

*Chapter 5*

**GERMAN JEWISH REFUGEES AND THE WARTIME  
DISCOURSE ON GERMANY'S FUTURE, 1942–1945**



While German Jews who fought as soldiers in the American Armed Forces frequently came into personal contact with Germans, most refugees who remained in the United States (most women, as well as those too old or young to take part in active military duty) also engaged with Germany during World War II. Though naturally less direct, this engagement occurred, as for soldiers, while the refugees were becoming more Americanized. From late 1942 to the end of the war, many refugees, particularly those young enough to join the workforce, became naturalized and increasingly integrated into American life through their war effort activities and participation in American Jewish organizational life. Simultaneously, the ongoing war drew refugees' attention continually toward the European continent and Germany. The war's events and outcome had immediate significance for them. Most still had family members and friends in Europe and worried about their situation. During the last three years of the war, refugees' relationship with Germany was shaped by news of Holocaust atrocities reaching the United States, their own prewar experiences in Germany, and larger discussions taking place in the United States and abroad about Germany's future after an anticipated Allied victory. German Jewish refugees, and particularly leaders within the organized community, participated in these discussions, formulating their own demands for punishment and restitution.

**On the American Home Front**

The organized refugee community put tremendous emphasis on rallying refugees to participate in war efforts—from civilian defense to purchasing war bonds.

---

Notes from this chapter begin on page 127.

Like refugee soldiers, civilian refugees found these activities important as contributions to defeating Germany and projecting their loyalty to America. Local refugee groups organized activities to support the wellbeing of refugee soldiers, such as letter-writing campaigns, and sent them issues of *Aufbau* and care packages with cigarettes, sweets, and “home made cookies.”<sup>1</sup> Along with such local efforts, *Aufbau*, the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, and the Immigrants’ Conference joined forces to centrally organize and coordinate the German Jewish community’s war efforts. Under the motto “We know the Enemy—America’s War is Our War,” they formed the Immigrants’ Victory Council, which worked to intensify cooperation between the immigrants and relevant American agencies, particularly in the U.S. Citizens Service Corps, in which many refugees served home-front needs.

Also like refugee soldiers, refugees on the home front put their special knowledge to use in the Allied war effort. In late 1942, the editorial staff of *Aufbau* initiated a “Map Drive,” calling on its readers to send maps, photographs, and any other information potentially useful to the Allied military in its operations against Germany.<sup>2</sup> Thus, even older refugees could contribute. Ludwig Schulherr, for example, in his sixties during the war, had specific knowledge concerning the location and construction of hydraulic dams in Germany because he had worked in this area before emigration. He presented his intelligence to the Navy and the Office of Naval Research. For Schulherr, who had had trouble adjusting to life in the United States, having left a prestigious position in Nuremberg to be a “nobody” in Atlanta without a social circle, let alone friends, this work was positive and gave him a sense of purpose and belonging.<sup>3</sup>

While many individual refugees became more involved in American organizational life through war efforts, refugee organizations also became increasingly represented in American Jewish institutions. At the national level, the largest organization of German Jewish refugees, the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe (AMFED), joined the newly founded American Jewish Conference in 1943. The latter organization included delegates from the major Jewish defense and advocacy groups, making it one of the most representative institutions of American Jewry. It was founded primarily to discuss the future of European Jewry and of Palestine. To be recognized and become part of this was significant for AMFED officials.<sup>4</sup>

In Los Angeles, meanwhile, the city’s Jewish Community Council elected a representative of the Jewish Club of 1933, the German Jewish refugee organization, onto its board of directors for the first time in 1944. Although the Jewish Club of 1933 had worked with different Los Angeles Jewish organizations since its establishment in 1934, such cooperation had been ad hoc regarding issues concerning refugees specifically. Now, however, refugees were officially represented in the Los Angeles Jewish community and participated in decision-making processes regarding L.A. Jewish life in general.<sup>5</sup> While the great number of

refugees in Los Angeles made the inclusion of representative voices in larger organizations more pressing and likely, similar developments occurred in communities all across the United States. Connecting to the larger institutional network gave refugees greater access and influence, establishing them more firmly in the United States.

### Concern about Europe's Jews

Even as refugees became more integrated into American life, their attention was constantly drawn to the European war and the situation of European Jews. Refugees in the United States were able to follow the events of the war closely through the American press, especially *Aufbau*, which dedicated significant coverage to the European theater and the situation of Jews in German-occupied territories.

From the beginning of the war, *Aufbau's* reporting was extensive. Its journalists wrote about deportations, ghettos, concentration camps, and mass killings of Jews. The general American press also reported these things but not as regularly. Nor did the general press usually put such stories on the front page, as *Aufbau* increasingly did. *Aufbau's* journalists also tended to give more credence to reports of atrocities than most non-Jewish papers. This was the case, for example, with the news about the implementation of the so-called final solution, which reached the United States during the fall and winter of 1942. In November 1942, *Aufbau* published an article concerning the public statement Reform Rabbi Steven S. Wise, then president of the World Jewish Congress, had made about Nazis carrying out an “extermination campaign” to “entirely liquidate” the Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe.<sup>6</sup> Wise emphasized that the State Department had confirmed this information,<sup>7</sup> yet most major American newspapers nevertheless “treated this as a story released by a Jewish source and an interested party.”<sup>8</sup> Their reporting—including the language and placement of the articles—conveyed doubt about the accuracy of Wise’s statement. General skepticism in the United States about stories concerning Nazi atrocities derived in no small part from World War I reporting about German atrocities that had later been discredited as “grossly exaggerated by Allied propaganda.”<sup>9</sup> For *Aufbau* journalists though, Wise’s statement reinforced their own reports. They declared that it “finally officially confirms in its entire tragic extent all the information which ‘Aufbau,’ based on its various sources, has been reporting.”<sup>10</sup>

*Aufbau* editors deemed such news significant to its refugee readership, but not all refugees liked to be presented with ongoing news about the atrocities. One rabbi explained in a letter to the editor: “Again and again I hear fellow refugees rail and curse, not at Hitler, but at *Aufbau*, as if your paper and not this bandit produced the horrors, as if it is your reporting and not the Nazi barbarity which

steals our sleep.”<sup>11</sup> Evidently some refugees, like other Americans—common people, journalists, and government officials—were somewhat skeptical about the accuracy of these reports, considering them possibly exaggerated.

While the American Jewish organizational landscape was rife with division over many issues, the organized refugee community, along with the big American Jewish organizations, repeatedly publicized their deep concern about the desperate situation of European Jewry. Several large organizations joined forces to raise awareness of this issue.<sup>12</sup> The American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Labor Committee, and B'nai B'rith organized a mass rally in New York City in July 1942, which drew more than twenty thousand people.<sup>13</sup> Then in December, after the news of mass extermination had reached the United States, delegates from different American Jewish organizations presented a memorandum to President Roosevelt, asking him to bring attention to the killings of Jews in Europe and to do everything he could to stop them.<sup>14</sup> As is well known, their pleas went unanswered.<sup>15</sup>

Refugees expressed outrage in their communities at this lack of engagement on the part of the United States and the United Nations concerning the rescue of European Jews, but they were largely limited to symbolic awareness-raising actions and fundraisers, which they hoped would help.<sup>16</sup> In this regard then, the activities of American Jewish organizations, both national and local, were particularly important for refugees in providing a (relatively) united voice to the world at large as well as avenues of symbolic and economic action. When, for example, the Synagogue Council of America initiated a six-week “Mourning and Intercession” period for the “victims of Axis brutality” in the spring of 1943, *Aufbau* editors supported these activities with a campaign asking United Nations leaders “to send a message of compassion and encouragement to the Jewish people in the world.”<sup>17</sup> The campaign was successful, and replies from various leaders were printed in subsequent issues.

A common symbolic action on the local level was to observe a minute of silence at meetings “in honor of the Jewish victims in Europe murdered by Hitler,”<sup>18</sup> as the board of directors of the Jewish Club of 1933 in Los Angeles did in the summer of 1943. The Los Angeles community also regularly organized various social events centering around the issue, which incorporated symbolic and political actions, and often also fundraising. One, for example, was a lecture titled “Our Duty towards European Jewry,” put on in July 1943 by the Society for Jewish Culture–Fairfax Temple, with which the city’s refugee community was closely affiliated. That event was intended partly to draw more attention to the show “We Will Never Die,” which had been staged in Madison Square Garden in New York earlier that year and was to play at the Hollywood Bowl. This dramatic “Memorial Pageant” created by Ben Hecht and Kurt Weill with the help of other European Jewish refugees aimed to raise awareness for the plight of Europe’s Jews and to call for more Jewish activism.<sup>19</sup> The L.A. organizers

appealed to refugees to attend both events and heralded the show as one that could make “American Jews and Gentiles understand more and more all the aspects of the refugee-problems and . . . bring them to a closer contact with what is happening to European Jewry.”<sup>20</sup> The show was a success in Los Angeles, raising money to benefit European Jewry.<sup>21</sup>

Beyond such individual events, there were longer-term efforts, such as one Felix Guggenheim, member of the Jewish Club of 1933 board of the directors, proposed: to start a separate fund to help “our unhappy brothers and sisters in Europe” after the war.<sup>22</sup> He believed that the efforts of the newly founded United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the United Welfare Fund would not be sufficient to help all the Jews he hoped would survive in Europe. Thus, he proposed that Jewish immigrants gather their forces not only within the United States but also by cooperating with refugees in Central and South America and Great Britain. Guggenheim suggested everybody should donate “at least one week’s salary” per year. While the proposal received much positive resonance, it failed to attract significant contributions, likely because people lacked the funds or gave to larger fundraising organizations.<sup>23</sup> Consequently the idea was abandoned, and the United Jewish Appeal remained the major campaign to collect money for the cause of Europe’s Jews.<sup>24</sup> While the German Jewish refugee community leadership stressed the community’s special responsibility toward Jews in Europe in public announcements, it did not launch any ongoing activities to distinguish refugees from the larger American Jewish community. Rather, most of its efforts happened in the context of activities organized by larger American Jewish organizations.

## **Punishment and Restitution**

### *Punishment*

As the refugees were occupied with the fate and future of European Jews, they also sought to ensure that those responsible for the crimes against Jews would not escape punishment. The community’s discussion of this topic happened in the context of similar debates around Germany and the war in both U.S. governmental and public circles in the country at large.<sup>25</sup> In November 1942, *Aufbau*’s front page featured the headline “Plans for the Punishment of the Nazi Perpetrators.”<sup>26</sup> The accompanying article explained that it was not too early to think about how to deal with the Nazi perpetrators after war’s end. It stated that both President Roosevelt and a high government official of Great Britain had publicly raised the issue of prosecuting German war criminals and that the two men believed such punishment would affect relatively few people compared to the overall German population. The *Aufbau* journalist pointed out

both men had distinguished between Nazis and the German people—suggesting that Germans had been “misled” by the Nazis—but did not comment on the legitimacy of this claim. While the newspaper featured this kind of “neutral reporting,” it also included opinion pieces by *Aufbau* journalists and outside contributors, remaining true to its mission to present a broad picture of events and opinions.<sup>27</sup> It treated the topic of German responsibility extensively in subsequent months. Following the November announcement of plans for punishing German war criminals, a December 1942 article approved of a UN declaration that it would launch a special commission to investigate the crimes against Jews in Europe. However, *Aufbau* criticized the lack of action when there were no new developments by February 1943 with the article “What Will Happen with the War Criminals? The Negotiations Are Not Yielding Results.”<sup>28</sup> In the following months, discussion on this topic was subsumed into a more general debate about the responsibility of the German people at large and the repercussions they should collectively face.

The German Jewish refugee community was not alone in America in engaging in this debate. Politicians and various other Americans with influence on public opinion—filmmakers, novelists, journalists, business leaders, etc.—also did so, representing different opinions and images on the nature of Germany’s dictatorship. In general, American public opinion changed over the course of the war from one that differentiated between Germans and Nazis to one that placed responsibility for Nazism on the German nation.<sup>29</sup> While refugees may have followed this general discourse to differing degrees through various media channels, *Aufbau* was once again the major community forum. It not only picked up strands of the general American discussion but also presented the opinions of a variety of representatives of the general German emigration, both Jewish and non-Jewish. *Aufbau*’s pages had carried debates about Germans’ responsibility led by prominent representatives of German exiles since they arrived in the United States, with Thomas Mann being a leading voice among them.<sup>30</sup>

The refugee perspective was not so different from that of the broader public. However, it displayed and was informed by a deeply personal understanding and connection to events. This, inevitably, caused refugees to be far less likely to overlook their treatment under the Nazis or absolve the general German populace, and more likely to take issue with those who did. However, it frequently also brought an immediacy to their arguments and urgency to their conclusions unmatched by most voices outside the community.

One particularly heated exchange of letters began when Charles Weisz, a German Jewish refugee from Washington, asked *Aufbau* to publish his response to an article by Gerhart H. Seger, a Social Democrat who had been incarcerated in Germany before fleeing in 1934. After emigrating to the United States, Seger became the editor of the New York–based *Neue Volkszeitung*, a newspaper close to the labor movement and associated with German Social Democrats in exile.<sup>31</sup>

In his article, Seger had differentiated between Nazis and the German people.<sup>32</sup> Weisz, after expressing that he had once been proud to be German and had loved Germany “above all else in the world,” questioned whether this differentiation could legitimately be made. In discussions among refugees, he noticed that they frequently considered only Germans who wore a SA or SS uniform to be Nazis. Weisz challenged this assumption on the basis of his own experience in Germany, where, as he wrote, it was “these non-Nazis who on October 10, 1938, took my two brothers, two nephews, an uncle and me out of our apartment; it was such ‘non-Nazis’ who slapped me all the way down four stories, just because I am Jewish.”<sup>33</sup> Further, a man who had been his friend for twenty-one years and whose life he had once saved called him a “stinking, dirty Sow-Jew” just two days after Hitler had come to power. Addressing Seger, Weisz wrote, “What do you understand to be the German people, I have to always ask you? Maybe 200 or 2,000 people who did not take part in the brutalities, do you call these 200 or 2,000 people the ‘German *Volk*’ among the 80 million others?”<sup>34</sup>

Seger’s reply was condescending in both tone and content, downplaying Weisz’s painful experiences by saying that he and other political emigrants had sometimes suffered far worse at the hand of the Nazis long before Jews ever concerned themselves with Hitler very much.<sup>35</sup> For Seger, the German *Volk* were the German workers and all those who had behaved decently toward Jews and fought the Nazis before they themselves were incarcerated in concentration camps.<sup>36</sup> Judging from the number of people interned in camps, this group was considerably larger than two thousand, he argued.

This exchange over the nature and responsibility of the German people clearly struck a nerve in the refugee community, as the discussion in subsequent issues of *Aufbau* shows. It continued with a contribution by outspoken non-Jewish anti-Nazi intellectual Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster, a rebuttal by Social Democratic philosopher Siegfried Marck backing Seger, and another reply by *Aufbau* editor in chief Manfred George. Both Foerster and George disagreed with Seger’s characterization of the German people and presented evidence that the general German population had been involved in Nazi ideology and crimes on a large scale. They referred to reports by American war correspondents about crimes committed by members of the German army and to interviews with German POWs, 85 percent of whom were identified as having been and continuing to be Nazis. Moreover, they pointed to the absence of large-scale resistance or acts of sabotage within the German Reich.<sup>37</sup> These facts, Foerster argued, demanded that the majority of the German people should be punished alongside acknowledged Nazis because they, too, had made themselves guilty by participating in the Nazi regime. He suggested that their punishment should consist of their right to political participation being revoked for the foreseeable future. Siegfried Marck, responding to Foerster, acceded that this kind of punishment might be justified if one looked at it from a purely ethical standpoint,

but he wondered whether enduring the consequences of the lost war were not already punishment enough.<sup>38</sup>

Marck and Foerster represented two camps that formed during the war years with opposing views on whether the end of the war should bring a “hard” or “soft” peace to the Germans.<sup>39</sup> In this lengthy debate, the German people’s complicity became an important criterion in discussing what should be done with Germany after the Allied victory, which I will return to below. Yet the debate, whose stakes were clearly important to the community, may nevertheless have had little direct effect on decision makers. While the opinions of Foerster, Marck, and their backers shaped views within the refugee community and even in the general American public, several historians have noted that German émigré intellectuals did not hold any official position of recognition or influence in the U.S. government circles that actually made these decisions on Germany after the war.<sup>40</sup> Officials in the State Department followed the debates among these groups, albeit in the interest of gaining information that would help their war aims in Germany rather than in developing government policy for the postwar period.

Specifically, the U.S. government sought information that could help U.S. forces on the ground identify individual Nazis. In May 1943, an *Aufbau* article called on refugees to document their experiences with particular Nazi officials—mayors, police officials, judges, etc.—and send this information to Robert M. W. Kempner.<sup>41</sup> Kempner had been a former official in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior and had been serving as special consultant to the U.S. Justice Department, the War Department, and the OSS since 1941.<sup>42</sup> Once again, refugees’ inside knowledge of the German enemy enabled them to make a special contribution to the war effort. As I noted for other contexts, such contributions gave them great satisfaction in a general sense because they supported their adopted country and efforts to defeat Germany, but in this particular context, they derived an additional, personal satisfaction, intertwined as it was with individual retribution, when they identified particular Nazis. Retribution was an important issue to the refugees and required their particular attention because, at the time, the larger discussion among Allies concerning the punishment of Nazis focused on wartime and on occupied territories. They did not take Nazi crimes against Jews in Germany and Austria before the official declaration of war into consideration, a shortcoming that refugees criticized. In early 1944, Felix Guggenheim, then president of the Jewish Club of 1933 in Los Angeles, articulated his thoughts on this at a membership meeting and suggested the club set up “a committee . . . to study these questions, to contact other groups and to prepare what ever can be done in this respect in order to safeguard our interests.”<sup>43</sup>

Guggenheim was always cautious not to represent his group of refugees as only interested in purely German Jewish affairs—the community wanted to be seen as civic-minded and good future Americans, and to represent this both within the community and beyond it. Consequently, he went on to say, “I don’t



want to be misunderstood. This is not a question of refugees thinking of their claims at a time when the world is on fire and when the American boys—and our friends among [them]—have to fight for a better world.” However, he explained that the club’s board members and the Political Committee regarded this issue as a more significant moral matter, namely, as a matter of justice:

This is a question of justice in more than one respect, because it is not only intolerable, that the chief of the concentration camp in Dachau may have the chance to get away with it, when the chiefs of the concentration camps in occupied countries will face the firing squad. It is equally intolerable—not from a materialistic point of view—that the Nazi who stole a house, a factory, an object d’art in Prag[ue] or Paris will be chased out if he is lucky and will be buried there if he has tough luck—when his colleague [*sic*] in Berlin or Frankfurt will stay in the stolen house and run the stolen factory [*sic*], because it has been fixed up legally and because it is done in a time of semi-war and within the boundaries of Germany.<sup>44</sup>

In this context of reflecting on specific losses, refugees mapped onto their image of Germany—as their former home, ordinary lives, and joys and suffering—a topography of expropriation, injustice, and crime. Their views on this differed from those of most other Germans and Allies. To make sure that, as Guggenheim put it, the “criminal acts committed against European refugees, against their life, their freedom, their property between 1933 and the beginning of the 2nd World War” would not be ignored after an Allied victory, Jewish Club members decided to seek cooperation with other organizations of its kind in the United States and Great Britain.<sup>45</sup> Guggenheim formulated very group-specific interests for doing so while simultaneously successfully pursuing the group’s Americanization and integration into American Jewish organizational life. For the first time since its establishment in the United States, the community reached out to similar groups internationally to pursue refugees’ own proactive interests related to experiences in their former homeland.

The concern that crimes against German Jews before the declaration of war would not be acknowledged was subsequently allayed when the Allies revised their concepts for postwar justice to include them. Then, as the war in Europe came to an end, refugees in the United States gained an opportunity to immediately contribute to bringing Nazi perpetrators to justice.<sup>46</sup> Four days before V-E Day, *Aufbau* editors published a call asking refugees to “Help with the Punishment of War Criminals.” The call asked readers to record information about Nazi crimes—such as murders, abuse in concentration camps, the torching of synagogues, and theft—as well as the names of the perpetrators based on “their OWN knowledge—something they experienced themselves or saw with their own eyes.” The stipulation that they should report only what they would be able and willing to “testify to under oath” was very important.<sup>47</sup> Once more, Robert M. W. Kempner served as the liaison to receive such testimony. Refugee

responses reached him from all over the world, and he was able to use this information in postwar legal proceedings against Nazi criminals.<sup>48</sup> Whether refugees' information eventually incriminated Nazis or not, they assumed a position of power over their former oppressors merely by being able to recount their experiences to an institution that actively wanted to hear them and intended to use their testimony. As with refugee soldiers who helped in the arrest of German Nazi criminals by interrogating POWs, the refugees on the home front in the United States thus at least felt that they were somewhat able to settle personal scores with Germans and Nazis. Once again, it was their specific German Jewish background that gave their claims about these Germans credibility, while their position in the United States provided them with structures and opportunities that empowered them in relation to Germany. Thus, refugees' interest in Germany's future was motivated by past experience even as it, paradoxically, facilitated their embrace of being American.

### *Restitution*

Discussions about the punishment of Nazi criminals frequently accompanied debates on matters of material indemnification and restitution. In the same speech to the Jewish Club cited above, Felix Guggenheim pointed out that it was a matter of justice to hold Germans responsible for stealing Jewish property, and he also declared that certainly "in all these instances justice can be done in respect to the transgressor without necessarily thinking of the former owners."<sup>49</sup> However, he went on to say that "during the foreign property registration we were shocked [*sic*] to see how many among us who are bitterly poor here, have been tricked and burgled [*sic*] in Germany too much to just let go of it."

Some German Jews raised the issue of material compensation for stolen Jewish property as early as 1939.<sup>50</sup> Then, Shalom Adler-Rudel, a former leader in the Jewish community in Berlin, wrote a memorandum presenting suggestions on how to record information about these thefts that could serve as a basis for subsequent specific claims on Germany. At that time, his memorandum generated little interest among Jewish leaders in the United States and Great Britain, but this changed by the end of the war.<sup>51</sup> While individual Jewish emigrants and different American organizations gradually engaged with the topic, the German Jewish refugee community in general did not pay much attention to it until 1943 and then increasingly in 1944.<sup>52</sup>

The community's hesitation to engage in the topic derived from many German Jewish refugees' having initially decided that they never wanted anything to do with Germany ever again. Felix Guggenheim remembered many refugees saying at first that they "don't even want to register anything. We don't want to have anything to do with it."<sup>53</sup> However, some leaders within the Los Angeles community, whom Guggenheim identified as "our practical group," believed that

“it would be foolish to reward the Germans by benign neglect, and leaving the spoils in their hands.” These members of the board of the Jewish Club of 1933 decided in February 1943 that “the time has come to initiate the establishment of a unified front of all refugees from Central Europe in the United States.”<sup>54</sup> As they were aware of activities of American Jewish organizations and U.S. government considerations on this issue, they wanted to make sure that “the voices of these early victims of Hitler would be most assertively heard at future hearings where decisions about expiation [Sühne] and restitution [Wiedergutmachung] for committed injustices will be made.”<sup>55</sup>

In discussions about restitution, the Jewish Club’s political committee emphasized legal and practical questions to secure German Jewish refugees’ rights both as a collective and as individuals. Committee members communicated and cooperated with various individuals and organizations from the refugee community in the United States, such as the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, the American Association of Former European Jurists, the Axis Victims League, and former German judge Hugo Marx, who was writing on German Jewish restitution issues at this time.<sup>56</sup> A preliminary activity in preparation for making actual demands was the formation of a special committee within the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe that would collect data about destroyed or stolen property and assets formerly held by Jewish communities in Germany.<sup>57</sup>

Cooperation among German Jewish refugees in restitution matters also went beyond national borders. In 1944, members of the Los Angeles Club began exchanging concrete ideas for postwar “rehabilitation and reconstruction” of European Jews with the Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain.<sup>58</sup> This strengthened German Jewish refugee networks nationally and abroad, yet refugees in the United States also deemed it crucial to represent their particular interests in restitution through the large American organizations. In addition to their membership in the American Jewish Conference, German Jewish refugees formed a German Jewish Representative Committee within the World Jewish Congress (WJC).<sup>59</sup> Committee members were representatives from AMFED and other active people from the community, such as Max Grunwald, Hugo Marx, Manfred George, and—the only woman—jurist Margarete Berent.<sup>60</sup>

Participating in these organizations was critical for refugees because they believed their situation differed from that of the great mass of European Jews in the countries occupied by the German Army in several ways.<sup>61</sup> Firstly, they wanted to ensure through the committee that crimes committed against German Jews during peace time and under legal pretexts were considered valid for indemnification claims. Participation in these larger American Jewish organizations was crucial for the refugees also to advance their standing in the United States. They viewed their German Jewish position in them not as a sign of their outsider status but rather a placement of their voice as one among many within greater American

Jewry. In engaging in this sort of collective action, then, joining various organizations together to project a concerted voice towards Germany on behalf of their community, the refugees strengthened their German Jewish community identity in the United States in light of a renewed, if troubling, connection to Germany through restitution.

### **Tensions Between the Connection to Germany and Americanization**

German Jewish refugees' renewed connection to their former country also brought tensions into their connection to the new one. Despite their increased integration in American (Jewish) life, refugees were still concerned with their status in the United States. Community leaders continued to emphasize the group's belonging to the United States, particularly in their pursuit of restitution and interest in the future of Germany. During these early years of discussions about restitution, refugee leaders frequently expressed their demands on Germany along with assurances that their loyalty and future was in America and that they had no intention of returning to their former home. As the organized refugee leadership in Los Angeles noted in connection with a demand for restitution from Germany,

The board of the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc. finds it misleading and dangerous . . . when an impression is created in the American public that the refugees want to play a part in the political shaping and organization of the future Germany. The board holds the position that the crimes of the past ten years have cut the bonds between us and Germany and that our present and future belongs to the country which, in the hour of plight offered us refuge, and wants to make us citizens.<sup>62</sup>

Clearly, German Jewish refugees still worried about looking like outsiders or temporary visitors in the United States, despite living lives to the contrary.

In an article from November 1944, Manfred George addressed the problem of refugees' image as temporary residents. He explained that the term refugee had "assumed a somewhat unfavorable meaning during the last few years. First, it was shrouded by clouds of pity and sympathy, then gradually the emotional fog lifted" and "the word slowly assumed a bitter taste. It came to be synonymous with 'alien,' 'foreigner.'"<sup>63</sup> He continued: "One of the commonest accusations brought against those who came to the United States during the last eleven years is the implication that they can't wait to go back." This image had even more negative implications than that of the foreigner. First, it cast refugees as taking unfair advantage of benefits. The notions that surfaced in this context were reminiscent of those made by anti-immigration agitators in the 1930s about refugees taking up jobs and receiving financial support when the United States

was struggling economically. The sort of refugee who might want to return to Germany all along while enjoying material benefits in the United States would be regarded as an exploiter. Second, this image connected the refugees directly to the enemy. A desire to go back to Germany, the country countless Americans were risking their lives to defeat, suggested betrayal. Furthermore, refugee stereotypes—such as the arrogant German who knows everything better, is nostalgic for the homeland, and critical of how things were done in America—persisted and made it seem more plausible that refugees wished to return.<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, the question of returning became particularly pertinent again on practical grounds in connection with rising demands for restitution from Germany. Demands for indemnification of lost property potentially suggested refugees had an economic interest in returning to Germany after the war—for example, to take back and run one's former factory, or live in the old family home. Some refugees did harbor such sentiments. An article in the Los Angeles *B'nai B'rith Messenger/Jewish Community Press* recounted the story of one anonymous refugee who, concerning his reparation demands, had stated, "Yes, the Nazis must be made to pay back. Where the property could be found in its original form there must be restitution. Where the property has been liquidated there must be compensation."<sup>65</sup> He went on: "I hope to get back to [my] house and live in it again." The author further stated, "Of course, those who preferred not to return to Germany could not expect restoration of their property; but exiles who resumed their lives in Germany should be paid in full for that of which they were robbed."

The organized refugee community did not respond favorably to such individual refugees who wished to return to Germany and linked restitution with that return. The Los Angeles Club, for example, which had always promoted refugees' Americanization, advocated indemnification irrespective of claimants' postwar residence. Community representatives also sought to characterize the desire to return as individual and unusual. A board member of the Jewish Club used a meeting at the B'nai B'rith Lodge to make a public announcement on this issue on behalf of the club:

99 percent of the refugees organized in the Jewish Club of 1933 have no other aim and intention than to be or become American citizens, fulfilling the duties and exercising the right this privilege involves. It would be a great mistake to assume—or to conclude from an exceptional single case—that the Jewish refugees from Germany would ever think of returning there . . . the fact itself cannot be stated clearly enough.<sup>66</sup>

The negative implications the question of return had for refugees' public image, and for their understanding of themselves as Americans, made them very sensitive to the issue. The refugee community increased efforts to refute this perception of them, which not only anti-Jewish circles but even some parts of the larger American Jewish community had. Manfred George's article "Do

Refugees Want to Return?” in *Congress Weekly*, the organ of the American Jewish Congress, for example, was another strong attempt to clarify the situation to American Jews. George blamed the perception that a majority of refugees wished to return to Germany on the vivid discussion about Germany’s future that politically active refugees led in 1943 and 1944. He wrote, “It is *their* arguments and activities, their postwar plans and letters-to-the editor which create the impression that all German-Jewish refugees want to go back—because the 99 percent who don’t meddle in German affairs or American foreign policy keep quiet.”<sup>67</sup>

The German Jewish Representative Committee of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) also characterized the refugee community’s position vis-à-vis postwar Germany clearly as one of noncontinuation and noninvolvement. They passed a statement declaring that German Jews—as opposed to surviving Jews from other European countries who might want to return or continue to live in those countries after the war—had “severed all connections with their former homeland and will not return to it” because of the atrocities the German state and Germans had committed against their own Jewish citizens.<sup>68</sup> In terms of restitution and restoration of rights to Jews in Europe, the Representative Committee made clear that German Jews did not desire to have their citizenship automatically restored in Germany, as the WJC had proposed for Jews who had not become or were in the process of becoming citizens of another country.<sup>69</sup> They explained that they did not “contemplate rebuilding a Jewish community in Germany” and demanded that Jews in Germany be able to renounce German citizenship because it constituted a “burden” for them. Nevertheless, they noted that some individuals who had left might have reasons to go back and that those people might “specifically and formally request” citizenship for themselves.<sup>70</sup>

Supporting this idea, Manfred George reiterated in a subsequent commentary in *Aufbau* that German Jewish refugees had “moral reasons that they do not want to be ‘Germans’ anymore.” Imagining a difficult postwar reality for Germany, George further added that “from a merely practical perspective, possession of a German passport is probably not something that either today or in the next few years will make its bearer particularly happy.”<sup>71</sup> While not completely excluding the idea that some Jews might live in Germany after the war, George’s message was that a future in Germany was neither desirable nor desired.

Overall, the public discourse about restitution and retribution in the last two to three years of the war within the organized German Jewish refugee community focused on emphasizing this group’s special situation and their desire to have nothing to do with Germany beyond reparations. In April 1945, the three major refugee organizations in the United States (AMFED), Great Britain (the Association of Jewish Refugees), and Palestine (Irgun Oley Merkaz Europa) formed the Council for the Protection of Rights and Interests of Jews from Germany, primarily to deal with postwar restitution for all Jews from Germany.<sup>72</sup> This act stressed their German Jewish identity in opposition to Germany and as

citizens(-to-be) of new homelands, positioning them on the winning side. This enabled them to formulate demands for retribution not as supplicant, but from a position of influence and potential power. While discussions over these demands touched on the question of Germany's future, broader debates in the United States at the time concerned more general plans for that future. The organized community participated in that conversation too.

### **What Should Be Done with Germany after the War?**

In 1943–44, public discussions about what should be done with Germany after the war were widely held in America. The government had already begun to debate this question shortly after Pearl Harbor, when President Roosevelt set up an Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy under Secretary of State Cordell Hull.<sup>73</sup> American intellectuals, too, ruminated on this issue and how Germany's postwar treatment would influence the future of Europe and the entire world.<sup>74</sup> The refugee community also engaged in these discussions, and regular articles about the postwar treatment of Germany appeared in *Aufbau*, pertaining particularly to questions of punishment and retribution for German crimes against Jews and others. When the American discussion began to delve into more concrete plans for Germany—whether it should be divided into different zones, occupied, demilitarized, etc.—Manfred George, as editor of *Aufbau*, published a statement delineating how he believed German Jews should participate in this.<sup>75</sup> He deemed it important “that formerly German-speaking Jews look at this issue as Jews and not as Germans.”<sup>76</sup> As Jewish refugees, they were becoming Americans and therefore ought to look at Germany only with an American eye, although some German Jews fancied themselves experts on the German people, he wrote. In George's eyes, these Jews were misguided, and their opinions on the subject suspect, as they themselves had not been able to foresee the German peoples' actions against their fellow Jewish citizens.

Despite George's skepticism, *Aufbau* took part in the larger discussion and published all kinds of opinions on the future of Germany by both American and German-born contributors, as well as Jews and non-Jews. The editors justified this by arguing that while neither the paper itself nor its editors had a stake in Germany's postwar future, it had to serve its journalistic function as one among many American newspapers engaging in the discussion, and cater to its audience of émigrés and immigrants. As a main news source for the German Jewish community, it understood itself as a “kind of ‘Clearing House of Opinions.’”<sup>77</sup> The discussion about Germany's future became the “most intense and longest” single debate to appear in *Aufbau* to that point, although refugee debates in the late 1930s about Americanization and Germanness prefigured it to some extent.<sup>78</sup>

Throughout this debate, George repeatedly argued that German Jewish refugees were immigrants who had severed their ties with their former home and did not want to return. Consequently, they must carefully consider how much interest they should even maintain in this discussion, let alone take part in it. As new Americans, their interest in Germany should be limited to that of Americans concerned about postwar peace in Europe, with no personal political ambitions for Germany.<sup>79</sup> In this, George made a strong distinction between political refugees and Jewish refugee-immigrants to the United States: whereas political refugees' keen interest in Germany and public suggestions on the nation's future could be tied to their ability and possible desire to return there, Jewish refugees generally did not feel that way. Like most Jewish organizations at the time, George argued that being Jewish automatically explained the decision not to return.

George felt that emotional responses to Germany among German Jewish immigrants to America were only acceptable if they related to private memories as well as to German language and culture. Political considerations about the future of Germany, on the other hand, should not make any emotional impression on them. Thus, he wrote "we do not faint, when somewhere someone suggests that parts of Eastern Prussia be ceded" from Germany.<sup>80</sup> George most frequently used "we" to insinuate that he was the spokesman for all refugees and represented their natural opinions and perspectives to the world. However, the didactic tone of his statements also suggests that some did not share these perspectives. In fact, George called Jews too interested in Germany's future, who contemplated returning, "confused minds."<sup>81</sup> Even though most German Jewish refugees shared George's opinions on returning to Germany, the division between rational detachment and emotional attachment to their former home, and the degree to which one ought to be interested in its future, were by no means as clear-cut as George suggested, as debate around the Council for a Democratic Germany showed.

The Council for a Democratic Germany was one of various groups, or Free Movements, in which German political émigrés and other interested anti-Nazis came together to discuss the future of postwar Germany. Under the chairmanship of theologian Paul Tillich, the council comprised a committee of nineteen members supported by sixty "signers"—all anti-Hitler emigrants from Germany representing a wide political spectrum ranging from Communists and Socialists, former members of the conservative German National People's Party, and the German Catholic Center Party, to Protestant clergy.<sup>82</sup> In addition, it was supported by more than fifty prominent Americans, including many liberal spokespeople such as Dorothy Thompson and Reinhold Niebuhr.<sup>83</sup>

Shortly after the council first published its program in May 1944, heated debates broke out about the organization itself, the specific content of its program, and its objective to "say a word about the future of Germany [at] a time, when the German people cannot speak for themselves."<sup>84</sup> Critics' main point of



contention was that the council's program depicted the German people as victims of Nazism who, therefore, could themselves be entrusted to dismantle the structures of Nazism—which the council identified as primarily the landowners, industrialists and the military.<sup>85</sup> This belief in the innocence of most Germans, given no evidence of any great resistance, was not well received in the emigrant community, nor by many Americans.<sup>86</sup>

Thomas Mann was the most famous early vocal critic of the council. As it was being formed, some founding members had asked Mann to participate as the organization's chairman. Mann declined because he did not believe that German exiles could or should give advice on how to deal with their former country after its people had committed horrible crimes.<sup>87</sup> For Manfred George, meanwhile, the council's establishment prompted him to declare that there was a clear split between German political exiles and immigrants, between those who saw Germany as their main interest and others whose future lay in America.<sup>88</sup> This split did not fall along Jewish/non-Jewish lines. However, the council's program said nothing explicit about the atrocities against the Jews and other victims of the Nazis, let alone punishment for those crimes. Also, while the council's program did mention restitution, it immediately made clear, hinting at the Treaty of Versailles, that too much restitution would generate a backlash and present a great burden to "the masses of German Nazi opponents."<sup>89</sup> These points provoked outrage within the Jewish community and the World Jewish Congress and German Jewish organizations, and spurred individual Jewish refugees to speak out against the council.<sup>90</sup> In addition, refugees were critical that some Jews supported the council despite its failure to acknowledge crimes against Jews.<sup>91</sup> For example, German Jewish writer Emil Ludwig—an active participant in the discussion about Germany's future—expressed his lack of understanding for Jews who saw themselves as more German than Jewish and who thus supported the council.<sup>92</sup>

Among Jews who supported the council was the former president and then honorary president of the Jewish Club of 1933, Leopold Jessner. Jessner's embrace of the council caused great uproar in the Los Angeles Club. The board not only discussed this matter within the club but also sought advice on how to deal with it from the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe in New York. In a letter to the federation's executive secretary, Herman Muller, club president Felix Guggenheim wrote, "we feel very much disturbed about some members of this Council as we feel that Jewish refugees, especially if they are consciously Jewish and are naturalized American citizens, should be reluctant to join the Council."<sup>93</sup> Not having had a chance to confront Jessner with this issue in person, as he was in the hospital recovering from an accident, Guggenheim asked to be informed about the federation's position and decisions in regard to the council.

The members of AMFED—representatives from different refugee organizations throughout the United States—concluded in mid-June 1944 that members

of their groups should abstain from joining the Council for a Democratic Germany.<sup>94</sup> Delegates had different reasons for this decision, however. While one's Jewish immigrant identity was the main criterion for some, others said that "for political reasons in general the Council should not be supported by anyone, whether he is Jewish or not." The diversity of reasons was not a matter of public discussion, nor was the decision that "those of our members who signed the Aufruf [call] of the Council for a Democratic Germany should not be called to account as everyone has the right of making decisions in his own discretion." But to the general public, the federation's clear message was disapproval of the council. Nevertheless, the federation emphasized that opposition to the council did not constitute disinterest in Germany's future: "On the contrary: on behalf of our brethren who may have to live in Germany after the war we have such an interest, and a very great one, which, however, we have to safeguard through recognized Jewish organizations and through the institutions of the United nations [*sic*] and not through the 'Council' or similar groups."<sup>95</sup> What mattered in the end was that the two most important organs of the refugee community—AMFED and *Aufbau*—set the tone of opposition to a program they felt neglected Jewish interests.

However, Jewish interest could also be used to make a case for the council, as evident in an explanation for Leopold Jessner's participation in the organization. Jessner's friend and former secretary gave a speech in front of the Jewish Club in Los Angeles clearly in response to accusations that only a person with a "confused" Jewish identity and lack of dedication to America would be driven to participate in the council:

Leopold Jessner's participation in the Council for a Democratic Germany is—needless to say—not dictated by a German heart, which none of us has anymore; it is dictated by his Jewish and American heart, it comes out of a feeling of solidarity with our Jewish brothers in Europe, who will have survived the decade of murder and for whom—seen from a real political perspective—neither the gates to America nor those to Palestine are open and will be open. It is not a German but a Jewish insight that longs for a democratic environment for the sake of these poor worn down people as a precondition for their emotional and mental [*seelisch*] convalescence. And it is not a German but a deeply Jewish understanding that is not only concerned about compensation for robbed money and possessions but above all about the foundation for political restitution of our Jewish brethren in Europe.<sup>96</sup>

Contrary to claims that the council was antithetical to Jewish interests, Jessner's spokesman argued in this context that Jessner joined precisely because the council's work was beneficial to and in the interest of Jews. Even though others, such as members of the AMFED as well as Manfred George, acknowledged the virtues of an interest in a democratic Germany for the sake of Jewish survivors and prospective peace, Jessner's lack of engagement with and ignorance

of German atrocities against Europe's Jews did not find understanding within the larger community. His position isolated him.

Together with Max Reinhardt and Erwin Piscator, Leopold Jessner had been one of the great directors of Weimar theater. Unlike the other two, however, Jessner was unable to continue his success in the United States. Even though he preached Americanization to his fellow refugees when he became active in the Jewish Club of 1933, he was not very successful in this endeavor himself. Jessner died in December of 1945 at the age of sixty-seven, but had, according to his close friend Alfred Perry, seriously considered eventually returning to Germany from 1944 on.<sup>97</sup> These variables, together with the fact that Jessner was both a socialist and a religious Jew, and a firm believer in a German-Jewish synthesis, make his decision to join the council seem much more understandable.<sup>98</sup> While it is not clear how Jessner could ignore the crimes against the European Jews, himself included, this short sketch reveals the complexities of human existence and emotional belonging that characterized the lives and experiences of some of the German Jewish refugees. As refugees' life stories and identities were complicated and inconsistent, so, too, could be the decisions they made.

If Jessner was at one end of the spectrum of attitudes German Jewish refugees held toward Germany during this time, Manfred George's stance can be regarded as the other. As a major public figure of the German Jewish refugee community and editor in chief of *Aufbau*, the mouthpiece of that group, he was in a very different position of responsibility than Jessner. George was always concerned with the image, standing, and future of this community in the United States. Thus, George's articulations and calls on refugees to abstain from having a political interest in postwar Germany and from joining organizations such as the council have to be seen in this context. When the public debate on Germany's postwar future was underway in summer 1943, the U.S. State Department made known that it did not seek to cooperate with anti-Nazi Germans.<sup>99</sup> Apparently, the U.S. government distrusted German emigrants' motives and aims in their postwar planning schemes.<sup>100</sup> Hence, George's strict position of noninterest and nonengagement in discussions of postwar Germany represented the safest way to situate his community in America.

Except for Jessner's, no one expressed opinions contrary to George's in *Aufbau* during that time. It is unclear whether there were none, none that wanted to speak publicly, or none that met George's editorial approval. Refugees' stances toward and interest in Germany at the end of the war were certainly tied to their age, personal experiences in the old country, the fate of family members and friends there, and their own family situation and integration into American life. The official principal stance of the larger organized community was to have no interest in Germany beyond issues of restitution, retribution, and the protection and survival of Jews in Europe.

In the last years of the war, German Jewish refugees, not without difficulty, carved out a special position for themselves within America, within the larger American Jewish community, and toward postwar Germany. In doing so, they took part, both within their community and more widely, in debates concerning German punishment and restitution. Their discourse on these topics, although superficially similar, was of a different quality than that outside the community. It betrayed an impatience, angst, and intimacy with the events that reflected a deeply personal connection to the debate, borne of their traumatic experiences and close ties between parts of their identity and its central questions. Overall, their engagement in this discourse strengthened their German Jewish refugee identity. Even though this identity was projected against Germany and deeply entrenched in a genuine attachment to America, suspicion from outside the community fostered insecurity among refugees about their position in the United States. This fear prompted the leading American refugee organizations not only to emphasize their belonging to the United States, but also to encourage refugees to abstain from showing too much interest in Germany. While Leopold Jessner's position, one that attempted to look beyond the atrocities to pursue a new Germany, did not meet with much understanding within the larger refugee community, George's rationalist stance, advocating complete disinterest in political developments in Germany, offered an alternative that ultimately also asked too much. Even though George insisted that the primary makeup of the refugees' identity, patriotically speaking, must be American and Jewish, their connections and special interests in Germany could not be denied; too many great questions regarding Germany demanded their interest. This is not to suggest that there was any significant positivity toward Germany or optimism for its future. On the contrary, in the initial postwar years, most refugees were suspicious and critical of the new state, regularly cautioning Americans not to be so trusting.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, the detachment from German affairs that George advocated waned, and the organized refugee community at large changed its relationship to Germany into one of critical engagement, an approach that was legitimated and then even promoted by George himself.

## Notes

1. See, e.g., *Aufbau* 9 (20 August 1943).
2. See collection of articles in "Aktion Landkarte," in Schaber, ed., *Aufbau Reconstruction*, 57ff.
3. Interview Kurt Shuler.
4. Herman Muller, in German, report from May 24, 1965, in Feld, "American Federation of Jews from Central Europe," 134.
5. "Dawn of Liberation," *Aufbau* 10 (12 May 1944).

6. “Himmler’s Ausrottungsplan: State Department bestätigt alle Nachrichten,” *Aufbau* 8 (27 November 1942). The article appears only on the fifth page, perhaps because some readers were fed up with reading such awful news. See, e.g., Manfred George in *Aufbau* 8 (23 October 1942). The next issue from 4 December 1943, gave the topic more prominence, however.
7. For more detail on this and how the State Department tried to distance itself from Wise, see Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 180ff.
8. *Ibid.*, 181. See chapter 8 on this larger issue.
9. Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914*, 410. While journalists did occasionally embellish stories about German atrocities during World War I (*ibid.*, 206), the German Army did in fact commit great atrocities. However, postwar pacifists in France, Britain, and the United States began to cast these wholesale as exaggerated propaganda (paralleling German revisionist accounts). This view became a dominant narrative and resulted in initial skepticism on the part of Allied governments toward reports of German atrocities and reluctance on the side of the press to publicize them. See *ibid.*
10. “Himmler’s Ausrottungsplan: State Department bestätigt alle Nachrichten,” *Aufbau* 8 (27 November 1942).
11. Rabbiner Dr. Manfred Swarsensky, “Sollen wir schweigen?” *Aufbau* 9 (4 December 1942). Translation mine, “fellow refugees” is “Schicksalsgenossen” in the original text. See also Karl Kluge of the Friends of German Democracy, “Wir dürfen nicht schweigen,” *Aufbau* 10 (11 December 1942): 10. People had different reasons for being unwilling to believe or engage with the news. See, e.g., Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 140–41; and Moore, *Know Your Enemy*, 193–94.
12. Some historians have argued that the disunity and strife within the American Jewish community led to insufficient and inefficient actions to save Europe’s Jews. Others have suggested that, although more could have perhaps been done by American Jews, forces dominating the American government and public opinion—who largely shared an anti-Jewish or disinterested attitude—were so strong it is unlikely that even a united American Jewry would have changed much. See, e.g., Feingold, *Bearing Witness*; Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 220–21.
13. Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 218.
14. Penkower, “American Jewry and the Holocaust,” 99.
15. Feingold, *Bearing Witness*; Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue*. For a counterargument, see also Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*; and Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*.
16. See, e.g., “Der grosse Appell,” *Aufbau* 9 (5 March 1943): 1; and the *Aufbau* campaign “Messages to the Jewish People,” *Aufbau* 9 (7 May 1943); and subsequent issues.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Minutes of the fourteenth meeting of the board of directors of the Jewish Club of 1933, Inc., on Thursday, June 3, 1943, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1942–1943, Correspondence Jewish Club of 1933.
19. March 1943 editions of *Aufbau* contain critiques of the show. Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 219.
20. Announcement from the Jewish Club of 1933 to its members, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1943, Refugees and Civilian Defense.
21. See “We Shall Never Die,” *Aufbau* 9 (6 August 1943).
22. Letter Dec. 15, 1943, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1943, Refugees and Civilian Defense.
23. *Ibid.* and undated document, probably early 1944, referring to the former. FGP, B107, Correspondence 1943, Refugees and Civilian Defense.
24. See, e.g., another appeal to the Los Angeles refugee community, *Aufbau* 9 (16 April 1945): 16.
25. Moore, *Know Your Enemy*, 3.
26. “Pläne für die Bestrafung der Nazi Verbrecher,” *Aufbau* 8 (6 November 1942).
27. See, e.g., “Einheit oder Aufteilung” *Aufbau* 9 (23 April 1943).

28. *Aufbau* 8 (25 December 1942); and “Was wird mit den Kriegsverbrechern? Die Verhandlungen kommen nicht weiter,” *Aufbau* 9 (19 February 1943).
29. See Alpers, *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture*, 2–3, 208.
30. For more detail, see Middell, *Exil in den USA*, 169–94.
31. Gerhart H. Seger was a member of the Reichstag for the SPD from 1930 to 1933 and was incarcerated in the concentration camp in Oranienburg.
32. “Wer ist eigentlich das ‘deutsche Volk?’,” *Aufbau* 9 (5 November 1943).
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.* See also Lamberti, “German Antifascist Refugees in America,” 292.
36. Toni Sender made a similar argument about the German workers, in “Gibt es ein ‘anderes Deutschland’? Der Widerstand der Gewerkschaften wurde nie gebrochen” in *Aufbau* 9 (30 July 1943).
37. See “Zum Streit über das Deutsche Volk” *Aufbau* 9 (12 November 1943); and Manfred George, “Die Frage deutscher Exilpolitik in U.S.A.,” *Aufbau* 10 (14 January 1944).
38. “Um das deutsche Volk,” *Aufbau* 9 (24 December 1943).
39. See Moore, *Know Your Enemy*, for a recent account on this debate in the United States.
40. See Lamberti, “German Antifascist Refugees,” 279, and note 1 for scholarly works that come to that conclusion, e.g., Petersen, “Das Umfeld: Die Vereinigten Staaten und die deutschen Emigranten,” 70–71. The German born writer Emil Ludwig (formerly Cohn) seemed to have been one notable exception to this trend. See the section on Emil Ludwig in Moore, *Know Your Enemy*, 256–58.
41. “Die Alliierten brauchen Ihre Kenntnisse über die Nazis,” *Aufbau* 9 (14 May 1943).
42. On the involvement of refugees in the OSS, see Franz Neumann et al., *Secret Reports on Nazi Germany*.
43. Speech manuscript, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1944, German Jewish Refugee Issues.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. See Manfred George, “None Shall Escape,” *Aufbau* 10 (16 June 1944).
47. “Helft mit bei der Bestrafung der Kriegsverbrecher,” *Aufbau* 11 (4 May 1945).
48. Kempner was assistant U.S. chief counsel at the Nuremberg trials. For more on how information provided by refugees through *Aufbau* aided Kempner in his prosecution of Nazi criminals, see Schaber, *Aufbau Reconstruction*, 72–73.
49. Speech manuscript, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1944, German Jewish Refugee Issues.
50. Sagi, *German Reparations*, 14.
51. *Aufbau*, which published two articles on the general topic of restitution in 1939, did not report about Adler-Rudel’s memo. See Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau*, 43 and notes 14 and 15.
52. American Jewish organizations—the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Conference, and the American Joint Distribution Committee—began launching coordinated activities in 1940 and 1941. In 1940, the American Jewish Committee set up a special Committee for Peace Studies concerned with questions of postwar compensation and reinstatement of rights for European Jews. In November 1941, the World Jewish Congress organized a conference in Baltimore dedicated to the subject. Then, Nahum Goldmann, who would become a central figure in restitution, stated to the participants of the conference, “Who can doubt that we Jews have a right to international help for European Jewry after the war? If reparations are to be paid, we are the first who have a claim to them.” The event did not receive *Aufbau* coverage. Bauer-Hack, *Die Jüdische Wochenzeitung Aufbau*, 44. In 1943, the American Jewish Conference was established. In Palestine, first organized activities to engage with restitution matters were launched in 1943, headed by Nir Company which had handled Ha’avara transfers prior to

- the war. Sagi, *German Reparations*, 16. For more details on the beginning of restitution and different approaches to the idea, see also Goschler, *Wiedergutmachung*.
53. Interview with Felix Guggenheim, conducted by Herbert A. Strauss, Los Angeles, 6 January 1972, LBI, AR 25385, <http://www.lbi.org/digibaec/results/?qtype=pid&term=1328082>.
  54. "Vorstandsbeschluss," *Aufbau* 9 (5 March 1943).
  55. *Ibid.*
  56. Different documents in FGP, B108, Correspondence 1944, German Jewish Refugee Issues.
  57. See "Wiedergutmachungsansprüche der Juden aus Deutschland," *Aufbau* 10 (27 October 1944).
  58. Demands included the following: "After cessation of hostilities Jews on the Continent shall be given the option for either returning to their countries of origin in possession of all their former rights as subjects of those countries, or of final establishment in their countries of residence, unless they choose to emigrate to Palestine or elsewhere. 3) Economic restitution has to be carried out regarding all properties in whatever shape or form towards Jews from Germany taken from them under legal forms or pretexts or by open robbery after the 30th January 1933. The same applies to rights of pension, special taxes levied on Jews, including flight tax, losses sustained through forced sales of property or businesses and the like. 4) Pensions have to be paid to widows or orphans of Jews murdered by the Nazis. 5) Communal property has to be restored respectively the indemnities paid to be used for the resettlement of Jews abroad. 6) Indemnity has to be paid on property belonging to persons who have died in Nazi Germany or after deportation to the rightful heir or, if none, to a resettlement fund." Memorandum of the Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain, London, FGC, B108, FGP, Correspondence 1944, German Jewish Refugee Issues.
  59. See, e.g., "Wiedergutmachungsansprüche der Juden aus Deutschland," *Aufbau* 10 (27 October 1944).
  60. Minutes, German Jewish Representative Committee, October 4, 1944, Ms. Col. No. 361, H134, American Jewish Archives.
  61. See, e.g., "Future of the Jews from Germany," *Aufbau* 10 (8 December 1944).
  62. "Vorstandsbeschluss," *Aufbau* 9 (5 March 1943).
  63. Manfred George, "Do Refugees Want to Return?" *Congress Weekly*, 10 November 1944, (as of 2006) uncatalogued materials related to the Jewish Club of 1933, Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.
  64. See, e.g., "Another Open Letter to the Refugees Who Are Our Guests," in the *Santa Barbara News-Press*, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1942–1943, Enemy Alien Issues incl. Tolan House Committee, 1 of 2. Discussions about the behavior of individual refugees as prompting this negative image of the group also appear in *Aufbau*. See also Kassof et al., *Lives Lost, Lives Found*, 20ff. See also Hannah Arendt's 1943 essay "We Refugees," which was then published in the *Menorah Journal* (January 1943): 69–77, and Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 264–74.
  65. Al Segal, "A Man's House," *B'nai Brith Messenger*, combined with the Jewish Community Press, 27 August 1943.
  66. FGP, B107, Correspondence 1944–1945, Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe.
  67. George, "Do Refugees Want to Return?," emphasis added.
  68. "Juden und deutsche Bürgerrechte," *Aufbau* 10 (17 November 1944).
  69. *Ibid.*
  70. "Future of the Jews from Germany," *Aufbau* 10 (8 December 1944). Interestingly, Manfred George, who expressed his strong disapproval for Jews living in Germany or wanting to have anything to do with Germany elsewhere, endorsed the option of German citizenship upon request; see Manfred George, "Staatsangehörigkeit 'Deutsch?'" *Aufbau* 10 (24 November 1944).

71. Ibid.
72. Over the next year, other refugee organizations from South America, France, Belgium, and Australia joined the council. *A.J.R. Information* 1 (January 1946).
73. Moore, *Know Your Enemy*, 281–82.
74. Ibid., 178.
75. See also the discussion about the proposal by the American political journalist Kingsbury Smith about the partition of Germany in *Aufbau* 9 (9 April 1943), and in subsequent issues.
76. Manfred George, “Diskussionen über Deutschland,” *Aufbau* 9 (8 January 1943).
77. “Einheit oder Aufteilung,” *Aufbau* 9 (23 April 1943). See April 1943 issues in which *Aufbau* editors asked prominent émigrés to answer different questions on the political future of Germany.
78. See Schaber, *Aufbau Reconstruction*, 212ff.
79. See, e.g., Manfred George, “To Repeat It Again and Again,” *Aufbau* 9 (28 May 1943); and “Deutschlandpolitik in U.S.A.,” *Aufbau* 10 (28 January 1944).
80. “Das unberührte Herz,” *Aufbau* 9 (3 September 1943).
81. Manfred George, “Diskussionen über Deutschland,” *Aufbau* 9 (8 January 1943); and “Verwirrte Gemüter,” *Aufbau* 10 (2 June 1944).
82. Langkau-Alex, “Vorwort,” in *Was soll aus Deutschland werden?*, ed. Langkau-Alex and Ruprecht, 10. For the history of the council, also see Liebner, *Paul Tillich*; and Lamberti, “German Antifascist Refugees.”
83. Lamberti, “German Antifascist Refugees,” 295.
84. “Deklaration des Council for a Democratic Germany,” in *Was soll aus Deutschland werden?*, ed. Langkau-Alex and Ruprecht, 156.
85. Ibid.
86. See, e.g., the reactions from the Society for the Prevention of World War III.
87. His brother was among the signers. See previously cited publications on the council and Chapter 9 in Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific*.
88. Manfred George, “Am Scheideweg,” *Aufbau* 10 (12 May 1944).
89. “Deklaration des Council for a Democratic Germany,” in *Was soll aus Deutschland werden?*, ed. Langkau-Alex and Ruprecht, 156. See Walter Mehring, “Kleine Feststellung,” *Aufbau* 10 (12 May 1944). See also *Aufbau* 10 (19 May 1944), for different statements from refugees about the council, including a long letter under the title “Es gibt kein ‘anderes’ Deutschland” by radio commentator Hans Jacob, who wrote, “There is no word on restitution. The crimes are forgotten.”
90. See, e.g., the letter exchange between Erika Mann and Carl Zuckmayer, *Aufbau* 10 (12 May 1944).
91. See the discussion about the alleged endorsement of Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, “Rabbi Jonah B. Wise dementiert seine Unterschrift,” *Aufbau* 10 (19 May 1944); and Lamberti, “German Antifascist Refugees,” 297, on the World Jewish Congress.
92. Emil Ludwig, “Richtigstellung,” *Aufbau* 10 (16 June 1944).
93. Letter from Felix Guggenheim to Herman Muller, June 15, 1944, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942–1945, American Federation of Jews from Central Europe.
94. Letter from Herman Muller to Felix Guggenheim, Jewish Club, dated July 10, 1944, FGP, B108, Correspondence 1942–1945, American Federation of Jews from Central Europe.
95. Ibid.
96. Mitgliederversammlung, FGP, B107, Correspondence 1944–1945, Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe.
97. From a letter by Alfred Perry to Marta Mierendorff, July 17, 1974, Marta Mierendorff Papers, Collection no. 0214, Marta Mierendorff Collection on Leopold and Fritz Jessner, 1910–1986,



- B1, Marta Mierendorff, Correspondence, 1965–1972, 1, 1, Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.
98. Feinberg, “Leopold Jessner,” 120.
99. See Claus-Dieter Krohn, “Der Council for a Democratic Germany,” in *Was soll aus Deutschland werden?*, ed. Langkau-Alex and Ruprecht, 17–48, 27 and note 32.
100. Petersen, “Das Umfeld,” 71.
101. See, e.g., “A Fateful Mistake,” *Aufbau* 11 (18 May 1945). Similarly, “Die Nazis haben es gut: Die Zustände in der englischen Besatzungszone,” *Aufbau* 12 (22 March 1946); and interviews in Peck, *Queen City Refuge*, and Wolmann, *Crossing Over*.