unsuccessful. Rather, what appeared to have changed the mind of the Prussian representative was a decision on the part of other German authorities that Genkin was acceptable on his own terms. There was a disjuncture between what was convincing from the perspective of tolerance and asylum, namely the appeal to recognize the worthiness of an immigrant based on how much he or she had suffered, and what was convincing from the perspective of citizenship, namely that someone themselves possessed a "German character." Here, even the suffering of a German war widow and her three children was less important to the decision of whether to grant Genkin citizenship than a determination of his appropriate German character. In such a situation, there arose a disjuncture between the language of asylum and the language of belonging that left refugees in a Catch-22. Refugees were tolerated in Germany because of what they had suffered, but it was precisely this perception of weakness that meant that they would not be accepted as productive members of the German community and thus eligible for citizenship. Moreover, the rhetoric of Jewish weakness set up a danger-

ous competition between Jewish and German suffering in a climate of ever shriller rhetoric about Jewish predation.

Arendt's contention that Germany was gradually transformed into a police state because of its high percentage of stateless persons does not hold for the early Weimar Republic. There is little that can be recognized as totalitarian in the refugee and asylum policies of the early Weimar period. Refugees had not been entirely abandoned to the police, and a plethora of different voices articulated and enacted different policies for handling these refugees. National, regional, and local authorities operated within a complex and multi-tiered system in which many immigrants were tolerated, some were considered eligible for benefits and only a small fraction were deemed worthy of actual citizenship. German officials attempted to apply both a logic of national-cultural belonging, and a logic of asylum or safe haven to regulate their relationship with foreigners, and neither of these allowed them either a consistent policy or a stable sense of themselves. The combination of wide-open possibility and threat that characterizes this period in so many different arenas ended with a sense of frustration.

In some sense, then, I'd like to suggest that Arendt may have been right. The refugee crisis in the Weimar Republic was tied to the rise of fascism in that country. Not because of Germany's "gradual transformation into a police state" as Arendt supposes, but because of the frustration engendered by the Weimar failure to assimilate foreigners except as victims in need of protection. What needs to be remembered about Nazism was that it was explicitly an ideology about foreigners—Jews—who were burdening, infecting, and ultimately destroying the German *Volk*. Thus, in some sense, the history of foreigners in Germany is central to understanding the appeal of the Nazis. I believe it is significant that so many of the issues that disturbed Germans were successfully connected by the Nazis to images of foreign invasion and infestation. Nazi ideas about biological race offered clearer boundaries and easier criteria for determining who belonged and who did not than the complex conglomeration of race and culture used by Weimar officials. The divide between tolerance and belonging that was so central, and also so problematic, for the Weimar national and Prussian state was done away with after 1933. Moreover, the victim status of foreigners led to resentments in the later Weimar Republic as the German people found themselves suffering even more due to economic hardship, resentments upon which the fascists were ready and eager to capitalize.

Notes

¹ This paper is taken from a talk given at the German Historical Institute as part of the Fritz Stern Symposium on November 15, 2002.

² Michael Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 9.

³ To place this in a wider context, my dissertation is an attempt to understand the territorial crisis and the highly ambivalent relationship to national borders in Germany precipitated by these three events. To do so, I also look at *Ansiedlung Ost*, a group of German socialists who planned to settle in Southern Russia, the *Freikorps* paramilitary campaign and settlement plans in the Baltics, and the German response to Russian POW camps and the émigrés living in the so-called “Russian colony” in Berlin. Ari Sammartino, “Utopia and Exile: Migration and Territorial Crisis in Weimar Germany” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2003, forthcoming).

⁴ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1973), p. 277.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 280 & 286. As I will discuss in a moment, the story is more complicated than Arendt suggests, and at times her analysis of the phenomenon seems driven more by her, not unjustified, pessimism than some of the facts would warrant. For one, many of the refugees, especially political emigrés, such as the Russians, did not want to either repatriate or naturalize. Moreover, the right of asylum in the nineteenth century was never a legal right but more a question of custom. While the twentieth century did lead (or at least at times has led) to a restriction of asylum, it also marked the first time that asylum became a recognized legal right and the first time that there was international cooperation in terms of the regulation of that right. Nonetheless, Arendt’s basic point, namely that governments in the twentieth century were more cautious about asylees, and indeed of foreigners in general, than those in the previous century, does hold up.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 287–288.

⁹ Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). For another argument critical of Brubaker along these lines, see Dieter Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen: Die Nationalisierung der Staatsangehörigkeit vom Deutschen Bund bis zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001).

¹⁰ This discourse of belonging was quite different from contemporary discourses on citizenship, which sees citizenship within the context of integration. See, for example, the recent German debate about the citizenship law of 2000.

¹¹ Of these, Michael Marrus claims there were 2 million Poles, 2 million Russians and Ukrainians, and 1 million Germans. The rest of the 9.5 million figure was made up of Armenians and Hungarians and smaller numbers of other national groups. Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 51–52.

¹² Marrus, *The Unwanted*, p. 67. Generally the estimates of the size of the Russian community in Germany settle on a figure of 500,000. It is unclear if this number includes Russians of German or Jewish descent. Bettina Dodenhoeft, “*Laßt mich nach Rußland heim*”: *Russische Emigranten in Deutschland von 1918 bis 1945* (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin: Peter Lang, 1993), (Ph.D. diss., Hamburg, Univ. der Bundeswehr, 1992), p. 9.

¹³ Bundesarchiv—Berlin [henceforth: BArch] R 43 I/594, p. 76. Letter from the RMI to the Reichzkanzlei, January 21, 1923.

¹⁴ BArch R 1501/114049, p. 135. Letter from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungspolitik to the Reichsministerium des Innern, April 9, 1920.

¹⁵ Trude Maurer, *Ostjuden in Deutschland, 1918–1933* (Hamburg: Hans Christian Verlag, 1986), p. 65. About half of Maurer’s figure is made up of Jews who came to Germany because they were recruited as labor during World War I.

¹⁶ See, for example, BArch R 43 I/594, p. 3. Denkschrift from the Reichskommissar für Zivilgefangene und Flüchtlinge, October 30, 1920. BArch R 1501/114049, p. 19. A letter from

the Reichswanderungsamt to the Reichsministerium des Innern from February 8, 1920 provides the completely exaggerated number of one million *Ostjuden* that had immigrated to Germany.

¹⁷ BArch R 1501/114049, p. 13. This letter from the Zentral-Polizeistelle Osten, Frankfurt Oder to the Landesgrenzpolizei on February 5, 1920 provides one representative list.

¹⁸ BArch R 1501/118392, p. 15. Mention of this *Erlass* is made in a report of a meeting on May 17, 1919 at the Reichsministerium des Innerns about the recall of German troops from Kurland and Lithuania and the expected migration of the population there to the German Eastern border. References continued to be made to this *Erlass* and the need to close the border once and for all. See, for example, a letter from Carl Severing, the Prussian minister of the interior, to the presidents of local governments including the president of police in Berlin. In this letter, Severing makes clear that he wants both a better surveillance of the border and the railways and a more tightly enforced registration regulation. *Gemeines Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz* [henceforth: GStA], 1 HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 1814, Nr. 3, p. 207–208.

¹⁹ BArch R 1501/114061, p. 47. Minutes of a meeting at the Auswärtiges Amt on April 10, 1919.

²⁰ BArch R 1501/114049, p. 42. Letter from the PMI to the Zentralpolizeistelle Osten February 13, 1920.

²¹ BArch R 43 I/594, p. 19. Summary of the entry visas granted to Russian citizens during 1922.

²² BArch R 1501/114061, p. 47. Minutes of a meeting at the Auswärtiges Amt on April 10, 1919 regarding the expulsion of Jews.

²³ BArch R 1501/114049, p. 129. Explanation of the Prussian government regarding the deportation or internment of Eastern immigrants, February 26, 1920.

²⁴ GStA 1 HA, Rep. 77, Tit. 1814, Nr. 3, p. 190. Prussian *Erlass*, November 1, 1919.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.* At a meeting on the issue on December 10, 1920, this provision was harshly criticized. Letter from the Reichsminister des Innern to the Reichskanzler from February 7, 1920. BArch 1501/114048, Bl. 181. As a result, restrictions were sharpened with another Prussian *Erlass* from November 17, 1920 BArch 3901, Nr. 761. Nonetheless, even in this later document, it was stated that a “right to asylum” could not be denied in principle.

²⁷ Approximately 35,000 of the Polish forced laborers forced to work for Germany during the war were Jews. Maurer, p. 86.

²⁸ For more on the Stab-in-the-back myth, see Bernd Buchner, *Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und der Kampf um die polit. Symbole in der Weimarer Republik*, (Bonn: Dietz, 2001), pp. 196–201; Joachim Petzold, *Die Dolchstoßlegende. Eine Geschichtsfälschung im Dienst des deutschen Imperialismus und Militarismus*, (Berlin (Ost): Akademie-Verlag, 1963); Friedrich Freiherr Hiller von Gaertringen: “Dolchstoß’-Diskussion und ‘Dolchstoßlegende’ im Wandel vor vier Jahrzehnten” in *Geschichte und Gegenwartsbewusstsein. Historische Betrachtungen und Untersuchungen. Festschrift fuer Hans Rothfels zum 70.Geburtstag*, Waldemar Besson et al., eds., (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), pp. 122–160.

²⁹ Robert Whalen, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War, 1919–1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Richard Bessel, *Germany after the First World War* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914–1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

³⁰ Karin Hausen, “The German Nation’s Obligations to the Heroes’ Widows of World War I,” in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, eds. Margaret Higonet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel and Margaret Weitz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 126–140.

³¹ Greg Eghigian, “Injury, Fate, Resentment and Sacrifice in German Political Culture, 1914–1939,” in *Sacrifice and National Belonging in Twentieth-Century Germany*, eds. Greg Eghigian

and Matthew Paul Berg (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), p. 92. Eghigian takes his notion of resentment from Max Scheler, whom he quotes: "Revenge tends to be transformed into resentment the more it is directed against lasting situations which are felt to be 'injurious' but beyond one's control—in other words, the more the injury is experienced as destiny." Scheler, "The Meaning of Suffering," quoted in *Ibid.* For more on this theme, see Eghigian, *Making Security Social: Disability, Insurance and the Birth of the Social Entitlement State in Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), chapters 5–7, especially chapter 6.

³² Eghigian, "Injury, Fate, Resentment and Sacrifice," p. 105.

³³ The view that the defeat, occupation and economic crises led to resentments that were instrumental in the rise of the Nazi party is represented by Thomas Childres, *The Nazi Voter: The Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); Richard J. Evans and Dick Geary, eds., *The German Unemployed: Experiences and Consequences of Mass Unemployment from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Gerald D. Feldman, *The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics and Society in the German Inflation, 1914–1924* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). I do not myself maintain that these resentments were the only legacy of Weimar; indeed, as I have tried to show throughout this dissertation, I believe that these existed in a constant and complex relationship with potentialities (progressive, conservative, and radical) also unleashed by these events.

³⁴ Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 178.

³⁵ Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerbeschäftigung in Deutschland 1880 bis 1980: Saisonarbeiter, Zwangsarbeiter, Gastarbeiter* (Berlin, Bonn: Dietz, 1986), p. 74; Saskia Sassen, *Migranten, Siedler, Flüchtlinge. Von der Massenauswanderung zur Festung Europa* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996), p. 110–113. Implicit in this argument is the idea that if Germans could conceive of their homeland in these terms, then they would be better people and have a better relationship with foreigners.

³⁶ One thing to note here: the early Weimar Republic featured a decrease in the use of immigrant labor. Actually, there were fewer foreigners in Germany during this period, but there were more without a definable function. This demographic change partially explains the shift from a discourse of utility to one of asylum.

³⁷ Bayerische Hauptstaatsarchiv [henceforth: BayHStA] MA 100317. Letter from the Bavarian Interior Minister to the Thuringen Interior Minister, February 7, 1923. Emphasis in original. In the German system of the time, an applicant for citizenship was really applying to be a citizen in one federal state. Nonetheless, other federal states could raise objections to those applicants they felt undeserving of citizenship. If the two states could not resolve their differences, the case fell before the *Reichsrat* where each federal state had a vote and the majority decision determined the fate of the application.

³⁸ BayHStA, MA 100317. Letter from Maria Berenz to Ebert, March 9, 1923.

³⁹ BayHStA, MA 100317. Letter from the Bavarian Representative to the Reichsrat to the Bavarian Justice Minister, May 12, 1923.

⁴⁰ BayHStA, MA 100317. Letter from Maria Berenz to the Thuringian Representative to the Reichsrat, May 3, 1923.

⁴¹ BayHStA, MA 100317. Letter from the Bavarian Representative to the Reichsrat to the Bavarian Justice Minister, May 17, 1923.