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From Emigration to Immigration: The German Experience in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Klaus J. Bade

1. New Challenges and Forgotten Experiences

UNITED Germany has become more ethnically diverse and, to a certain extent, more “multicultural” with a growing minority of immigrants and temporary migrants living within its borders. There are labor migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe with restricted work permits, immigrants coming out of the former “guest worker” population, and ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe as well as various groups of asylum seekers and other refugees.¹

Facing migration problems is a new and threatening experience to many Germans. Contemporary public debate has largely chosen to ignore the fact that throughout German history the movement of people across borders and the consequent clash of cultures was not the exception but the norm. It has also been forgotten that many native inhabitants are descendants of foreigners who immigrated to Germany, and that millions of German emigrants were strangers in foreign countries, just as many foreigners today are strangers in the united Germany.

Another historical reminder that should be called back into public consciousness are the numerous “Little Germanies” in the transatlantic New World of the nineteenth century that have existed for two or three

This is a revised version of the opening address delivered at the first conference of the Joint German-American Project on Migration and Refugee Policies of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, held 23–27 March 1995 in Cambridge, Mass.

1. Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen and Georg Hansen, eds., *Ethnische Minderheiten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ein Lexikon* (Munich, 1995); cf. Berliner Institut für Vergleichende Sozialforschung, ed., *Handbuch ethnischer Minderheiten in Deutschland* vol. 1 (Berlin, 1991); Friedrich Heckmann, *Ethnische Minderheiten, Volk und Nation. Soziologie inter-ethnischer Beziehungen* (Stuttgart, 1992).

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generations, much as the “Little Istanbuls” and other ethnic communities in German cities do today. If Berlin is called today’s largest “Turkish city” outside of Turkey, it should be recalled that in the nineteenth century United States many more or less German towns and German city quarters could be found in addition to the predominantly German Midwest.

In the past, Germans abroad and foreigners in Germany have experienced all imaginable forms of cross-border migrations: emigration, immigration, and transit movements; labor migration of Germans across the German borders as well as the influx of foreign labor into Germany; refuge and forced migration of Germans into foreign countries and of foreigners to Germany, and of Germans as victims and as offenders within and outside German national borders. In addition to the movement of people across borders, German history has also seen the movement of borders across people. Finally, in recent German history, there have been enormous domestic migrations, often over large distances, which have made even former inlanders become strangers in Germany itself. This was true, e.g., for the long-distance migrations of the “Ruhr-Poles” and the “Ruhr-Masures” from Eastern Prussia to the coal and steel industries of the Prussian West as well as for the migration of refugees and expellees from the former German East after World War II.²

As the above shows, encounters of the majority with minorities and of native inhabitants with foreigners have been frequent and common in German history. It should be possible, therefore, to handle the respective issues and problems in a pragmatic, even in a calm manner. Some of these issues, however, carry the weight of tragedy. That is all the more true as German history has seen not only the migration of people across borders and of borders across people but also the exclusion of minorities, such as ethnic Poles, Jews, Sinti, and Roma within German borders. To this context belongs a development from the nationalistic and romantically (*völkisch-romantisch*) inspired dissociation of the “other” (*Fremde*) in the early nineteenth century, the ethno-nationalistic agitation against “alien-ness” (*Fremdartigkeit*) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the systematic racist destruction of the “culturally alien stock” (*Artfremde*) in Nazi Germany and German occupied Europe. The horrible end of this path casts its long-lasting shadow of mass crimes committed against ethnic, cultural, religious, and other minorities.³

A necessary condition for acquiring the capacity to tolerate the “foreign”

2. Klaus J. Bade, ed., *Deutsche im Ausland—Fremde in Deutschland: Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich, 1992); idem, *Homo Migrans: Wanderungen aus und nach Deutschland—Erfahrungen und Fragen* (Essen, 1994).

3. Lutz Hoffmann, *Das deutsche Volk und seine Feinde. Die völkische Droge—Aktualität und Entstehungsgeschichte* (Cologne, 1994).

is a positive relationship to one's "own," since feelings of positive collective social identity (we-ness) offer a sense of security. Therefore, in Germany, the historical relationship to one's own, scarred by the darkest chapter of German history, is in itself a burden. This is particularly relevant when criteria, quota, and other basic regulations of immigrant policies are debated.

The memory of the fact that in Nazi Germany and in German occupied Europe millions of Jews and other victims were deprived of their rights and were persecuted and murdered, complicates the discussion of minority issues, of quota regulations, and the inevitably resulting problems of inclusion and exclusion. The shadows of the past continue to darken the present when decision-making processes regarding potential immigrants' applications are compared in the public discussion with the "selection" at the ramps of Nazi concentration camps.

Nonetheless, Germany cannot avoid the creation of legislative and political structures to cope with the problems of immigration, integration, and minorities. The former country of emigration, as an unwilling immigration country today, has to deal more and more with problems that in former times were indeed more often caused by Germans abroad than they are today by foreigners in Germany.

2. From Transatlantic Emigration to Continental Immigration

Emigration has a long historical tradition for Germans. While it has not ceased even today, it is fading and becoming largely irrelevant, especially when compared with the much more frequent immigration from other regions. An early example of emigration from German-speaking regions includes the migration from the Rhine and Mosel areas to the Hungarian Kingdom in the mid-twelfth century. These migrants, called "*Siebenbürger Sachsen*" in Hungary (Transylvania), were followed by other groups of settlers in the eighteenth century, called "*Banater*" and "*Sathmarer Schwaben*" in their new world in Southeast Europe.

There were also German settlements in other central and southeastern European regions. For a long time, they were accorded special economic, legal, and cultural privileges, e.g., the settlements in Wolhynia, as well as those on the Crimean peninsula and in the Caucasus, all in the multi-ethnic tsarist Russia. Another significant settlement in Russia was at the Volga, where the Autonomous Soviet Republic of the Volga Germans was founded in 1924. In 1941, in response to Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union, Stalin ordered the destruction of this republic. The German settlers were deported to the eastern border of the Soviet Empire. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, millions of ethnic Germans from the east (*Aussiedler*)

and their descendants are, as they themselves and official German policies put it, returning to their ancestors' homeland in great numbers. This mass "re-migration," which began in the 1950s, changed into a continental mass immigration in the late 1980s.⁴

It was not until the 1830s that the flow of continental emigration from Germany to the East was surpassed by the transatlantic mass emigration to the West, with ninety percent of the latter directed to the United States. Other, less important, destinations of transatlantic emigration from Germany were Canada, Brazil, Argentina, and Australia.

Estimates of the number of Germans who may have immigrated during the colonial period range from about 65,000 to about 100,000. At the time of the American Revolution, approximately 225,000 German-Americans made up about 8 to 9 percent of the total population of the colonies and, according to the first U.S. census in 1790, about a twelfth of the U.S. population was then of German descent.⁵

The primarily religiously oriented group migrations leading to community settlements were without doubt of significance in the German emigration to North America during the colonial era. Over-interpretation of religious motives should, however, be avoided: "The motives for emigration were always complex, economic and social problems were always important, and often decisive." In fact, growing numbers of emigrants without any apparent religious motivation or even any group membership had already found their way to the New World in the eighteenth century. That was above all true of those for whom the "Redemptioners" system, which can be traced from 1728 through the American Revolution and into the 1820s, opened the way across the Atlantic. According to reliable estimates, a half to two-thirds of the German immigrants to British North America were "Redemptioners." There were even earlier cases of mass migration leading thousands of Germans to North America in the eighteenth century (1709, 1749 to 1752, 1757, 1759, 1782). Apart from the rapid increase in the number of emigrants to about 20,000 in 1816 to 17, as a result of a poor harvest and a famine, numbers had remained relatively low until the mid-1830s.⁶ It

4. Lothar Dralle, *Die Deutschen in Ostmittel- und Osteuropa. Ein Jahrtausend europäischer Geschichte* (Darmstadt, 1991); Detlef Brandes, "Die Deutschen in Russland und der Sowjetunion," in *Deutsche im Ausland—Fremde in Deutschland*, ed. Klaus J. Bade, 85–134.

5. Wolfgang Helbig, Walter D. Kamphoefner, and Ulrike Sommer, eds., *Briefe aus Amerika. Deutsche Auswanderer schreiben aus der Neuen Welt, 1830–1930* (Munich, 1988), 11; Günter Moltmann, "300 Years of German Emigration to North America," in *Germans to America: 300 Years of Immigration, 1683–1983*, ed. idem (Stuttgart, 1982), 9.

6. See Günter Moltmann, ed., *Aufbruch nach Amerika. Friedrich List und die Auswanderung aus Baden und Württemberg 1816/17. Dokumentation einer sozialen Bewegung* (Tübingen, 1979); cf. Harald Focke, "Friedrich List und die südwestdeutsche Amerikaauswanderung 1817–1846," in *Deutsche Amerikaauswanderung im 19. Jahrhundert. Sozialgeschichtliche Beiträge*, ed. Günter Moltmann (Stuttgart, 1976), 63–100.

was not until the first half of the nineteenth century that this level was to any great extent exceeded.⁷

From 1816 to 1914, about 5.5 million Germans emigrated to the United States, followed, since 1914, by another 1.5 million German emigrants. From 1820 to 1860, the German-born population formed the second largest group of immigrants (30 percent), after the Irish, and from 1861 to 1890 Germans represented the largest immigrant group in the United States. Overall, since 1820 Germans have accounted for about fifteen percent of European immigration, making them the largest group of European immigrants. According to a survey conducted in 1979, Germany is the country in which the greatest number of US-Americans believe to have their family roots: about 26 percent of the Americans that were polled believed that they could trace at least some of their ancestors back to Germany. Today, transatlantic nostalgia characterizes the expanding business of the "routes to the roots" on both sides of the Atlantic. Recently, considerable sums of private and public money have been invested in this business on the German side.

Transatlantic emigration from nineteenth-century Germany was primarily a socioeconomic mass movement composed of small groups, families, and later to an increasing extent, of individual migrants. This pattern differed from the previous transatlantic emigration, which was dominated by groups leaving for religious reasons or hoping to build utopian, early socialist, or communist communities. The traces of these groups, however, faded already in the first half of the nineteenth century with the rising mass movement, which characterized transatlantic emigration in the second half of the century. During this period, and particularly in the last third of the nineteenth century, conditions of transatlantic migration changed: travel on steamships had become more bearable, more frequent, and less expensive. At the same time, the extension of railway networks made the trip to the port of exit and the continuation of the journey from the seaports within the country of immigration easier and faster. Furthermore, increasing transatlantic communication as well as migration traditions formed by the mass movement were supporting factors in many emigration areas. Letters from emigrants, prepaid tickets, and chain migrations were helpful factors to ease decisions to emigrate.

The most important demographic and economic factors leading to the

7. Helbich et al., eds., *Briefe aus Amerika*, 29 (quotation), 32; Moltmann, *300 Years*, 10; Günter Moltmann, "The Migration of German Redemptioners to North America, 1720–1820," in *Colonialism and Migration. Indentured Labour before and after Slavery*, ed. Pieter C. Emmer (Dordrecht, 1986), 105–22; cf. Wolfgang von Hippel, *Auswanderung aus Südwest-deutschland. Studien zur württembergischen Auswanderungspolitik im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1984), 35ff., 41, 132; Hans Fenske, "International Migration: Germany in the 18th Century," *Central European History* 13, no. 4 (1980): 332–47.

transatlantic mass emigration from nineteenth-century Germany were the disproportion between population growth and a lack of sufficient labor opportunities. The cause of this disproportion was the crucial transition from an agrarian to an industrial society. The German dream of “America” encompassed a broad variety of hopes, expectations, and counter images of the “New World” compared to the old one in Europe. The primary motives for migration remained, however, economic and social. Using today’s terminology, it can be said that most German emigrants during the transatlantic mass emigration of the nineteenth century were “economic refugees” (*Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge*) in the true sense of the phrase.

After the sharp rise in emigration figures between the mid-1830s and the mid-1840s, transatlantic emigration can be characterized as a “proletarian mass migration.”⁸ As a mass movement, it must be viewed against a background of population growth, profound changes in the social institutions, and a rapid economic transformation. Hence, the million-fold emigration from nineteenth-century Germany served to relieve widespread social tensions in the home country, with the effect of exporting social problems.⁹

This became particularly evident during the first emigration wave (1846 to 1857). The latter was initiated by Germany’s last preindustrial crisis of the disastrous *type ancien* (E. Labrousse) in 1846 to 1847, striking agriculture as well as the crafts.¹⁰ This crisis pushed the emigration curve up above the level of the revolutionary period to that of 1852 (176,402). From there, figures rose sharply to the 1854 peak of 239,246, when emigration increasingly took on the nature of a mass flight to the New World. The mass movement lowered the threshold of individual decision-making and developed its own momentum (“emigration fever”). Between the last crisis of the *type ancien* and the start of the “first world economic crisis” (H. Rosenberg) in 1857 to 1859, nearly 1.3 million Germans emigrated overseas—more than half a million of them moving between 1854 and 1857 alone.¹¹ The defeat of the 1848/49 revolution and the subsequent period of political reaction reinforced the tendency to emigrate, but with the exception of

8. Imre Ferenczi, “Proletarian Mass Migrations, 19th and 20th Centuries” in *International Migrations*, vol. 1, *Statistics*, ed. Walter F. Willcox (New York, 1929, repr. 1976), 81ff.

9. Hans Fenske, “Die deutsche Auswanderung in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Öffentliche Meinung und amtliche Politik,” *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 24 (1973): 221–36; Christine Hansen, “Die deutsche Auswanderung im 19. Jahrhundert—ein Mittel zur Lösung sozialer und sozialpolitischer Probleme?,” in *Deutsche Amerikaauswanderung*, ed. Moltmann, 8–61; Michael Kuckhoff, “Die Auswanderungsdiskussion während der Revolution von 1848/49,” in *Deutsche Amerikaauswanderung*, ed. Moltmann, 102–45.

10. Ernest Labrousse, *Esquisse du mouvement des prix et des revenus en France au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1932); idem., *La crise de l’économie à la fin de l’ancien régime et au début de la révolution* (Paris, 1943); cf. Wilhelm Abel, *Massenarmut und Hungerkrisen im vorindustriellen Europa. Versuch einer Synopsis* (Hamburg, 1974), 302–96.

11. Hans Rosenberg, *Die Weltwirtschaftskrise 1857–1859*, 2d ed. (Göttingen, 1974).

the small group of Forty-Eighters, emigration for purely political reasons did not increase.¹²

The outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 led to a short-term congestion of the emigration stream, but by 1864, before the end of the war, the second emigration wave began to swell. During the economic recession from 1873 to 1879, which equally affected both the German and the American economies, emigration figures again fell sharply. Immediately after the end of the recession, the third and largest emigration wave of the nineteenth century started abruptly in 1880, involving almost 1.8 million emigrants until the American economic crisis in 1893, which effectively ended the last emigration wave from nineteenth-century Germany.

All in all, the "Exodus to America" was a flight from the penurious social circumstances of the Old World, sustained by dreams of liberty, but above all by the hope for better economic and social living conditions in the New World. Many emigrants crossed the Atlantic hoping to regain their lost economic basis, to realize dreams that the Old World could not fulfill or even to "export" overseas the economic basis of livelihood that was threatened at home. This was true for many farm laborers and sons of farmers not in line to inherit their father's land, who hoped to become independent farmers in the United States. But in many cases, particularly in the last third of the nineteenth century, they ended up as factory workers instead. This was often a painful economic step into modern economy and society, and in many cases the result of emigration was precisely what the newcomers had hoped to avoid by leaving their land. The emigrants' expectations for their new lives did not always match the realities of the New World.

The greatest mass movement crossed the Atlantic during the five decades from 1846 to 1893 with more than 100,000 emigrants in the 1850s and more than 200,000 emigrants per year in the 1880s. Between 1880 and 1893 there were still approximately 1.8 million emigrants heading overseas. After that, the secular mass emigration from nineteenth century Germany declined as demographic pressure was more and more absorbed by the increasing employment opportunities at home on the industrial labor market. The boom period that started in the mid-1890s, in spite of two recessions, lasted until the eve of World War I, replacing transatlantic emigration to

12. Adolf Eduard Zucker, ed., *The Forty-Eighters. Political Refugees of the German Revolution of 1848* (New York, 1950); Carl F. Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution. The German Forty-Eighters in America* (Philadelphia, 1952); Eitel Wolf Dobert, *Deutsche Demokraten in Amerika. Die Achtundvierziger und ihre Schriften* (Göttingen, 1958); Walter D. Kamphoefner, "Dreissiger and Forty-Eighters: The Political Influence of Two Generations of German Political Exiles," in *Germany and America. Essays on Problems of International Relations and Immigrations*, ed. Hans L. Trefousse (New York, 1980), 89–102.

a certain degree with the increasing streams of internal migration from rural to urban-industrial areas.

A new gigantic wave of emigration was expected to start from Germany after World War I and particularly after the treaty of Versailles. However, German emigration in 1919 and 1920 was of no significance. After the gradual removal of barriers to emigration that had been erected due to the war, migration increased considerably but reached a level comparable to the "emigration waves" of the nineteenth century only in 1923. During the period of industrial stabilization in the mid-1920s emigration slowly declined. At the beginning of the world economic crisis, the Great Depression, emigration stopped abruptly, and did not resume until the flight of hundreds of thousands from Nazi Germany after 1933 because of political and racist persecution.

This was a new movement that can by no means be compared to the German transatlantic emigration during the preceding one hundred years.¹³ Nazi barbarity was the reason for an exceptional mass flight from the German-speaking regions. Even today the extent of this flight can only be estimated, because considerable numbers of emigrants crossed the borders illegally or disguised themselves as travelers without leaving traces in the data of emigration statistics. In any case, the total number of refugees from German-speaking countries to other European countries or overseas from 1933 to 1945 is estimated to be well over half a million; the number of emigrants of Jewish origin alone reached more than 500,000.

Emigration from German-speaking countries during the Nazi period can be traced to nearly eighty countries of destination all over the world. Countries bordering Germany were mainly transit countries until the German war machine broke through their borders. The United States was the last and most important country of refuge, absorbing about 48 percent of the emigrants. From 1933 to 1941, the year in which the USA entered World War II, a total of 104,098 Germans and Austrians of which more than 80 percent were Jews emigrated to the USA. Roughly half of these, however, did not arrive in the USA until 1938 to 1941, since most fled first into surrounding European countries and continued their flight from there to the States as the threat of German expansion grew during the war. For many of them, especially for the Jewish emigrants, the flight into exile and emigration was a salvation from the imminent threat to their lives.¹⁴

13. Klaus J. Bade, "Die deutsche überseeische Massenauswanderung im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert: Bestimmungsfaktoren und Entwicklungsbedingungen," in *Auswanderer—Wanderarbeiter—Gastarbeiter: Bevölkerung, Arbeitsmarkt und Wanderung in Deutschland seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols., ed. idem. (Ostfildern, 1986), 1:259–99; Reinhard R. Doerries, "German Transatlantic Migration from the Early 19th Century to the Outbreak of World War II," in *Population, Labour and Migration in 19th and 20th Century Germany*, ed. Klaus J. Bade (Oxford, 1987), 115–34.

14. Werner Röder and Herbert A. Strauss, eds., *Internationales Biographisches Handbuch*

After World War II a gigantic mass emigration from Germany overpopulated with refugees and economically ruined was once again anticipated. Emigration during the immediate postwar years, however, was only possible for a very limited number of people and for special reasons. Thereafter, the transatlantic movement, although it was permitted once again, did not reach the proportions which initially had been expected. In 1948 approximately 27,400 emigrants left Germany. In 1952 the rate reached the postwar peak with approximately 90,000 emigrants, and in 1956 there were 82,000 Germans heading overseas. After that the numbers declined consistently, and in 1960, the first year of full employment, about 47,700 people emigrated from Germany. Among the countries of destination, the United States was still the most popular, followed by Canada, Australia, and Brazil.

Expellees and refugees made up a high contingent of the emigration from postwar Germany: in 1956, they represented 17.5 percent of the overall residential population of West Germany, yet they made up 37 percent of overseas migrants for that year. As their integration into the Federal Republic progressed, they accounted for a decreasing fraction of the total overseas emigration.¹⁵

Due to the increasing development of international labor markets, "emigration" became a "nineteenth-century concept" for most of the Germans who went abroad in the 1960s. Today only a small percentage of the Germans leaving the country annually are emigrants in the nineteenth-century sense of leaving without any intention of permanent return. The traditional understanding of emigration as a permanent departure from one's country has been replaced by modern patterns of seeking education and training in other countries, working for German companies abroad, or labor migration for an indefinite period of time. All of these are temporary migrations which only sometimes, due to long-term residence abroad, turn into permanent emigration.

As the above figures show, since the late nineteenth century, transatlantic emigration from Germany has decreased while continental labor immigration into Germany has increased: at the end of the nineteenth century, the secular demographic and economic crisis caused by the disproportional growth of both population and labor force came to an end. During the rapid industrial growth of the two decades before World War I, labor shortage replaced the surplus of labor, which previously had been the

der deutschsprachigen Emigration nach 1933/International Biographical Dictionary of Central European Emigrés 1933–1945, 3 vols. (Munich, 1980–1983); Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Das Exil der kleinen Leute: Alltagserfahrungen deutscher Juden in der Emigration* (Munich, 1991).

15. Siegfried Bethlehem, *Heimatvertreibung, DDR-Flucht, Gastarbeiterzuwanderung. Wanderungsströme und Wanderungspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1982), 205–9.

strongest demographic and economic motivation for transatlantic emigration.

For this reason, since the 1890s the continental immigration into Germany and particularly into Prussia, now became a mass movement. As shown above, from 1880 until 1893 there were 1.8 million Germans leaving their country; by 1913, however, there were already 1.2 million "foreign migrant workers" (*ausländische Wanderarbeiter*) in the German Reich. In Prussia, Poles from central Poland, at that time part of Russia (as well as Poles and Ruthenians from Austrian Galicia), and Italians formed the main contingent of the labor force migrating into Germany.¹⁶

In Prussia in the 1880s and early 1890s, economic and political interests concerning the "question of migrating labor" came in conflict with one another. Employers, especially in the Prussian East, were interested in "willing and cheap" (*willig und billig*) foreign labor from across the eastern borders, while the Prussian government was afraid of political destabilization in the Polish-populated border regions of the Prussian East, where the national-revolutionary dream of a revival of the Polish state could not be suppressed. The basic idea of the "Prussian Defense Policy" (*Preussische Abwehrpolitik*) was therefore to fight against the "Polonization of the East" (Max Weber) that would result from immigration across Germany's eastern borders.

The conflict between economic and political interests was solved by the implementation of a system of compulsory rotation limiting labor immigration to seasonal employment. The result was a structure similar to a temperature curve showing the annual fluctuation of labor migration across the eastern borders to Prussia and back to the East: rapid rise in springtime, summit during the height of the summer season, and sharp decline at the beginning of the restrictive period in the winter. Foreign workers from the East were welcomed in spring; but they had to leave the Prussian territory before Christmas to avoid deportation. These problems scarcely concerned rural employers. Industrial and commercial employers, however, were struggling, largely in vain, to get special permission to employ Polish labor without seasonal limitations.¹⁷

In the central and western provinces of Prussia, with the exception of

16. Klaus J. Bade, "German Emigration to the United States and Continental Immigration to Germany, 1879–1979," *Central European History* 13, no. 4 (1980): 348–77.

17. Klaus J. Bade, "Politik und Ökonomie der Ausländerbeschäftigung im preussischen Osten: Die Internationalisierung des Arbeitsmarktes im 'Rahmen der preussischen Abwehrpolitik,'" in *Preussen im Rückblick*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Puhle and Hans-Ulrich Wehler (Göttingen, 1980), 273–99; idem, "'Preussengänger' und 'Abwehrpolitik': Ausländerbeschäftigung, Ausländerpolitik und Ausländerkontrolle auf dem Arbeitsmarkt in Preussen vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 24 (1984): 91–162; idem, ed., "Arbeiterstatistik zur Ausländerkontrolle: Die 'Nachweisungen' der preussischen Landräte über den 'Zugang, Abgang und Bestand der ausländischen Arbeiter im preussischen Staate' 1906–1914," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 24 (1984): 163–283.

agricultural work, strictly controlled employment prohibition was imposed on Poles from abroad in order to avoid a second ethno-nationalist fear: the “polonization of the West” (*Polonisierung des Westens*): In the Prussian West, dominated by coal and steel industries, there was a growing fear that Polish immigrants could join the Prussian “Ruhr-Poles.” The latter were ethnic Poles mostly from the Prussian East. Since the “Ruhr-Poles” were Prussian citizens and not foreigners, they could not be prevented from their internal east-to-west migration, but their rights as citizens were restricted in many ways.¹⁸

The “Prussian defense policy” was aimed only at the Polish majority of labor migrants in the east of Prussia. Nevertheless, in Prussia as well as in the German federal states that adopted the Prussian concept, all other foreign labor migrants were subject to this control system. While migrations of Poles from abroad were strictly regulated by this system, migrations of other foreign labor were only observed but not regulated. Italian labor migrants, e.g., were free to move within the labor market even in the Prussian Ruhr area, but their movements, too, fluctuated considerably.¹⁹

In the Weimar Republic, the admission of foreigners no longer depended on the security principles of the “Prussian defense policy,” but rather on the economic ratio of labor market policy: foreign laborers were only admitted if their employers could prove that there were no German workers available for the respective work. This new system, called “license requirement” (*Genehmigungspflicht*), was based on the model of “public labor administration” (*öffentliche Arbeitsverwaltung*) developed during World War I. The employment of foreign labor in the Weimar Republic remained low and in pre-World War II Germany increased only slowly until 1938. This was mainly due to the restrictive foreign exchange policies impeding the transfer of wages in Nazi Germany.²⁰

After the outbreak of World War II, foreign labor was replaced by the slavery of millions of deported “foreign workers” (*Fremdarbeiter*) and prisoners of war, a method called the “deployment of foreigners” (*Ausländereinsatz*) in the Nazi war economy. After the war, the victims accounted for the majority of the “Displaced Persons,” amounting to about 12 million people in occupied Germany. One decade later, in the middle of the 1950s, the

18. Christoph Klessmann, *Polnische Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet. Soziale Integration und nationale Subkultur einer Minderheit in der deutschen Industriegesellschaft* (Göttingen, 1978).

19. René Del Fabbro, *Transalpini. Italienische Arbeitswanderung nach Süddeutschland im Kaiserreich 1870/71–1918* (Studien zur Historischen Migrationsforschung, vol. 2, Osnabrück, 1996); Adolf Wennemann, *Die Italiener im Rheinland und Westfalen des späten 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts* (Schriften des Instituts für Migrationsforschung und Interkulturelle Studien, vol. 2, Osnabrück, 1996).

20. Klaus J. Bade, “Arbeitsmarkt, Bevölkerung und Wanderung in der Weimarer Republik,” in *Die Weimarer Republik—Belagerte Civitas*, ed. Michael Stürmer (Königstein im Taunus, 1980), 160–87.

hiring of “guest workers” (*Gastarbeiter*) opened a new chapter of employment of foreigners in Germany, which, to some extent, adopted the traditions of the Weimar Republic.²¹

3. Public Discussion and National Policies

Since transatlantic emigration had become a social mass movement in the first half of the nineteenth century, the public and governmental activities concerning the emigration question were shaped by two main issues: on the one hand, humanitarian and charitable motives, and on the other, ideological and manipulative intentions. Both perspectives were highly complex with often overlapping arguments. The public discussion of these issues climaxed in the 1840s and 1880s.

Part of the debate regarding humanity and charity in the middle of the century²² included private counselling efforts for prospective emigrants and appeals for governmental protection of the emigrants. There were numerous private emigration clubs in the 1830s and 1840s, whose efforts often failed with disastrous consequences for the emigrants, and a broad public debate on emigration questions. The emigration law acknowledged by the Frankfurt National Assembly in 1849 represented the climax of the endeavors to gain governmental commitment. This law was to create a central migration office with the status of a national ministry. The law aimed at achieving unlimited freedom of emigration, protection for emigrants and Germans abroad, elimination of non-licensed migration agents, and inspection of the emigrants' ships. The revolution failed and the emigration law as well as the emigration office remained revolutionary dreams.²³

The ideological and manipulative discussion of migration issues at mid-century was informed by efforts to influence, control, “organize,” i.e., to take advantage of migration especially for socioeconomic purposes. Criticisms pointed to the cultural “bleeding” (*Aderlass*), the loss of human capital, and to persons avoiding conscription, while simultaneously, emigration was favored as a means to alleviate social problems: partly in the sense of an “export” of poor people and criminals. More important in this context was the idea of using transatlantic emigration as a “social safety valve” against revolutionary elements. This idea became a central focus of the emigration debate throughout the nineteenth century, although it never led to regular public programs.²⁴

21. Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerbeschäftigung in Deutschland 1880–1980: Saisonarbeiter—Zwangsarbeiter—Gastarbeiter* (Berlin, 1986), 120–236.

22. Fenske, *Die deutsche Auswanderung*, 221–36.

23. Michael Kuckhoff, “Die Auswanderungsdiskussion während der Revolution von 1848/49,” in *Deutsche Amerikauswanderung*, ed. Moltmann, 102–45.

24. Christine Hansen, “Die deutsche Auswanderung im 19. Jahrhundert—ein Mittel zur

Research into the degree to which emigration actually may have served these functions has only begun. For many emigrants their departure was a manner of nonviolent social protest against the living conditions in their homeland. Suppose for a moment that millions of Germans, in fact, had not had the opportunity to emigrate in the nineteenth century, and that the majority of those who stayed had not had the chance to consider the dream of the "New World" in America as a real and viable alternative. Perhaps then, the expectation of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, that the lost political revolution of 1848/49 would be followed by a successful social revolution, might not have turned out to be simply a false projection.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the discussion of emigration reached another plateau as the question about colonial expansion arose in the late 1870s and early 1880s. The public debate was provoked anew in 1879 by the propaganda pamphlet "Does Germany Need Colonies?" written by Friedrich Fabri, the director of the Rhenish Missionary Society and the leading German expansion publicist. Partly following the ideas of Wakefield and Torrens and taking up again points of the mid-century public debate, Fabri's book concentrated on questions of population and emigration. His argument was reinforced by the renewed vigor of transatlantic emigration in the early 1880s. The public debate stimulated by Fabri's book and the following publications by other authors combined nationalistic visions and ethnocultural ideas with economic calculations and social imperialist strategies.²⁵

During the crisis-prone and hectic transition from an agricultural to an industrial society, emigration was still considered to be a "sociopolitical necessity" (*sozialpolitische Notwendigkeit*) in order to reduce the danger of a social revolution. However, there was the simultaneous desire to preserve the "Germanness" (*Deutschtum*) of the immigrants and to avoid the loss of human capital, especially to the competing power of the US economy on the world market. Therefore the emigration was to be "directed" from North to South America or to the German colonies still to be acquired. This was justified through ideological theorems of ethnocultural "amalgamation" and "resistance": there was fear that German emigrants would be quickly absorbed into the civilization and economy of the New World due to the "cultural relationship" of the German and North American civilizations and due to the superiority and attractiveness of the New

Lösung sozialer und sozialpolitischer Probleme?," in *Deutsche Amerikaauswanderung*, ed. Moltmann, 8–61; Günther Moltmann, "Auswanderung als Revolutionersatz?," in *Die Deutschen und die Revolution*, ed. Michael Salewski (Göttingen, 1984), 272–97.

25. Friedrich Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien? Eine politisch-ökonomische Betrachtung* (Gotha, 1879, 3rd ed. 1884); cf. here and next: Klaus J. Bade, *Friedrich Fabri und der Imperialismus in der Bismarckzeit: Revolution—Depression—Expansion* (Freiburg, 1975).

World's economy. By directing immigrants to South America which, it was suggested, was culturally and economically "inferior," and to the German colonies, it was hoped that the emigrants would maintain their "Germanness," remaining attached to their home country's culture as well as to its economy. This would not only support the "Germanness" of the settlers, but it would also improve the export of the "mother country," by creating new markets linked to ethnocultural bonds of loyalty and excluding foreign competition. These ambitions, it was hoped, would turn the deplorable ethnocultural and economic "disadvantages" of the "sociopolitically necessary" emigration into "advantages" for the Reich. Finally, it was believed, emigration would become unnecessary due to the economic growth at home that would follow the opening of new overseas markets.²⁶

All these plans and hopes remained unfulfilled. On the one hand, the propaganda for establishing "German" districts had a somewhat negative influence on the attitudes of South American countries toward immigration from Germany: in Brazil, an informal German state within the Brazilian state was regarded with suspicion, e.g., advancements in favor of the German immigrants were temporarily stopped while other groups of immigrants, especially Italians, were steered into the German settlement areas.²⁷ On the other hand, emigration on the whole could not be controlled or even "directed." Finally, the "Protectorates" (*Schutzgebiete*) of the German Colonial Empire in Africa and the Pacific region founded in 1884–85 and lost during World War I, were absolutely unsuited for mass immigration. Moreover, already in the early 1890s, German transatlantic emigration as a social mass movement came to an end.²⁸

As had been the case in the public debate of the 1840s, the discussion on emigration during the late 1870s and the early 1880s again called for migration legislation. However the mass movement was mostly left to itself: in the USA restrictive quota legislation had as yet not been passed and in Germany, since the early nineteenth century, there had been no further state restrictions imposed on emigration. The migration legislation of the German states was liberal, and as mentioned above, their migration policies—as far as they had them—were included with the idea of a transatlantic export of "social problems."

26. Bade, *Fabri*, 80–99, 354–60.

27. Frederick C. Luebke, *Germans in Brazil. A Comparative History of Cultural Conflict During World War I* (Baton Rouge, 1987), 1–82.

28. Klaus J. Bade, "Das Kaiserreich als Kolonialmacht. Ideologische Projektionen und historische Erfahrung," in *Die deutsche Frage im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Josef Becker and Andreas Hillgruber (Munich, 1983), 91–108; cf. idem, "Die 'zweite Reichsgründung' in Übersee: Imperiale Visionen, Kolonialbewegung und Kolonialpolitik in der Bismarckzeit," in *Die Herausforderung des europäischen Staatensystems: Nationale Ideologie und staatliches Interesse zwischen Restauration und Imperialismus*, ed. Adolf M. Birke and Günther Heydemann (Göttingen, 1989), 183–215.

Actually, a “German” emigration legislation as such could not have been enacted before the founding of the German Reich. The protection of the emigrants formed an exception: shocking accounts about disastrous conditions on board the emigration ships led to the appointment of a “Federal Commissioner (later on Reich Commissioner) for Emigration Affairs” (*Bundes-/Reichskommissar für das Auswanderungswesen*) in 1869. His duty was to control the emigration and particularly to inspect the emigrants’ ships in Hamburg and Bremen, to report grievances, and to ask local authorities for corrective measures. Apart from that, governmental involvement in emigration questions was limited to various internal regulations issued by individual German states. These rules were designed especially to control foreign emigration agents and to avoid emigration of persons dodging military service.²⁹

The Constitution of the German Reich of 1871 (art. 4 no. 1) conferred the responsibility for emigration issues onto the Reich itself. However, during the early years of the empire Bismarck and the agrarian-conservative political elite in the German Reich refused to consider an emigration law. This seems very odd given the general shift from liberalism to protectionism and state intervention, e.g., in the forms of welfare legislation, protective duties against foreign trade competition, and overseas protectorates. Nevertheless, the belief was that a legislative pursuit of emigration issues would mean official acknowledgment of the subject and even support for a mass phenomenon unpopular especially among agrarian employers. This was true particularly in the Prussian East, for the predominant contingent of the mass emigration of the 1880s came from the largely agrarian north-east regions of the Reich, where there was already a growing shortage of labor.

More than a quarter of a century after the foundation of the German Empire, the legislative responsibility of the Reich established in 1871 was, in fact, applied to questions of emigration. The first “Reich Emigration Law” (*Reichsauswanderungsgesetz*) became effective in 1897, when mass emigration from nineteenth-century Germany had already been a thing of the past for several years. Consequently, the law concentrated largely on the protection of German emigrants and contained only a few indirect possibilities to “control” emigration by consulting emigrants and granting licenses to emigration agencies and shipping lines.³⁰

29. Cf. e.g. von Hippel, *Auswanderung aus Südwestdeutschland*; Ingrid Schöberl, *Amerikanische Einwandererwerbung in Deutschland 1845–1914* (Stuttgart, 1990); Agnes Bretting and Hartmut Bickelmann, *Auswanderungsagenturen und Auswanderungsvereine im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1991). An exception was the Prussian regulation of 1859 (von der Heydt’sches Reskript) against emigration to Brazil.

30. In 1902, a “Central Enquiry Office for Emigrants” was opened to give advice to emigrants. It was, however, supervised by the Chancellor of the Empire, was not a governmental office but assigned instead to the German Colonial Society. This was an expression of the

While there was a clear lack of interest of the national state toward emigration questions, there had been, as already mentioned, from the beginning a strong commitment to continental immigration, which was subject to the policies of the individual German federal states. This interest was of Prussian origin as the strongest contingents of the continental immigration were coming across the eastern Prussian borders. In spite of many differences of opinion at the governmental level and in the legislation and administration of the individual German states, the general intentions and tendencies regarding the questions of transnational migration were twofold: to protect German transatlantic emigration and to protect Germany *from* continental immigration.

As discussed by Rogers Brubaker,³¹ this matter can be related to the path from ethnocultural to ethnonational self-consciousness, and the consequent strengthening of the *jus sanguinis* (the principle of ethnic heritage) tradition, codified in the citizenship law of 1913. The Prussian-German state of the nineteenth century already established the general validity of *jus sanguinis*, and while ethnonational intentions first grew gradually, since the late nineteenth century they expanded rapidly in accordance with the principle of *jus sanguinis*. *Jus sanguinis* placed the principles of nation and national community above those of civil rights and republic, in strict opposition to the principle of territory (*jus soli*) according to the French republican idea. The German understanding of citizenship, as expressed in the law of 1913, bound civil rights to the principle of ethnic descent. At the same time, the law of 1913 aimed to prolong German citizenship for German emigrants and to limit acquisition of German citizenship by foreigners to exceptional cases.³²

During World War I, for the first time there were thoughts of a migration office to deal with the problems of transnational migration: for enormous migration movements were expected for the period after the war. In addition to continental labor immigration, strong movements of transnational emigration as well as of continental re-migration were anticipated. In particular, a heavy influx of re-migration of Russian-Germans was expected, as a result of the laws enforcing the liquidation of German property in Russia which had already led to the ruin and expulsion of approximately 200,000 colonists from Wolhynia in 1915/16. In 1919, these considerations

vain hope that at least part of the stream of overseas emigration might be branched off toward the colonies. Cf. Ralph Langbein and Wiebke Henning, "Staat und Auswanderung im 19. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 39, no. 3 (1989): 292–301.

31. Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass, 1992), German edition: *Staats-Bürger. Deutschland und Frankreich im historischen Vergleich* (Hamburg, 1994).

32. Brubaker, *Citizenship*, 114–37.

led to the foundation of the Reich Office for German Immigration, Re-Migration, and Emigration (Reichsamt für deutsche Einwanderung, Rückwanderung und Auswanderung), officially called Reich Migration Office (Reichswanderungsamt).³³

The transnational movements during the immediate postwar period, however, proved to be of less volume and long-term continuity than expected. Economic measures to consolidate the national budget meant, therefore, that the new Reich Migration Office was reduced to a "Reich Emigration Agency" (Reichsstelle für das Auswanderungswesen). The Agency offered consulting programs to emigrants, and vainly tried to change their minds. The agency was therefore referred to in the contemporary debate as "Reich Agency for Prevention" (Reichsverhinderungsamt) and as the "Agency of lost words" (*Amt der verlorenen Worte*). In its reduced form and function, it survived the decline of the Weimar Republic. In Nazi Germany, it advised Jewish emigrants especially, leading to several conflicts with the Gestapo, but its final dissolution did not come until 1944.³⁴

The ambiguous position of Germany as a country of transatlantic emigration as well as of continental labor immigration led to a unique ambivalence which became readily apparent in the Weimar Republic. As an emigration country, Germany opposed the increasing international protective restrictions toward immigration, especially those of the USA which was the main destination for German immigrants. As a labor-importing country (*Arbeitseinfuhrland*),³⁵ however, Germany had to defend its own control system for continental immigration. Regarding protective intentions, the German system was in fact comparable to the recent American policy toward immigration.

This dual role also determined the German attitude toward multilateral endeavors for a regulation of the emigration and immigration movements by the international organizations developed after World War I: following the proposal of the International Labor Conference in Washington in 1919, there were attempts to fashion bilateral treaties with the European homelands of foreign migrant labor in Germany. During multilateral negotiations concerning the regulation of international migrations in the 1920s, however, the German position vacillated, depending on whether

33. Hartmut Bickelmann, *Deutsche Überseeauswanderung in der Weimarer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 1980), 81–119; still very useful: Karl C. Thalheim, *Das deutsche Auswanderungsproblem der Nachkriegszeit* (Jena, 1926), 111–39; Klaus J. Bade, "Das 'Amt der verlorenen Worte': Das Reichswanderungsamt 1918–1924," *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 39, no. 3 (1989): 312–21.

34. Bickelmann, *Überseeauswanderung*, 85–91; Norbert Kampe, "Die Reichsstelle für das Auswanderungswesen und die Vertreibung der Juden 1933–1941," *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 39, no. 3 (1989): 326–35.

35. Imre Ferenczi, "Die internationale Regelung der Aus- und Einwanderung," *Soziale Praxis und Archiv für Volkswohlfahrt* 30 (1921): 898–904.

regulation under consideration affected the country of immigration or the "labor importing country." This was true for government representatives as well as for those representing organized interests on the labor market.

Attempts to regulate migration began with the Central European economic conference on the organization of the labor market in Budapest in 1910, and thereafter included the meeting of the delegates of the emigration countries in Rome in 1921, the first international conference of emigration and immigration countries in Rome in 1924, the World Migration Convention organized in London in 1926 by the International Federation of Trade Unions and the Labor and Socialist International, and, finally, the second international conference of emigration and immigration countries in 1928 in Havana. To this last conference Germany sent only one observer who did not have permission to enter the discussion or to vote.

The first conference in Rome, which was promising, was followed by the disappointing one in Havana. The general impression of the participants was that negotiations on problems of emigration and immigration should be addressed to the International Labor Office rather than to conferences organized by the emigration and immigration countries themselves. Both the International Commission of Emigration, already established in 1920 by the International Labor Organization and the Permanent Emigration Committee in Geneva, however, were affected by the conflicting intentions of emigration and immigration countries.³⁶

The era of National Socialism in the history of transnational migration was characterized neither by continuity nor by discontinuity. In fact, existing continuities were augmented gradually and, culminating during World War II, were aggravated and distorted almost beyond recognition. What resulted was a new dimension which was different in quality yet still represented a continuity: concerning "Germanness" after 1933 on the one hand, efforts were being made to influence the Germans abroad by the ideas of National Socialism and to encourage them to re-migrate "home" to National Socialist Germany. On the other hand, there was the persecution of many Germans for political, religious, and racist motives pushing them into exile that often led to permanent emigration. As regards citizenship, the consequences of National Socialist "Germanness" policies resulted for many people in humiliation, deprivation of all rights, and finally the stripping away of civil rights: especially Jews as "ethnic aliens" (*Fremdvölkische*) were the victims. As long as the borders remained open there was a chance to escape by emigration. After the borders had been sealed, the road finally led to the organized mass murder of the Holocaust. For continental immigration, the road led from the employment of foreign migrant labor

36. Walter F. Willcox, ed., *International Migrations*, 2 vols. (New York, 1929, repr. 1969), vol. 1, *Statistics*, vol. 2, *Interpretations*; cf. Bade, *Arbeitsmarkt, Bevölkerung und Wanderung*.

to the unlimited exploitation of slave labor brought into the Reich especially by compulsory deportation from Eastern European territories.³⁷

The contradictions in dealing with problems of transnational migration continued in Germany after World War II. As in the twenties the German position remained determined by the ambivalent tension between protecting emigrants from Germany and protecting Germany from true immigration. The protection of emigrants—including the “Decree against Unacceptable Conditions in Emigration” (*Verordnung gegen Missstände im Auswanderungswesen*) of 1924—was continued in the Federal Republic by the establishment of the Federal Emigration Agency (Bundesstelle für das Auswanderungswesen), which in 1950 even employed personnel previously connected to the Reich Emigration Agency (1924–1944), and in 1952 was renamed the Federal Emigration Office (Bundesamt für Auswanderung). Another legislative continuity is the line of protecting emigrants that lasts until 1975, when the law of protection for the emigrants from exploitation, deprivation of rights, and deceitful illusions was passed. All of this was part of a long tradition, that had begun in 1869 with the appointment of the Federal Commissioner for Emigration Affairs in the North German League.³⁸

In 1959–60, the Federal Emigration Office was integrated into the Federal Administration Office (Bundesverwaltungsamt). The new office had to deal with questions and problems related to emigration as well as to immigration. The office, however, mainly concentrated on emigration issues. It seems to be largely unknown in public debate that the Constitution of the FRG (*Grundgesetz*/GG) includes the responsibility for emigration legislation (Art. 73, Para. 3/Art. 73, Nr. 3 GG) and that the founding law (*Einrichtungsgesetz*) of the Federal Administration Office of 1959 (Art. 2, Para. 3 / §2, Abs. 3) clearly states that the office may perform the same duties “in the fields of immigration” as in the fields of emigration. This means, in fact, that the necessary administrative body to take action in immigration issues has already been established by law, while an immigration law itself is still nonexistent. Although the establishment of an immigration law would, in view of the above, not require a constitutional amendment, the willingness to rethink migration policy is gaining ground only at a very slow pace.³⁹

So far, the Federal Administration Office is, in fact, only informally dealing with immigration issues in the context of the immigration and

37. Ulrich Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter: Politik und Praxis des ‘Ausländer-Einsatzes’ in der Kriegswirtschaft des Dritten Reiches* (Berlin, 1985); idem, ed., *Europa und der ‘Reichseinsatz’: Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und KZ-Häftlinge in Deutschland 1938–1945* (Essen, 1991).

38. Birgit Frieler and Wiebke Henning, “Auswanderung nach 1945: Hoffnung für Millionen—Schutz und Fürsorge für Auswanderer als staatliche Aufgabe,” *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 39, no. 3 (1989): 336–44.

39. Bade, *Homo Migrans*, 95f.

integration of accepted ethnic Germans from East and Southeast Europe (*Aussiedler*). These, however, are not considered immigrants, but “Germans” according to German laws (116 GG, *Bundesvertriebenen- und Flüchtlingsgesetz*, *Kriegsfolgenbereinigungsgesetz*). German legislation states that minorities of German descent in Eastern Europe and other regions farther in the East, where many descendants of Germans were settled following deportation from the former Volga Republic in 1941, are still suffering from post-World War II “expulsion pressure” (*Vertreibungsdruck*). The preconditions to be accepted for the return to Germany as an “*Aussiedler*” are German descent and the “confession of Germanness” (*Bekenntnis zum Deutschtum*).⁴⁰

The legal right of the descendants of Germans, who had emigrated from Germany generations before, to return to the homeland of their ancestors as “Germans,” is grounded in the *jus sanguinis* tradition and in an ethnocultural and ethnonational understanding of German identity. The policy toward ethnic Germans from eastern Europe (*Aussiedlerpolitik*), however, works like an informal immigration policy following ethnic criteria and, in addition, is said to be a kind of peaceful German contribution to an “ethnic purge” (*ethnische Säuberung*).⁴¹ A similar continuity is visible in the defensive attitudes against regular immigration legislation and policies, which undoubtedly need to shift from the pure *jus sanguinis* principle as a basis for immigration and citizenship to a new principle that would embrace elements of both *jus sanguinis* and *jus soli*.

4. Migration as Profit and Loss in the German Postwar States

The ambivalent attitude toward emigration and immigration issues has hardly changed in postwar Germany although the shift in emphasis from emigration to immigration issues has accelerated dramatically since World War II. More than in any other Western industrial state in the second half of this century, the population, economy, and society in West Germany have been characterized by mass migration movements. Since World War II, three large integration processes can be distinguished in Germany: the integration of refugees and expellees in West and East Germany; the development from the “foreign labor recruitment” via the resulting “guest worker question” to the true immigration problem in West Germany; and finally, the new integration issue facing the united Germany of the

40. Unlike the former use of language, the law of 1993 does not use any longer the expression “expulsion pressure” but “fate of consequence of war.”

41. R. Olt, “Zwischen Selbstpreisgabe und Hoffnung. Die Lage nationaler Minderheiten in Osteuropa,” in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 February 1994; Klaus J. Bade, *Ausländer—Aussiedler—Asyl: Eine Bestandsaufnahme* (Munich, 1994), 25–28, 147–74.

early 1990s (see part 5). Different and partly contradictory experiences of West and East Germans with migration and with the encounters between inlanders and foreigners finally influenced the encounter of East and West Germans themselves during the unification process.

The first important integration issue was the integration of refugees and expellees from the former German East and from East European regions. In West Germany, they were called “expellees from home” (*Heimatvertriebene*), whereas in East Germany they were euphemistically called “resettlers” (*Umsiedler*). What for decades was publicly referred to in the West by influential expellee organizations as the “legal claim to return” (*Recht auf Heimat*) remained taboo in the GDR, whose leaders did not want to draw the attention of Eastern neighbors and therefore quietly referred to a “resettlement problem” (*Umsiedlerproblematik*).

The integration of refugees and expellees (resettlers) aside, until the construction of the Wall in 1961, and to a lesser degree after that, outmigration, flight, and finally legal moving (*Übersiedlung*), rather than immigration and integration, were predominant issues in the GDR. For West Germany, the influx from East Germany had the character of “flight from the Communist sphere of influence” (*Flucht aus dem kommunistischen Machtbereich*). It therefore was politically accepted and, at the same time, welcomed as a needed boost to the labor force. In the GDR, however, outmigration—as a rule illegal since 1961—was a criminal act called “flight from the republic” (*Republikflucht*), and was hushed up in public discussion as had been the “resettlement problem” since the early 1950s. Consequently, in East Germany many immigration, integration, emigration, and exclusion issues were publicly repressed and became political taboos.⁴²

In the West, many German expellees and refugees were still strangers in their new home country when the officially organized foreign labor recruitment began with the German-Italian Treaty of 1955. That marked the onset of the second large integration process in the West. The building of the Wall brought the influx from the GDR to a halt in 1961 and precipitated West Germany’s reluctant move toward becoming a country of immigration. The recruitment of foreign labor from then on increased dramatically. However, there was no comprehensive and long-term concept in the Federal Republic to deal with the permanent integration of the immigrated foreign labor population and with the resulting social problems. For decades, “policy concerning foreigners” (*Ausländerpolitik*) remained basically labor market politics applied to foreigners, only later on including

42. Helge Heidemeier, *Flucht und Zuwanderung aus der SBZ/DDR 1945/1949–1961. Die Flüchtlingspolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland bis zum Bau der Berliner Mauer* (Düsseldorf, 1994); Volker Ackermann, *Der ‘echte’ Flüchtling. Deutsche Vertriebene und Flüchtlinge aus der DDR 1945–1961* (Studien zur Historischen Migrationsforschung, vol. 1, Osnabrück, 1996).

cautious attempts toward “temporary social integration” of foreigners (*soziale Integration auf Zeit*).

The “guest worker period” in the West ended in 1973 with the “labor recruitment stop” (*Anwerbestop*). It caused a boomerang effect on German policy toward foreigners: only for a short time did the number of foreigners decrease, while, by lowering the transnational fluctuation of the foreign migrant labor force, the already growing tendency toward permanent residence was strengthened. Foreign workers who were not willing to live permanently separated from their families were only left with two possibilities: either to return to their home country without a chance of being readmitted into Germany later, or to stay and have their families move to Germany. Most of them chose the latter solution and by 1979, the number of foreigners in Germany exceeded the figure of 1973, in part as a result of families moving to Germany and also because of the natural growth of the foreign population within the German borders.

The decision to stay typically grew with the increasing length of residence. Thus “guest workers” gradually evolved into immigrants. At the beginning of the 1980s, a significant and growing part of this foreign minority made up of the former “guest worker population” lived in the FRG in the paradoxical circumstances of being *de facto* immigrants in a country that did not consider itself an immigration country. The government of the FRG, however, consistently denied that Germany was inevitably becoming a “country of immigration.” It suppressed political action regarding immigration thereby shelving any political discussion and administrative handling thereof. As long as true immigration is a taboo subject, policies toward immigration cannot be developed. The formulation of a framework for handling immigration and integration issues are long overdue.

To a small extent, foreign workers were also employed in the GDR on the basis of interstate agreements. This employment was officially hushed up or played down as “training migration” (*Ausbildungswanderung*) although the “foreign workers” (*ausländische Werktätige*) in the East—just as the “guest-workers” in the West—were employed under the hardest conditions and in jobs Germans liked least of all, e.g., three quarters of the foreigners worked shifts. In the GDR, there was an administrative, patriarchal “care” for “foreign workers,” but on the whole, there was more state-prescribed separation and less social integration of foreign labor than in the FRG. “Foreign workers” in the GDR were often quartered in separate mass accommodations which kept them socially at a distance. In this social vacuum created by state-sponsored segregation, a latent xenophobia was growing which erupted at the end of the GDR’s existence.

During the unification process, it became evident that the two groups of Germans, with their opposing political, ideological, and personal

experiences, had become strangers to one another. Among other things, they had to address the unsolved problems regarding the treatment of foreigners in both states and they had to deal with the shadows of German history, particularly in this field.⁴³

5. "Native Foreigners" and "Foreign Germans" in the Unification Process

The new integration issue in the unification process of the early 1990s was much more complicated than both preceding integration movements since World War II. Several very diverse groups of immigrants were involved, among them "native foreigners" (*einheimische Ausländer*) or "foreign inlanders" (*ausländische Inländer*) as well as "foreign Germans" (*fremde Deutsche*).

1. The largest minority group has been and still is composed of three generations of "native foreigners" or "foreign inlanders" originating from the former guest worker population—whose first generation is already entering retirement.

2. The ethnic Germans from the East (*Aussiedler*), with more than two hundred thousand immigrating each year since the late 1980s, make up the second largest group. These "foreign Germans" are coming from former Communist countries and although they are legally Germans, they are in most cases confronted with a real immigration situation that carries heavy psychological and mental pressure, sometimes severe enough to lead them to re-migrate.

3. Since the early 1980s, the number of refugees and asylum seekers—coming from the so-called Third World up to the mid-1980s and mostly from Eastern Europe today—has grown considerably. The new restrictive asylum law of 1993, while decreasing the number of applications for asylum, has probably increased the number of illegal residents. The most recent group of immigrants in Germany are Jews from the former Soviet Union. In addition to immigrations crossing German borders, there were in the early 1990s two big inter-German integration issues caused by people moving across borders and borders moving across people.

4. People crossing borders: in West Germany, those numerous Germans who, up until the late 1980s, came as refugees from the GDR to the supposedly "golden" West, and those who went to the West during the unification process (*Übersiedler*), had and partly still have identity problems to overcome. Many of them suffered a "German-German" culture shock caused by the differences in material culture and mentality between the Communist East and the capitalist West.

43. Bade, *Ausländer—Aussiedler—Asyl*, 38–90; cf. Herbert Grundmann et al., "Ausländer in Ostdeutschland," *Wiss. Mitteilungen aus dem Berliner Institut für Sozialwissenschaftliche Studien* 3 (1991): 6–75; Marianne Krüger-Potratz, ed., *Anderssein gab es nicht: Ausländer und Minderheiten in der DDR* (Münster, 1991).

5. Borders moving across people: in East Germany, there were not only economic and social, but also mental integration problems during the unification process. Many people lived in a sort of imported integration situation—not because they moved to foreign countries, but because of alienation at home. During the rapid process of social, economic, and political transformation in the early 1990s, many people became strangers in their own land facing two alternatives: conformity to Western ways without reservation or progressive alienation.

Problems and difficulties related to this increasing alienation process reduced the willingness of many people in East Germany to accept and integrate foreigners, including asylum seekers who were assigned to the five new federal states according to the Unification Treaty. The sense of their own alienation increasingly led to defensive attitudes and hostility toward foreigners, and violent attacks were already occurring prior to the well-publicized violence in Saxon Hoyerswerda in September 1991. Much like the offenses against foreigners that had occurred in the West, the earlier violence in the East was hardly noticed because the media had not yet “discovered” this new phenomenon. At first, the growing hostility toward foreigners was more aggressive and violent in the East, but on the whole, it turned out to be neither “typically East German” nor caused solely by social fringe groups threatened by social decline. Rather, it found fertile ground in the West, and increasingly enveloped all of unified Germany.⁴⁴

Since 1991, names of German towns where violent offenses took place became known worldwide as catchwords for xenophobic terror. Those were, e.g., Hoyerswerda (17–22 September 1991) in the East where asylum seekers had been driven out of their homes, attacked on public buses, and injured by stones thrown at them. Another name was Rostock-Lichtenhagen (23–27 August 1992), where crowds applauded as asylum seekers were besieged and attacked in their homes and their houses were set afire. In Hünxe (10 October 1991) in the West, two refugee children were seriously injured in an arson attack. In Mölln (11 November 1992) and in Solingen (29 May 1993), members of Turkish families who were either long-term residents of Germany or born in Germany were burnt to death in their houses or escaped with serious injuries from these attacks of arson. For the first time in Germany since the Nazi pogrom of November 1938 against the Jews, a synagogue was burnt in Lübeck during the night

44. Bade, *Ausländer—Aussiedler—Asyl*, 175–206; cf. Wolf-Dietrich Bukow and Robert Llaroya, *Mitbürger aus der Fremde, Soziogenese ethnischer Minoritäten*, 2d. ed. (Opladen, 1993); Barbara Dietz and Peter Hilkes, *Integriert oder isoliert? Zur Situation russlanddeutscher Aussiedler in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Munich, 1994).

between 24 March and 25 March 1994. This was followed by other violent offenses in May 1995 and by letter bomb attacks perpetrated by Austrian Neo-Nazis which spread to Germany as well in mid-1995.

The riots in May and June 1993 at the scene of the Solingen murders and in other towns demonstrated the increasing readiness of victims of xenophobia to defend themselves, if necessary by going on the offensive. This is especially true for the young German Turks. Clearly, ethnosocial tension is growing. In addition, potential conflicts among the foreigners themselves are spreading to Germany from other countries, including the activities of the Kurdistan Labor Party (PKK). German authorities reacted to this threat by banning the PKK and several other Kurdish organizations. This led to new problems because it is often difficult to make legal distinctions between political and ethnocultural actions of more or less organized immigrant minority groups. This dilemma could no longer be ignored after the bloody Kurd demonstrations in March 1994, which were not only an ethno-cultural protest against the prohibited celebration of the Kurdish New Year in Germany, but also a celebration of the PKK and, as the same time, a political protest against the oppression of the Kurd minority in Turkey.

The new German xenophobia of the early 1990s, however, broadcast all around the world by the media, was neither fascist nor distinctly German. While it has existed for a long time in other European countries of immigration as well, the problems in Germany should not be underrated by this comparison with other European countries, since the new hostility toward minorities in united Germany and the excesses in German streets recall a history potentially different from that of the rest of Europe.

The dark shadow of German history and the sensationalism of the media's coverage of right-wing extremism and violence against foreigners, however, has led to distortions and misinterpretations. Normal peaceful coexistence in united Germany is thus overlooked as are all the countermovements and helpful initiatives, including the famous human chains of candles in the winter of 1992, the vast numbers of organized and spontaneous offers of help in daily life, the taking in of and caring for refugees, and the provision of hiding places for asylum seekers whose applications have been denied and who are to be deported. About 440,000 refugees claimed asylum in Germany in 1992. Moreover, Germany took in the bulk of refugees from the former Yugoslavia still accounting for about 320,000 in 1995—more than in all countries of the EC together.⁴⁵

45. Helmut Willems et al., *Fremdenfeindliche Gewalt. Einstellungen—Täter—Konflikteskalation* (Opladen, 1993).

6. The German Paradox: Immigration Country without Immigration Policies

The primary problems of immigration, integration, and minority issues and their social and political treatment, have been mentioned only peripherally in many national and international discussions of the new German xenophobia. This is especially remarkable as the continued political disorientation of the population about social problems and political tasks relating to immigration, integration, and minorities must be seen as an important source of the defensive attitudes toward foreigners.

The main cause of this political disorientation was and still is the emphatic denial that the Federal Republic in fact has become a new type of immigration country—not in a legal, but in a social and cultural sense. Yet the government continues to declare that, “the Federal Republic is not an immigration country.” Officially, Bonn still responds to questions of immigration with the term “policy concerning foreigners” (*Ausländerpolitik*) and not with “immigration policy.”⁴⁶

The continuous reluctance toward addressing immigration laws and politics can only be compared with the above-mentioned scepticism of Bismarck and leading agrarian and conservative circles in the Kaiserreich against the legitimization of emigration in the late nineteenth century. This attitude was based on the belief that an emigration law would only encourage emigration out of agricultural areas, which were already suffering from labor shortage. This scepticism contributed to the fact that the first emigration law of 1897 came too late. However, this delay was not very important to the emigration country since the law served mainly to protect the emigrants, millions of whom were already living overseas, 90 percent of them in the United States.

“A delay in immigration legislation, however, could have disastrous consequences, not only for the fates of persons involved in the immigration process, but also for the immigration country as a whole,” I wrote more than ten years ago.

Because the “de facto-immigrants” are already in the country, yet as immigrants, they remain outside the law as long as they cannot plan their lives with the help of laws regulating immigration and integration. There is a common mistake in which immigration legislation and immigration politics are confused with unlimited approval of immigration. If, in this context, a lesson may be learned from the history of emigration and immigration, it is the following one: immigration policy

46. Lutz Hoffmann, *Die unvollendete Republik: Zwischen Einwanderungsland und deutschem Nationalstaat* (Cologne, 1990); Dieter Oberndörfer, *Der Wahn des Nationalen. Die Alternative der offenen Republik* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1993).

is not merely assistance to people who wish to immigrate. It is also a regulating instrument and, therefore, should be seen as a self-help for the country of immigration.⁴⁷

Warnings and hypotheses of this sort expressed in the early 1980s by researchers and people working with foreigners did not have any political consequences. In terms of migration and integration issues, the eventful 1980s were a lost decade. Meanwhile, the political and social scenario became more and more frightening: from above, politicians denied the existence of problems which, from below, people were experiencing in everyday life. The paradoxical situation of immigration happening in a “non-immigration country” has been, and still is, a peculiarly German type of multicultural reality.

The denial was the flipside of political helplessness and lack of guidelines in regard to immigration and integration affairs. Therefore, the increasing pressure of problems did not only result from the asylum hysteria of the 1980s and the early 1990s. It was primarily the result of more profound omissions a long time ago concerning immigration issues. Basically, the asylum debate only took people’s minds off those issues. The price to pay for this became evident when, in the beginning of the 1990s, many additional problems arose due to the unification process. Among the population, a pervasive fear of foreigners was growing, while politicians began to fear the attitudes of citizens toward foreigners as well as toward domestic politicians.

Disorientation and fear among the population coupled with the helplessness of politicians had a decisive influence on the political credibility crisis, warnings of which had been sounded in vain for many years. For a brief period, this crisis even seemed to endanger the parliamentary democratic system. In autumn 1992, Chancellor Kohl therefore spoke of a “national state of emergency” (*Staatsnotstand*) in migration affairs, which even led some opinion leaders involved in the public debate to recall the political instability, governmental powerlessness, and ultimate rejection of parliamentary democracy at the end of the Weimar Republic.⁴⁸

In November 1993, 60 scholars issued the “*Manifest der 60*,” a manifesto confronting the topic of “Germany and the Immigration.” According to these scholars, silent xenophobia, violent hostility toward strangers, and acceptance of violence in this context during the unification process of the early 1990s were “not inevitable consequences of immigration and integration, but rather, avoidable results of a lack of political structuring

47. Klaus J. Bade, *Vom Auswanderungsland zum Einwanderungsland? Deutschland 1880 bis 1980* (Berlin, 1983), 122f.

48. Bade, *Ausländer—Aussiedler—Asyl*, 122.

of these processes" as well as "an aggressive response to the lack of migration policies."⁴⁹

Today, we are facing the danger of a shift from alarmism to indifference. In the late 1980s and early 1990s political debate and the media coverage of asylum issues resulted in a sort of Titanic hysteria. In the election year of 1994, however, political parties and the media, fearing a resurfacing of violent offenses against foreigners, avoided the explosive topics of migration, integration, and minorities.

In the end, there still remains the paradoxical issue of de facto immigration in a non-immigration country. Currently there are some cautious attempts at structuring the issues with many open questions remaining for the future. But one thing is certain: migration policy cannot be limited to regulations for transnational movements fashioned with an eye on foreign security politics. It requires corresponding internal policies for the integration of minorities. Therefore, the internal side of migration politics falls essentially under the category of domestic social politics.

However, such migration policies can only be successful if they are based on a large fundamental consensus. In a liberal democracy, such an agreement must be carried by the will of the majority. Without it severe consequences would flow from which the immigrant minorities and the political system as a whole could suffer. Therefore, migration policies must be properly promoted. Social coexistence, cultural tolerance, and social peace depend on whether and to what extent society, including the political elite in the united Germany, are willing to meet the challenges of migration through the development of comprehensive programs and farsighted perspectives.⁵⁰

In the wider context of immigration politics in Germany, two aspects above all of transatlantic movements have to be distinguished in spite of overlapping circumstances: flight and asylum on the one hand, labor migration and immigration on the other. As to flight and asylum issues, the concerns and security of refugees must be taken care of, and in the countries of origin, the causes for flight must be reduced as far as possible. As to labor migration and immigration, migration processes must be carefully regulated according to the receiving countries' own interests. Both aspects should be related to each other through comprehensive concepts, but they must not be played off against each other in the public debate.

49. Klaus J. Bade, ed., *Das Manifest der 60: Deutschland und die Einwanderung* (Munich, 1994), 13, 20.

50. Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Thomas Schmid, *Heimat Babylon. Das Wagnis der multikulturellen Demokratie* (Hamburg, 1992); Claus Leggewie, "Das Ende der Lebenslügen: Plädoyer für eine neue Einwanderungspolitik," in *Das Manifest der 60*, ed. Bade, 55–60, 213–25; Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen et al., *Einwanderung—und dann? Perspektiven einer neuen Ausländerpolitik* (Munich, 1993); Werner Weidenfeld, ed., *Das europäische Einwanderungskonzept* (Gütersloh, 1994).

To handle all this while duly considering the interests of the countries of origin requires a migration-oriented development policy, or rather a development-oriented policy of migration. In this context, there is no avoiding an “international balance of burdens” (F. Nuscheler) to fight the global disaster that is creating mass migrations worldwide. At the same time, this would be an important contribution to support sustainable growth as a guideline for economic, ecological, and social interventions aiming at the creation of an equitable and sustainable world that does no longer live on the credit of future generations.⁵¹

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51. Bernd Hof, *Europa im Zeichen der Migration. Szenarien zur Bevölkerungs- und Arbeitsmarktentwicklung in der Europäischen Gemeinschaft bis 2020* (Cologne, 1993); Franz Nuscheler, *Internationale Migration, Flucht und Asyl* (Opladen, 1995).