

Introduction

REFUGEES FROM NAZI GERMANY AS HISTORIANS

Origins and Migrations, Interests and Identities

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This book deals with the biographies, scholarly oeuvres, and intellectual interests of men and women who were both professional historians and, in a particular sense, “participants” in history.¹ They were born in the early twentieth century and grew up in Germany or the surrounding German-speaking territories usurped by the National Socialist regime before 1939. At a young age, they were forced to leave the so-called Third Reich and escaped to other countries. The families of these young refugees reacted to the discrimination and terror that the Nazis imposed on them. They were no longer wanted in Germany. With few exceptions, they were targeted as Jews. In contrast to the older, first generation of émigrés² who fled the Nazi dictatorship after their university training had been completed, members of the younger, or second, generation acquired their academic degrees after their emigration and in the English-speaking world. Our volume concentrates on this younger cohort, specifically those who ultimately settled, or spent the bulk of their career, in North America; we also cast a look at England and Israel.

In this second generation we encounter historians who lost their parents and family members in the Holocaust as well as scholars who escaped the Nazis via a *Kindertransport* (children’s transport) abroad. We find one historian who was still a baby when his parents brought him to Shanghai, and another who parachuted as a U.S. soldier into Normandy in June 1944, seven years after his escape from Germany.³ The second generation includes others who spent years in France, New Zealand, Bolivia, and Mexico before they found a home in America. They all demonstrated a remarkable persistence in moving on after their escape from

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Nazi Germany. They shared some cultural capital, and there remains something distinct about them. Yet, they pursued different interests. Age, gender, family background, personal references, and the levels of support they found in the institutions of higher education all made a difference. They also negotiated their personal and professional identities in a wide variety of ways. Some, for example, quickly shed that of an *émigré*, while others never felt entirely assimilated in their new homeland.

This volume presents the first sustained effort to examine the second generation of refugees who became historians and to analyze their scholarly work. But it does not present one *émigré* narrative.⁴ The various connections between personal experiences and scholarly interests resist quick generalizations. First, we provide space for nine American historians to speak for themselves; they were all born in Germany and escaped the Nazi dictatorship. The authors include Klemens von Klemperer, Walter Laqueur, Peter Paret, Fritz Stern, Georg G. Iggers, Gerhard L. Weinberg, Hanna Holborn Gray, Peter J. Loewenberg, and Renate Bridenthal. Part II offers some conceptual thoughts about this generation and the role it played in post–World War II historiography. Part III consists of case studies that deal with individual historians. The chapters in Part IV point out comparative and transnational perspectives.

Taken together, these contributions demonstrate that the historians of the younger *émigré* generation added important themes, experiences, and perspectives to the academic landscape that expanded after 1945. In a few cases, they played a role in the transformation of history as a discipline. For the various audiences of history in the English-speaking world, many of these scholars kept alive a critical interest in the plurality of the German and European pasts.⁵ In diverse, often subtle, and mediated ways, the imprint of these pasts expressed itself in a distinct *habitus*, rather than in a common concentration on a few themes. Furthermore, several of these historians drew German scholars into intellectual and personal conversations that helped to open German historiography to new analytical concepts and to overcome its national orientation.

But who belonged to the second generation? Our volume offers, in Part V, for the first time a biobibliographic guide, which is based on systematic research and features 107 individuals. Chapter 22 explains the methodology used to identify them; Tables 1 and 2 at the end of this introductory essay offer a summary. This sample is much larger and far more diverse than one would assume at first glance; it includes eighty-seven male and twenty female historians. The detailed biographies in chapter 23 provide information about the origins, migrations, academic careers, international recognition, and publications of these 107 historians of the second generation, supplemented by a selected bibliography.⁶

In the following, I exploit the collected data, utilize the rich pool of autobiographical literature, as well as information obtained directly from former *émigrés*,⁷ to present some general observations. I will trace the various origins of

the young refugees and then follow their extended migrations, which in some cases led around the globe. These migrations equipped the future historians with transcultural experiences that allowed them to acquire a broad outlook on the world and make us realize the complexity of what constitutes their identity. As a result, seemingly coherent entities such as “German-American emigrants” or “German-Jewish historians” become more differentiated. We can discern more clearly elements of continuity and discontinuity that characterized these émigrés’ paths to history, the diversity of their interests, and their place in the intellectual history of what Eric Hobsbawm, yet another migrant between cultures, has called the “Age of Extremes.”⁸

The Second Generation

The protagonists of this book did not escape as “refugee scholars.” This term has been used frequently when discussing the enforced brain drain from Nazi Germany; it encapsulates what is often called the first generation of émigrés.⁹ A considerable number of works have dealt specifically with the refugee historians who escaped from the Third Reich as academically trained scholars. Hans Baron, Fritz T. Epstein, Felix Gilbert, Hajo Holborn, Ernst Kantorowicz, Hans Kohn, Paul Oskar Kristeller, Hans Rosenberg, Hans Rothfels, Selma Stern-Täubler, and Helena Wieruszowski belong to this group of ninety-eight historians (see Table 3 at the end of this essay). Studies on this older generation¹⁰ have drawn our attention to the intellectual dynamics inherent in the process of *Wissenschaftstransfer*—that is, the transfer, exchange, and transformation of scholarly knowledge—and have suggested moving beyond older models that distinguished between losers and winners of scholarly emigration.¹¹ This volume focuses not on the migration of existing scholarly knowledge, but on the competencies that young refugees carried abroad.

The term “second generation” itself has also been established by previous studies.¹² We use it primarily as a heuristic category to analyze the cohort of emigrants who escaped from Nazi Germany at a young age—that is, as children, teenagers, or young adults. With few exceptions, they were born between 1918 and 1935 (see Table 1). Most of them had not even finished middle or high school when they left Germany. In our sample, the average age at the time of emigration was thirteen years and nine months (see Table 2). Speaking of a second generation, however, bears an ironic notion insofar as this term prioritizes the German perspective on those who left the Third Reich. If we concentrate on the young refugees’ arrival and careers in their new countries, we see that they were often the first—that is, the first who attained a native speaker’s fluency in English; the first to receive a doctorate in the English-speaking world; and the first to fight in American or British uniform against the country in which they were born (and its allies in the Pacific theater).¹³ Moreover, the term “second generation” bears different meanings in other scholarly

contexts. Psychologists, literary scholars, and historians apply it to describe the children of Holocaust survivors. Sociologists use the term when dealing with the children of immigrants, especially in the United States.¹⁴

The refugees of the second generation did not know that they would be scholars one day. While a few of them had parents who were accomplished academics, they were anything but “illustrious immigrants.”¹⁵ Their acculturation in North America, as in England and Israel, was not about adjusting an existing professional record to a new environment; it was about creating a professional future from scratch. There are individuals in this generation who rose to prominence in postwar historiography, such as Peter Gay, Gerda Lerner, or George L. Mosse—and the authors who contribute autobiographical testimonies to this volume. But there were others as well: historians who published little, were not well known outside the circle of experts, and have therefore been largely forgotten. They, too, deserve to be taken into consideration.¹⁶

Acknowledging this diversity means we should refrain both from construing a generation of emigrants in a biological sense and from suggesting that émigrés-turned-historians constituted a clearly identifiable group. Nor should we claim a direct causal connection between the experience of emigration and the research émigrés undertook years later. Kenneth Barkin, Catherine Epstein, Christhard Hoffmann, and James J. Sheehan have articulated similar caveats in their observations on first-generation refugee historians.¹⁷ Epstein and Volker Berghahn confirm this caution in this volume. The emphasis on the diversity of the émigrés also separates our volume from a recent trend to design so-called generations that are defined by commonalities in life experiences and intellectual output, yet seem to derive from the common year of their birth.¹⁸

Numbers, Origins, Chronology

Approximately 500,000 individuals left Central Europe in the years 1933 to 1945 to escape discrimination and ultimately—as we now know—physical annihilation. Those young refugees who eventually became historians constitute numerically a tiny segment of the group of around 28,000 emigrants who were born between 1918 and 1935.¹⁹ Only four of the second-generation refugees in our sample were born in the first decade of the twentieth century; twenty between 1910 and 1919. A total of sixty-six were born in the 1920s; seventeen in the 1930s. The oldest at the time of her emigration was Ann Frank Beck, born in 1900; she later taught history in South Dakota, Michigan, and Connecticut. The youngest is Michael A. Meyer, who was born in 1937 and became a leading scholar in the field of Jewish history.

Eighty (c. 75 percent) were born and lived in the territory of the German Reich prior to the annexation of Austria, twenty-one (c. 20 percent) in Austria,

while one was born in Poland and one in Switzerland; four grew up in post-World War I Czechoslovakia.²⁰ This distribution corresponds roughly to that of the total number of refugees who escaped the National Socialist regime in the 1930s. It is not surprising that four major cities with strong middle-class Jewish communities feature prominently among the birthplaces in our sample: twenty-three of the young émigrés came from Berlin, sixteen from Vienna, eleven from Frankfurt/Main, and six from Breslau, today's Wrocław.

The chronology of their emigration, as well as the set of motivations that triggered it, mirror the patterns we know from the general statistics. The year 1933, when the Nazis took over in Germany, represents a first peak; twelve left Germany that year. Their parents immediately saw the consequences of the establishment of Hitler's regime. The socioeconomic situation of the families affected made a difference. Emigrating—which required not only a visa, but also the means to manage the departure logistically—was an option more available to middle-class families, especially those with connections abroad, than to others.²¹ The families of George L. Mosse and Johanna Stolper belonged to this group. With disarming frankness, Mosse later described that his departure from Germany does not fit the image of an adventurous escape. Mosse grew up in the bourgeois setting of the wealthy Lachmann-Mosse family in Berlin. After he had concluded his last exam at a prestigious boarding school on Lake Constance, he took a boat to Switzerland, where he attended a boarding school for another year.²² Stolper, the author of two stimulating books on German society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is known in the profession under the name Joan Campbell. Her parents, Gustav and Toni Stolper, both originally from Vienna, had become accomplished economists and journalists in the Weimar Republic. Living in Berlin, they belonged to Weimar's liberal establishment and were close friends of the family of Theodor Heuss. The Stolpers also had ties to intellectuals abroad and were able to move to New York City in 1933.²³

In our sample, as in the population at large, the number of emigrants remained low until the end of 1937, but it rose noticeably after the Nuremberg Laws were passed in 1935 (see Table 2).²⁴ The year 1938 constituted a watershed. It was epitomized by three traumatic events that accelerated the pace with which the National Socialist regime undermined the remaining legal and social status of Jews.²⁵ Germany's annexation of Austria on 11–12 March 1938, the so-called *Anschluss*, marked the beginning. Raul Hilberg, the analyst of the Holocaust, recalled that “giant swastika flags were draped from the upper stories of apartment houses” in Vienna the next day. His father remarked tersely: “Hitler will put us to the wall.” Then, in October 1938, came the German annexation of the border region of Czechoslovakia that included a significant German-speaking population, the *Sudetenland*. This step meant a dramatic intrusion into the post-World War I order, sanctioned by the Munich Agreement of late September. For Wilma Iggers, who was born in Bohemia as the daughter of a Jewish farmer and

later became a literary historian in the United States, the Munich Agreement meant “the greatest shock imaginable for my belief in the decency of the world.”²⁶

The attacks on Jews intensified after the pogrom of 9 November 1938, the so-called *Kristallnacht*. Werner Gundersheimer, who would serve as the director of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington from 1983 to 2002, was still an infant in November 1938. But through his parents’ memories, he relived the terror of *Kristallnacht* for decades. His mother had already prepared the sandwiches she thought would be needed for her husband in captivity after that night. But for another nine months, the Gestapo kept Hermann Gundersheimer in custody. He was an art historian who was forced to relinquish his position as a university docent and had taken a position as curator of the Rothschild Museum of Judaica in Frankfurt/Main. The secret police wanted to exploit his knowledge of Jewish art, which had just been vandalized in the Rothschild Museum and elsewhere. The Gundersheimer family left for England in 1939 and emigrated to the United States a year later.²⁷

The enforced departures of 1938 and 1939 were organized much more hastily than those in previous years. The rapidly growing external as well as psychological pressure to find a way “out of Germany,” to quote Renate Bridenthal’s chapter in this volume, placed an even greater burden on families with limited financial means. Roosevelt’s America was the most desired destination. Many scrambled to secure an affidavit and acquire a visa to enter the United States, the country that ultimately agreed, against domestic opposition, to receive the largest contingent of refugees from the Third Reich. An estimated 130,000 came directly from Central Europe; the total number might be significantly above 200,000 if we were to count those who arrived in the United States after stays in other countries, such as England, and often with a hiatus of several years.²⁸

It has been estimated that 118,000 Jews escaped from Germany in 1938 and 1939—about 42 percent of the total number of Jewish emigrants in the years 1933–45. The number of Jews living on Austrian territory shrank by about 100,000 (c. 55 percent) within twelve months after the German annexation.²⁹ Our sample of émigrés confirms these statistics. Twenty-three (c. 21 percent) of them left—or were deported and expelled from—the now enlarged German Reich in 1938, thirty-one (c. 29 percent) in the following year. Several escaped abroad via a *Kindertransport*. They were rescued in a series of last-minute efforts to provide a safe haven for an estimated 10,000 children who would otherwise have faced an abyss. This small group included Robert Schwarz, who taught for over three decades at Florida Atlantic University; Gerald Holton, a distinguished Harvard physicist who also immersed himself into the history of science; and George Nadel, who pursued his changing interests in Australia, the United States, and England. They were all first brought to England, while Peter Buzanski, a long-time professor of history at San Jose College in California, left Vienna for Sweden in March 1939, crammed into a railway car filled with refugee children.³⁰

Diversity and the Shades of Emigration

Many of the refugees who turned into historians were part of a complex migration history, the roots of which reach back to the nineteenth century. They were not simply Germans who turned into Americans.³¹ They had parents who had come to Berlin, Vienna, or other German-speaking cities from the multiethnic regions of Central and Eastern Europe, which were then part of the ethnic patchwork of the eastern parts of the German Empire and especially of the Habsburg and Russian Empires. They spoke Czech, Hungarian, or German; some, Russian or Polish; others, Yiddish or Romanian—and in many cases several of these languages.

Both Alexander Dallin, the expert on Russia at Columbia and Stanford University, and George A. Lensen, who wrote about history of Russian-East Asian relations during his tenure at Florida State University, were Berliners. And both were sons of Russian fathers, a Menshevik and a Kadet, who lived in exile from the Bolshevik Soviet Union. Raul Hilberg's father was born in what is today the western region of the Ukraine, his mother in Galicia. Theodore Hamerow, a long-time professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, was born in Warsaw. He would later entitle succinctly the last chapter of his recollections of interwar Poland "Leaving the Titanic."³²

The refugees' diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds as well as their multifaceted cultural and linguistic heritage, in addition to their age and gender, had an impact on the timing and circumstances of their escape. For those who were old enough and willing to speak up against the National Socialists, or who directly felt the Gestapo's terror, this political experience needs to be blended into the story of emigration and escape. All these factors influenced how the refugees later remembered their early years in German-speaking Europe and whether they were willing to reconnect with the country of their birth.

A telling example is provided by Gerd Korman, who taught history in Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations for decades. Korman's mother was born in today's Wuppertal, where her family—Jews from the Austro-Hungarian Empire—had immigrated in the midst of a migration of Polish workers into the industrial Ruhr valley. His father, however, had entered Weimar Germany from Polish Galicia, and counted as a Pole—and a Polish Jew. According to the German citizenship law, Gerd Korman and his immediate family were categorized as Polish citizens. In late October 1938, after the Kormans were forced to surrender their passports, making them stateless, they were ordered out of the country. They fell victim to the deportation of Poles, the so-called *Polenausweisung*, which ultimately affected about 18,000 individuals living on German territory. Korman was forced into the camp set up for Polish Jews in Zbaszyn, a Polish town close to Germany's eastern border. Under dire conditions, he began to embrace Yiddish culture and Zionist ideas. In August 1939, Korman was rescued by a

Kindertransport that brought him to England. A year later, the family reunited in New York City. Korman later felt deep ambiguities and anxieties when visiting Germany and, after decades, began to speak German again.³³

Klemens von Klemperer and Gerda Lerner were both older and exposed to the National Socialist regime in different ways. Klemperer, the long-time professor of European history at Smith College, came from a middle-class family. At the time of the *Anschluss*, he had already graduated from a prestigious high school in Berlin, the *Französische Gymnasium*, spent two years at Oxford's Balliol College, and was enrolled at the University of Vienna. Although Klemperer realized immediately the necessity of leaving Austria, he continued to support his anti-Nazi friends. Thinking of becoming a poet, Klemperer was concerned about "losing my living tie with the German language."³⁴ In the fall of 1939, he packed his suitcases under the supervision of two Gestapo men and left for New York City, though with cultural baggage that was very different from Korman's. While the latter devoted much of his energies to teaching and writing about the necessity of keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive, Klemperer focused on bearing witness to those Germans who had resisted the National Socialist dictatorship; he cultivated ties to academic communities in both Germany and Austria.³⁵

Gerda Lerner, born in Vienna, also arrived in New York City in 1939. She would become one of America's foremost feminist scholars and a pioneer in the field of women's history. The daughter of a Jewish pharmacist, Lerner absorbed Socialist and feminist literature as a teenager in Vienna. She engaged in political activities with her young Marxist friends. Lerner later described the German annexation of Austria as a "funeral." Desperately attempting to obtain a visa for the United States, enduring harassment by the local bureaucracy, and being held for several weeks in a Vienna prison, Lerner felt it was like "trying to fight your way out of a swamp and sinking deeper with every step."³⁶ Under a deportation order, she was finally able to leave Austria, exactly a month before *Kristallnacht*. In the immediate years after that experience, Lerner could no longer bear "to hear the German language without choking." Even more than six decades after her enforced departure from Vienna, Lerner was struggling to write about and emotionally confront the events of 1938. Only the resonance that her literary and scholarly works found in the German-speaking world reconciled her with her native tongue and with Austria.³⁷

German-Jewish Cultures

Most of those portrayed in this volume belonged to the "Generation Exodus" as described by Walter Laqueur: the generation of young, German-speaking Jews who were old enough to witness the rise of the Nazis, but young enough to begin a new life in America, England, Palestine, and elsewhere.³⁸ Being Jewish had

different meanings for members of this cohort. It could be a distinct religious identity or, more broadly, a set of cultural values and traditions. Jewishness could be a category imposed by the National Socialists, which might then have been strengthened by the experience of the Third Reich. For some, being Jewish was a highly mediated and partial identity, while others strongly embraced it. Can we capture, at least in nuances, what the hyphenated, seemingly familiar term “German-Jewish” signified for the refugees of the second generation?³⁹

We know today that the National Socialists themselves grappled with developing a supposedly coherent racist categorization of Jews.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, from early 1933 on, being classified as Jewish was the decisive reason to be targeted by the new regime. About 90 to 95 percent of the individuals in our sample and their families fell into this category. This confirms what we know about the composition of the refugees from Central Europe at large.⁴¹ The category of Jews included children of religiously mixed marriages and of grandparents with Christian and Jewish origins. Hans A. Schmitt, who later taught at the University of Virginia, was one of them. Until 1933 he did not care much about the fact that his mother was Jewish. Schmitt never had a bar mitzvah, and in his self-perception was “not a Jew and had no intention of becoming one.” But he marched proudly in the first rank of the Jewish Boy Scouts with his “certified Nordic appearance,” as he dryly put it later.⁴² Others did see themselves as Jews. At least two of the émigrés in our sample had mothers who had converted from the Christian faith to Judaism before 1933.⁴³

A substantial number of young refugees exemplified the cultural situation of Jews who had become part of the German *Bildungsbürgertum* whose social position largely derived from their educational achievements and economic success. These middle-class citizens embraced the value of *Bildung*, culture and education, in both their private and professional life. They often shared a sense of civic responsibilities—and pride—as German citizens. Not surprisingly, the *Bildungsbürgertum* of Jewish background displayed a high degree of assimilation. In their cultural tastes, habitus, interests, and material attributes, they had immersed themselves to a considerable extent into the dominant Protestant culture of Prussia and adjusted more generally to the surrounding Christian society and its “Germanness.” Many were baptized; others reconciled respect for Christian holidays (often including a Christmas tree for their children in the living room) with their Jewish traditions.⁴⁴ Fritz Stern’s childhood illustrates this sociocultural situation. He comes from a highly educated family of medical doctors and is one of several in our sample who were baptized Lutherans. Stern was named after his godfather, Fritz Haber, one of Germany’s prominent scientists, who had converted from Judaism in his mid-thirties.⁴⁵

Himself an agnostic, the Berliner Walter Simon also came from the Jewish middle class; his father was an industrialist. In the postwar era, Simon taught for twelve years as a professor at Cornell before leaving for England, where he continued to write on nineteenth-century German history. John L. Clive, too,

came from the upper middle-class. The son of a Jewish lawyer, he, like Klemperer, attended the prestigious *Französische Gymnasium* in Berlin. Clive taught as professor of history at Harvard from 1965 on, while his brother Geoffrey became a professor of philosophy in the United States.⁴⁶

The German-Jewish *bildungsbürgerlich* Eyck family in Berlin generated no fewer than three historians. Erich Eyck, a prominent lawyer and intellectual from the left spectrum of Germany's fractured liberal scene, became best known for his biographies of William Gladstone and Otto von Bismarck. He had celebrated his bar mitzvah, but rarely attended services at a synagogue. Eyck objected to the various Jewish dietary, hygienic, and Sabbath restrictions. His much younger cousin Franz Gunther Eyck emigrated first to Palestine in 1933 and then taught at various universities in the United States. Better known is Erich Eyck's son, Frank Eyck, who also focused on British and German history as a historian. Frank was allowed to join the youth wing of the *Central-Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*, and, after 1933, the *Kulturbund deutscher Juden*.⁴⁷ But he was exempted from learning Hebrew at school. The family had intimate Christian acquaintances who helped make them a center of sociability in Berlin's liberal circles. Among them were Elly and Theodor Heuss. Frank Eyck's "sheltered childhood ended abruptly" on 30 January 1933.⁴⁸ His father lost his position and was harassed by SA troops. Family connections allowed Frank Eyck to transition into the English school system in 1935–36.

The religious and cultural identities of the young émigrés varied considerably. They ranged from those who defined themselves as secular or agnostic, if not atheist, to Orthodox believers, from Zionists to others who described their upbringing as that of a religiously traditional but culturally assimilated family. The latter held true for Toni Oelsner, who worked with a Jewish study group at the *Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus* (Free Jewish School) in Frankfurt/Main prior to her emigration. Lacking a doctorate, she never held a tenured position at an academic institution in the United States. Werner Angress and Werner Warmbrunn joined the Jewish youth organization *Schwarzes Fähnlein* (Little Black Flag), which initially distanced itself from Zionist groups.⁴⁹ In the post–World War II era, Angress became a professor at Berkeley and the State University of New York (SUNY) Stony Brook, while Warmbrunn taught at Pitzer College in California.

Others in our sample were drawn strongly to Judaism as a religion and equally to the political contents of Zionism. The young Georg Iggers, for example, opposed his parents' relaxed attitude toward kosher food and increasingly felt that he "was Jewish, not German." Susan Groag Bell, on the other hand, grew up with a Jewish background and bilingual in the Moravian-Silesian region of Czechoslovakia. But she was baptized, lived in a predominantly Catholic town, and celebrated the Christian holidays. Both of Bell's parents converted to Lutheranism.⁵⁰ Much later, Bell played an important role in the fields of women's and gender history in the United States.

Yet, there were also the Zionist families living in the partially German-speaking parts of Czechoslovakia: the father of Theodore K. Rabb, who taught for decades at Princeton, was a well-known Zionist intellectual and journalist.⁵¹ While nearly all of the historians in our sample nominally retained their religious affiliation, only one, Bruno Schlesinger, converted to Christianity before emigration. This did not prevent the Gestapo from targeting him as a Jew in Vienna. Schlesinger devoted his academic life to teaching at a private Catholic college in Indiana.⁵²

Still others had roots in the Orthodox and Eastern European segments of Central European Jewry. They constituted a heterogeneous group from which Western European Jews often distinguished themselves, as the historian Manfred Jonas recalled.⁵³ Abraham Ascher provides an intriguing example. Like Fritz Stern, Ascher grew up in Breslau, though in a very different milieu. Both his parents had moved to the city from the Polish-speaking part of Galicia. They “never regarded themselves as Germans,” did not socialize with Gentiles, and raised their son as a religiously Orthodox Jew. Accordingly, the young Ascher always wore a hat. For good reasons, he concealed it on the day in March 1936 when curiosity drove him to watch Adolf Hitler speak to the local population. When he did not cheer to the *Führer*, Ascher was thrown down, yelled at (“Damn Jew”), and had to run for his life. He escaped to England in July 1939 and later had a distinguished career at Brooklyn College.

By the time Ascher arrived in England, he no longer felt particularly religious. He had discovered Marx’s writings, which replaced the Old Testament for him. In the light of his personal encounters with antisemitism and the National Socialist terror, however, he was determined “to preserve the essentials of Judaism” and his attachment to Jewish culture.⁵⁴ Ismar Schorsch does not fit the type of an assimilated German Jew, either. He came from a family deeply devoted to Jewish service and learning. Schorsch fled Germany in 1938 at the age of three, after his father was released from internment in the Buchenwald concentration camp. Emil Schorsch had been ordained as a rabbi at the Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary, and Ismar Schorsch was ordained in the United States. He later became professor and chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and an intellectual voice of America’s Conservative Judaism.⁵⁵

In spite of the differences in their cultural and social background, all of the young refugees brought personal experiences of antisemitism to their new countries. Some encountered ardent Nazis among peers and teachers, though a surprisingly large number report a relatively protected school life and even instances of explicit solidarity with Gentiles. The gray zone in between generated its own bizarreness. For Werner Angress, this included the experience of being praised by the local teacher of *Rassenkunde* (science of race) for his Aryan head shape—“just like our Reich Propaganda Minister Dr. Goebbels.”⁵⁶ Looking back at his years at Berlin’s *Goethe Gymnasium*, Peter Gay pinpointed the obvious dilemma. His experiences contradicted widespread clichés; these years “attested to surviving

pockets of decency in Nazi Germany, even of quiet resistance. And this further complicated our assessment of what we had to expect.”⁵⁷

Finally, there were some refugees with different cultural roots and other reasons to emigrate. Gerard Thormann, from 1959 on professor at Manhattanville College, came from a Roman Catholic, anti-Nazi family. In 1933, he followed his father, a well-known left-leaning Catholic journalist, into exile in France. Maria Schweinburg Grossmann also came from a Roman Catholic family and fled Austria after the German annexation. In the United States, she married a refugee from a Jewish family in Vienna. Maria Grossman served for years as a librarian at Harvard, while Walter Grossmann, her historian husband, became the director of the libraries of the University of Massachusetts, Boston.⁵⁸

Neither Ursula Lamb nor Theodor von Laue were Jewish. Both came to the United States in the 1930s on temporary student visas—and they stayed, alienated by the National Socialist regime. Colleagues of Lamb, who became a distinguished historian of the Spanish Empire, report that she had already opposed the Nazis in Germany.⁵⁹ The same cannot be said of Laue. In the 1930s, he seems to have lived in a largely apolitical, private world of education, sports, and *Bildung*, protected by the well-off family around his scientist father, the Nobel Prize winner Max von Laue. Max von Laue’s connection with Albert Einstein, who lived in Princeton, helped Theodor when he was admitted to Princeton University. As a historian in the postwar era, he concentrated on Russian history and became an early advocate of teaching world history.⁶⁰

Like Laue, the Protestant Hans W. Gatzke was older than most second-generation émigrés. He does not fit into any category. Neither a descendant of an established *bildungsbürgerlich* family, nor of Jewish background, nor a left-wing opponent of National Socialism, Gatzke had belonged to the *Deutsche Freischar* in Weimar, one of the liberal branches of the German youth movement. After his return from a year at Williams College, Gatzke began to study in the Third Reich. Realizing that he did not fit into the National Socialist matrix—a realization emphasized by a Gestapo raid of his apartment—Gatzke returned to the United States for good in 1937. During his tenure at Johns Hopkins University and Yale, Gatzke gained a stellar reputation as a scholar of Germany’s political history. Already in 1950, Gatzke proposed a critical analysis of imperial Germany’s aims during World War I that anticipated the later writings of Fritz Fischer.⁶¹

Transcultural Migrations

And so they fled Germany: some officially left as emigrants with the *Reichsfluchtsteuer* (federal escape tax) paid by their parents, others were expelled, many escaped without a clear plan. All left under immense stress: deprived of their homes, robbed of all their belongings, and separated from family members

whose future remained uncertain. The young refugees brought along distinct features of their socioeconomic, cultural, and political upbringing. In very different ways and mediated through their families' experiences, they brought to the English-speaking world a familiarity with diverse German-Jewish cultures—in the plural. Soon, they carried indelible memories of family members and friends murdered in the Holocaust. For many, such memories played into their motivation to study history, even when they did not deal explicitly with the Jewish genocide. For some, the memory of the past fueled their willingness to become politically engaged against new and other forms of injustice.

However, lines of continuity were broken by moments of discontinuity. Once the young refugees had left Germany, they added the experience of migration to the cultural and social capital wrapped in their mostly sparse baggage. This experience meant yet another formative period in their lives. Their migration often turned out to be much longer than expected. It generated more twists and unanticipated interruptions which offered gateways to new transcultural experiences. The enforced movement through different geographical and cultural spaces gave many refugees an understanding of themselves that was not restricted by state borders or national narratives.⁶²

After his departure from Germany, it took Peter Gay more than a year and a half to arrive in the United States. He spent most of this time in Cuba. Life in Havana meant being part of both the German-Jewish refugee and the American communities while surrounded by a Spanish-speaking society. Gay used the time to improve his English and immerse himself in American popular culture. He became a fan of the New York Yankees and finally saw *Gone with the Wind*, after having read Margaret Mitchell's novel two years earlier in German. Memories of Berlin would continue to hang over him "like a sinister shadow." Still, while sitting on suitcases in Havana, it was necessary to preserve a "fixation on the future."⁶³

Several of the young refugees spent considerable time in western and southern Europe before they were forced to move on again. Peter Paret spent two years in Austria, followed by two years in France, before arriving in the United States via England. Peter Amann escaped from Austria to France in 1939, a year later to Switzerland, then again to France, only to board a ship from Lisbon to New York City in 1941.⁶⁴ Mostly due to family connections, Italy provided a temporary haven for some refugees in the mid-1930s, including Robert A. Huttenback, who rose through the ranks at the California Institute of Technology, and Conrad Schirokauer, the long-time professor of Asian history at the City University of New York.⁶⁵ A large number of refugees first spent some time in the United Kingdom, primarily England, before leaving again, this time for America or Canada. Peter Alter provides a survey of those who stayed in the United Kingdom in this volume.⁶⁶

Arrival in England, though a country familiar to some, meant entering a new "contact zone."⁶⁷ Those who had just escaped the National Socialist terror were now exposed to an asymmetrical mix of cultural influences, some friendly, others

not. This *mélange* generated new forms of intercultural encounters, all of which took place on unfamiliar ground. There was the private English boarding school with uniform-wearing peers and a headmistress who greeted the newcomer in person, certainly a double novelty for those coming from a German *Gymnasium*. Yet other refugees perceived a “Prussian discipline” in English educational institutions. And there were the Anglican families who embraced Jewish children with their own ethical principles and religious rituals, with nonkosher food on the dinner table and the celebration of Christmas and Easter.⁶⁸

The beginning of the war against Germany in September 1939 marked another milestone. It turned the refugees into “enemy aliens.” Some soon found themselves in British internment camps, including Frank Eyck, who was held on the Isle of Man in 1940. There he was surrounded by Nazi sympathizers and victims of the Third Reich, by internees of Italian, Turkish, and Japanese descent, by rabbis, Catholic priests, and Protestant pastors. This experience made Eyck not only more sensitive to the necessity of accepting the coexistence of different cultures, but also confirmed his decision to dissociate himself politically from Germany.⁶⁹

George L. Mosse underwent a fundamental political socialization during his six years in England. He did not experience the deprivations of an *émigré’s* life; on the contrary, exile “energized” and “challenged” Mosse as nothing had done before. He experienced his “true political awakening” at Cambridge University and joined young socialists in the antifascist cause. Mosse’s consciousness of being a German Jew, though secular in nature, became more pronounced instead of weaker—a parallel to Fritz Stern, who emigrated straight to the United States where his “sense of being a Jew became still stronger.”⁷⁰

There is substantial evidence to suggest that especially those who went to the Netherlands embraced the experience of cultural tolerance. This did not mean that they abandoned what they regarded as German traditions worthy of preservation. For no fewer than five or six individuals out of our sample, this experience was epitomized by the Eerde School, hosted in a Dutch manor not far from the German border. The result of an initiative by German and English Quakers, Eerde began its operation in April 1934. The school’s primary purpose was to protect “half-Aryan” and “half-Jewish” children from discrimination by the Nazis. The predominantly German-Jewish children at Eerde received a rigorous education, oriented to the requirements of the Oxford School Certificate. They enjoyed excellent instruction in English, as well as a grounding in literature and music that firmly anchored them in European humanistic traditions. In spite of the curricular demands, girls in particular enjoyed the “feeling of freedom” at Eerde.⁷¹ One of them was Beate Ruhm von Oppen, who would eventually come to the United States via England. She became a skillful translator of historical works, including the first volume of Konrad Adenauer’s memoirs. Hans A. Schmitt, another Eerde alumnus, turned the Quaker support for refugees from Germany into the topic of a monographic study.⁷²

We know about the indispensable support lent by the Quakers and Jewish aid organizations, which helped many of the individuals documented in our sample. Historians have also devoted attention to refugees' experiences in England, Palestine, and Israel: Walter Laqueur's fifteen-year passage through all three regions is instructive. In this volume, Shulamit Volkov deals with the émigrés who taught history in Israel. Yet, with the exception of the German refugee community in Shanghai, the formative experiences that some young émigrés' gained in Asia and South America have hardly been explored.⁷³

Ernst Badian, Harvard's long-time professor of ancient history, escaped the Nazis to the Pacific world. In 1938, he and his parents moved to New Zealand, where he acquired his first academic degrees. Badian preserved his sympathy for New Zealand throughout his life. He maintained close ties to his alma mater and even endowed a chair in classics there. After more than two decades in England, Badian accepted a position in the United States. One can speculate whether his critical account of Alexander the Great might have been informed by his family's early encounter with Hitler's dictatorial power.⁷⁴

Harry Benda's scholarly interests were directly connected to his experiences in the Pacific. Both of Benda's parents and most of his close relatives perished in the Holocaust. As a twenty-year-old, Benda managed to escape to Indonesia in 1939 and found employment in an import firm. In the wake of the Japanese occupation, Benda was interned in a camp together with other Jews. After his liberation, he acquired his first academic degrees in New Zealand. Benda used his first-hand knowledge of Southeast Asia to succeed in Cornell University's doctoral program in government with a thesis on Indonesian Islam under the Japanese occupation of Java. As a professor at Yale, Benda was instrumental in establishing Southeast Asian history as a major field of study in the United States and argued against the prevailing, "western" view of Asia.⁷⁵

South America also contributed to shaping the biographies of the second-generation émigrés. Henry Blumenthal, born into a Jewish middle-class family in Mazovia, was old enough to enroll briefly at the *Hochschule für Wissenschaft des Judentums* (College for the Scholarly Study of Judaism) and at the University of Berlin, where the historian Hermann Oncken accepted him as a doctoral candidate. In 1936, he escaped to Brazil, only to encounter the wave of antisemitic measures endorsed by President Getúlio Vargas. Blumenthal was expelled to Uruguay. In 1938, he took the chance to immigrate on the Polish quota to the United States, where he discovered his interest in North American and French history.⁷⁶

Charles W. Arnade's global itinerary first led from his hometown Görlitz to China. In Nanking, he and his father, who served in the German Military mission, witnessed the brutal Japanese invasion in 1937. Via Shanghai and Switzerland they escaped to Bolivia, where Arnade spent six years—and, in 1944, won the country's swimming championship in breaststroke. In his academic positions in Florida, Arnade promoted the teaching of the Holocaust as

well as of the Spanish Empire in the Americas and, specifically, Bolivian history. Neither his memory of the Third Reich nor the itinerary of his life, which ultimately led him to Holocaust conferences and lectures around the globe, stopped at national borders.⁷⁷

Settling in America

In 1953, the political scientist Franz L. Neumann, who belonged to the older generation of German-Jewish emigrants and, as a professor at Columbia University, advised several students of the second generation, praised the “openness of American society” when it came to integrating refugee scholars. The term reverberates in the autobiographical recollections of the younger refugees. For many, the United States presented itself as a “land of opportunity,” in the words of Walter L. Arnstein, who escaped the Third Reich in 1939.⁷⁸ Arnstein excelled as a historian of Britain at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. However, once the young refugees had arrived in America and become immigrants, they noticed that there were some limits to openness—and more opportunities for some than for others. While embracing the chance to enter high school and college, they faced a plethora of new challenges, ranging from the loss of social status and distinct gender-specific obstacles to variations of antisemitism.

The overwhelming majority of immigrants in our sample, as in the refugee population at large, went through an extended period of uncertainty, during which they and their families struggled to make a living. Women in particular were forced to stay in low-paying jobs for a while. A few could make use of their family’s social connections in Germany; others used the skills they had acquired during their emigration. Leonore Laan did both—and the latter even left an imprint on her historical research. After her schooling at Eerde, Laan trained as a nanny in England and then went to Italy before arriving in the United States in 1939. The émigré and theater director Max Reinhardt, acquainted with her mother, arranged part-time employment for her as a nanny in California until she could start attending the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). At Radcliffe College, Laan wrote a dissertation on the history of nursing legislation in the British Commonwealth.⁷⁹

Early work experience in the United States also left its traces on the thematic interests of Herman Freudenberger, who had emigrated with an early *Kindertransport* via New York City to Chicago. As a worker in a mattress and shoe polish factory, Freudenberger experienced first hand the world of manufacturing and industrial production, which he later analyzed as an economic historian. Others faced what Gerda Lerner summed up as follows: “I had nearly gone under in the first eight months as an immigrant, unable to find work, due mostly to the fact

that employers of casual labor and domestic work found me ‘overqualified,’ and I was too afraid of getting in trouble with the Immigration Service to seek even private assistance.”⁸⁰

The young immigrants were Germans, Austrians, or Czechs who now turned into Americans. Yet, the naturalization process could take a long time; some remained stateless for years.⁸¹ As far as we can tell, all of them retained the capacity to read and understand German. This heritage was often encouraged, if not enforced by parents, as Hanna Holborn Gray describes it in her contribution to this volume. Thanks to their previous schooling or religious education, many could add some knowledge of Hebrew and other European languages, old and new. Particularly in some neighborhoods of New York City, where more than half of the German-Jewish refugees from the Third Reich initially settled, German could be used in everyday life well into the 1950s.⁸²

Foreign language ability was another piece of cultural capital that turned out to be a plus for these immigrants on their way into academia. However, there was not only the momentum of continuity. Gerhard Weinberg recalled that he needed to refresh his German after two years of English schooling, which predated his emigration to the United States in 1940. In Albany, New York, his family spoke English so that his parents could gain a command of this language. Furthermore, a considerable number of immigrants refused to speak German at home. Emotional and political reasons played a role, but also the desire to accommodate non-German speaking partners and friends who now joined the family circle. Once reunited in New York City, the Arnstein family no longer wanted to speak German: “We were so disgusted.” But this judgment did not affect their continued willingness to respect European cultures. Fritz Stern felt “no urge” either to have his children “learn the language of a country that had expelled me, a language that they were unlikely to find as easy or natural as I did.” Yet he wanted his children to master French and cherished their affinity for the “Europeanness” of his parents’ home.⁸³

In their new professional lives, the young immigrants almost always spoke English. Ironically, this was not the case among the faculty members at the Institute for German History in Tel Aviv, whom Shulamit Volkov encountered as late as 1973.⁸⁴ English became the second-generation émigrés’ primary language in America; they learned it quickly, and most spoke it without any trace of an accent. This learning process was a catalyst in their Americanization, in addition to absorbing American popular culture—practicing baseball, for example—immersing themselves in the dorm life in college, and becoming citizens of the United States.⁸⁵ In their mastery of English, the young immigrants clearly differed from the first generation of émigrés. Only a few scholars, such as Georg and Wilma Iggers, Klaus Epstein, and Felix F. Strauss, published continuously and without a translator’s assistance in German.

Gender and Military Service

Gender was of paramount importance when these young people adjusted to their new environments and found a way into academia. More often for women than for men, there was continuity between their involvement in organizing the practicalities of emigration in their German homes and managing the logistics of social and economic acculturation in America.⁸⁶ They shouldered the tasks caring for siblings and children, doing errands and handling bureaucratic procedures, while contributing to the family's economic survival and supporting husbands and other male family members. This reality came at the expense of young women's chance to pursue their intellectual interests at college and delayed their earning a graduate degree.

Twenty—that is, around 19 percent—of historians in our sample are women, as opposed to only around 9 percent among the first-generation refugee historians (see Tables 1 and 3). Among these twenty female historians, five never acquired a doctorate.⁸⁷ This percentage is significantly higher than in the group of male historians. Moreover, the average age at which female historians finished their Ph.D., slightly above thirty-three, is higher than among male historians. Four female historians did not finish their doctorates until well after they turned forty: Ann Beck, Joan Campbell, Maria Grossmann, and Gerda Lerner. After completing her undergraduate and graduate training at two elite schools, Radcliffe and Oxford in England, Campbell married and soon followed her husband when his academic career took the family to New Zealand and Canada. It was only in her forties that Campbell, a devoted mother of four children, enrolled in the Ph.D. program of Queen's University, Ontario. Involuntarily, she became part of what her male colleagues in the history department condescendingly referred to as the "housewives brigade," which happened to do much of the department's teaching. With abysmal academic job prospects, she got by for several years with part-time assignments at various Canadian universities.⁸⁸

Other women faced gender discrimination when entering university, at times reinforced by age discrimination and hostile attitudes toward what contemporaries defined as deviant sexual behavior. Renée Watkins, who was born in Berlin in 1932 and escaped Germany via the Netherlands and Portugal, was admitted to Radcliffe in the early 1950s. But she found the college's atmosphere stuffy and oppressive, which compelled her to hide her homosexuality. Still in the mid-1960s, Susan Groag Bell was turned down by the admissions committee of Stanford's graduate program in history due to her age, then thirty-nine.⁸⁹

Military service was a distinctly gender-specific experience for a majority of men in our sample, about forty-nine out of eighty-eight.⁹⁰ Many experienced combat in the European or, as in the case of Peter Paret, in the Pacific theater of World War II. Later Paret drew on this experience in his studies of military and cultural history. He dedicated one of his seminal works, *Imagined Battles*, to the

memory “of the men with whom I served, and against whom I served.” Paret acknowledged explicitly how his personal experience motivated his long-standing interest in the place “war occupies in history and in the role it has played for my generation.”⁹¹

The U.S. Army used the bilingual competence of several immigrants to deploy them for purposes of psychological warfare and to interrogate German military and Nazi Party personnel. Werner Angress, Henry Kissinger, Hans A. Schmitt, Gerard Thormann, and Guy Stern, who later became one of the foremost scholars of German literary history, all served as “Ritchie Boys.” They became members of the U.S. military intelligence unit trained in Fort Ritchie, Maryland, to be deployed in Europe after the Normandy invasion. With fifteen minutes of jump training under his belt, Angress parachuted into the area behind German lines on 6 June 1944. Only a year later, when he arrived at Wöbbelin, a branch camp of the Neugamme concentration camp in Hamburg, did Angress learn about the full extent of the “Final Solution,” a term—like Auschwitz—he had never before heard.⁹²

Serving in the military against their homeland was for some a stepping-stone in their “Americanizing.”⁹³ Yet, this had more complex implications. Service in intelligence units brought some together with other German Jews and opened a space to discuss responses to National Socialism. For many, military service helped to confirm the growing separation between their German past and the conscious—and desired—political separation from Germany as a state. “I could never call myself a German again,” recalled Frank Eyck after the Second World War had ended.⁹⁴ He had served in the British army, as did Lewis Gann, who worked in the postwar period as an archivist in Rhodesia and a curator at the Hoover Institution in Stanford, and Guenter Lewy, who pursued his historical interests as a professor of government and political science.

The biography of Gunther E. Rothenberg exemplifies how military service for a cause outside, if not against, the country of origin became a seminal event. It meant departing from an ethnic, seemingly objective understanding of national belonging in favor of turning toward a voluntary, subjective understanding of what the commitment to a nation entailed. Rothenberg was born into an upper-middle-class family in Berlin. He left Germany in 1937 and came to the United States after years of migration via the Netherlands, Palestine, and Canada. Rothenberg served in three armies. A member of the Zionist-Socialist movement Hashomer Hatzair, Rothenberg first did a five-year stint in the British Army in the Mediterranean theater before fighting as a captain in the Haganah for an independent Jewish state in Palestine. During the early Cold War, he joined U.S. Air Force intelligence, suspicious of new fascist or other authoritarian threats. Rothenberg identified strongly as a Jew and a supporter of Israel after 1948. He followed his military experiences with a distinguished career as a military historian at the University of New Mexico.⁹⁵

Distinctiveness and Antisemitism

Going to college turned the young American citizens into the historians we know today. They—and, again, this meant many more men than women—profited from the expansion of American higher education during and after the end of World War II. The G.I. Bill officially sanctioned the growing demand for education in 1944. This trend was fueled by high birth rates in the United States between 1946 and 1964. These political and demographic developments created a growing student population. Colleges and universities, both long-established and newly founded, expanded their programs and increased the number of faculty. The social sciences and humanities had their share in this transformation, as did new area studies and revamped foreign language programs. For some years, career prospects in one of these fields were much better than prior to World War II, even when they still influenced by gender, family circumstances, and changing economic cycles. Moreover, once the GIs had graduated in the 1950s and college and university enrollments dropped again, far fewer academic jobs were available.⁹⁶

Did the immigrants bring to American academia a “distinctiveness advantage”⁹⁷ thanks to their European heritage? There is, at first glance, abundant evidence to support this sociological observation. They were able to infuse a distinct cultural capital into the study of history. They possessed a familiarity with European intellectual traditions, accompanied by the linguistic skills that America’s liberal arts education cherished. This helps explain why immigrants such as Karl J. Weintraub, Werner Warmbrunn, Bruno Schlesinger, and John Rodes excelled as teachers in the flourishing World and Western Civilization programs. These became a key element of the general education requirements many American institutions of higher learning implemented after 1945.⁹⁸

But the German-speaking immigrants’ tangible or perceived distinctiveness must be assessed in comparison with that of others—and it was ambiguous. Since almost all of our sample were Jewish, they could face forms of antisemitism, which had its own tradition in American academia.⁹⁹ Although prejudices against Jewish students weakened from the 1940s on, many encountered the resulting impediments in one way or another, often closely coupled with their social status as refugees. It is difficult to draw general conclusions from individual recollections. Some encountered a defensive attitude, if not hostility, toward Jewish refugee students when they met a conservative professor; others, when mingling with peers; still others in the social environment of universities.

Harvard and Columbia were more open to Jewish students than other Ivy League schools, while Princeton traditionally had a very low percentage of Jewish students. The City College of New York and Brooklyn College had a predominantly Jewish student population and welcomed faculty from Jewish and German family backgrounds. Across the United States, the picture varied dramatically.¹⁰⁰ The newly

founded Roosevelt College in Chicago, for example, welcomed Jewish and African-American students. Roosevelt College (from 1954 on called Roosevelt University) employed a considerable number of first- and second-generation émigrés from National Socialist Germany as faculty, among them the historians Helmut Hirsch, Georg Iggers, and Walter Arnstein. Rolf A. Weil, Roosevelt's long-time president, was also a Jewish refugee; he opted for economics instead of history as a senior in college. It was then evident for him that "as a Jew I would have great difficulty getting equal consideration at many institutions of higher learning." He found this situation "extremely disillusioning" in light of his previous experiences in Germany.¹⁰¹

Gerald D. Nash's experiences attest to the fact that America was not always like New York City, or Roosevelt College, for that matter. The distinguished historian of the American West was born as Gerhard Nachschön in Berlin in 1928. Nine years later he arrived via Palestine in New York City, where the family shortened its last name to Nash. Nash felt comfortable at school in Washington Heights, where many German-Jewish middle-class families settled, as well as at New York University and Columbia. Having already become acquainted with a "kaleidoscope of European emigration" in the family's second apartment in Manhattan, Nash wanted to learn more about the country and accepted a fellowship at Ohio State University in Columbus. Here he encountered a "virulent anti-Semitism" and landlords who did not rent rooms to Jewish students. Not surprisingly, Nash returned to New York City, where he wrote his master's thesis at Columbia on the Reconstruction era. Nash's early intersection with fascism surfaced much later in his critique of the New Western history and again, unexpectedly, in 1990–91, during a year as a guest professor in Göttingen. There, Nash encountered protesters rallying against the first Gulf War. Their attitude, "mass meetings," and the "shattering of glass" prompted unwelcome memories of the Nazi era.¹⁰²

Academic Entries and Thematic Interests

As a result of the National Socialist dictatorship and World War II, American institutions of higher education realized the need to research the history of Germany, Europe, and East Asia—and to utilize the expertise of refugees. There was an urgent demand to find explanations and analytical categories that could explain the rise of the "German ideology" and the "failure of illiberalism," as Fritz Stern pointedly described the particularities of German history. There was also the desire to arrive at generalizations that would explain the character of authoritarian and totalitarian societies. Experts were needed to investigate these issues.¹⁰³

Against this background, the immigrants from the second generation pursued careers in the historical disciplines—just as others chose neighboring fields, many of which overlapped with the interests of historians: political science, sociology, economics, art history, and psychology as well as Judaic and Jewish studies,

German studies and literature, and Romance cultures; in chapter 22 I provide examples of scholars from these areas. Out of the 100 immigrants in our sample who received a doctorate, a few, such as Benda, Hilberg, Lewy, Schlesinger, and Kissinger, did so in the fields of political science or government; they all emphasized the historical aspects of their topics. Peter Gay, strongly drawn to Franz L. Neumann, initially taught in Columbia University's government department. Most future historians began their study with a broad range of interests. Their later research foci developed over time and did not necessarily reflect their initial ideas about a possible specialization. George L. Mosse, for example, was primarily interested in European history before 1800 when he came to the United States.¹⁰⁴

Only three in our sample finished their Ph.D. between 1940 and 1945: Alma Luckau Molin, who later taught at Vassar College; Herbert Moller, the demographic historian at Boston University; and Theodor von Laue. The numbers rose considerably in the following two decades. Fourteen concluded their doctoral work in the years 1946–50, thirty-three between 1951 and 1955, and thirty in the period 1956–60. Twenty received their doctorate after 1961. Columbia University tops the list of institutions that awarded doctorates to members of this group (21), nearly matched by Harvard (20, a number to which three Radcliffe dissertations could be added,) and followed, with a considerable gap, by the Universities of Chicago (8) and California, Berkeley (6). The sample includes three doctorates each from the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Wisconsin (Madison), Stanford, Yale, and Oxford (England), in addition to other institutions in the United States and three Central European universities.¹⁰⁵

Many immigrants, the women among them in particular, had to live on temporary appointments for years. Others spent a considerable portion of their early careers at institutions that did not emphasize history or even the humanities. Herbert A. Strauss taught for six years at New York's Juilliard School of Music before becoming a member of the faculty at the City College of New York. Many found employment at small institutions, such as Conrad Latour at Beaver College, today's Arcadia University, and Wilhelm Reuning at Susquehanna University. Some immigrants went into fields that are important for the study of history but easily overlooked: the work of translating (Ruhm von Oppen), library service (Maria Grossmann and Agnes Peterson), bibliographical research (Eric H. Boehm), administrative work for philanthropic foundations (Gerald Freund), and research in nonacademic institutions such as the Office of the Historian at the State Department (Arthur G. Kogan). Foundations and institutions that granted aid and fellowships widely recognized the talent of many refugees and the importance of their research topics. The number of fellowships awarded to them is staggering, as documented in chapter 23; thirty (c. 28 percent) received a Guggenheim fellowship in the course of their career.

The second-generation immigrants, now American citizens, chose very different areas of specialization. Their thematic spectrum was much wider than that

among the older refugees.¹⁰⁶ They came of age in an academic setting that offered them considerably more—and more varied—options. Individual preferences and the conditions at each university, where mentors needed to be found, played as much of a role in choosing research topics as did their past. Moreover, there was simply the luck of finding a supportive place to study and of entering a field in need of scholars.¹⁰⁷

Many began to research the various histories of society, politics, and culture in the German-speaking territories of Europe. A closer look, however, reveals that a relatively small number concentrated on the Third Reich and, later, the Holocaust. Gerhard Weinberg did so in his path-breaking studies on Hitler's "Second Book," National Socialist foreign policy, and the genocidal war after 1939, increasingly in global perspective. George Stein concentrated in his studies on Hitler and the *Waffen SS*. Renate Bridenthal contributed to exploring the role of gender and of biological thinking in the paths to the Third Reich and in the fabric of the National Socialist society. Several historians pointed out varieties of resistance against the National Socialist regime.¹⁰⁸

Conceptual and historical approaches to the Holocaust and genocide at large developed slowly, as Doris Bergen shows in her chapter on Henry Friedlander, Raul Hilberg, and Gerhard Weinberg, to whom we would need to add Henry Feingold, Saul Friedländer, Henry R. Huttenbach, Walter Laqueur, and the less well-known George M. Kren. Eric H. Boehm did not undertake original research in the field of Holocaust studies, but already in 1949 drew the public's attention to survivors of the Holocaust and opponents of the Third Reich. Gerd Korman also published a moving collection of testimonies by victims of the Nazis.¹⁰⁹ More often, however, the immigrants concentrated on the long and twisted roads to National Socialism. Several scholars sought its roots in a dazzling spectrum of populist and political ideologies, including Klaus Epstein, Walter Laqueur, George L. Mosse, and Fritz Stern. Others, such as Hans W. Gatzke, Manfred Jonas, and Joachim Remak, researched the diplomatic history of the decades leading to World War II.

While emotional reasons are difficult to assess, there was a fundamental methodological reason for what might seem like a reluctance to study Nazism: access to sources and their availability in print were still limited in the two immediate postwar decades. From the 1950s on, this dilemma prompted Fritz T. Epstein, the father of Klaus Epstein, as well as Raul Hilberg, Gerhard Weinberg, and others to devote their expertise to documenting important German source materials and making them accessible to future researchers. Weinberg expands on this topic in his essay in this volume.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, a considerable number of immigrants injected their familiarity with the plurality of Jewish histories in Germany and Central and Eastern Europe into historiographical works. Their studies offered analyses of a broad range of local and regional Jewish cultures and communities.¹¹¹

Equally important are studies on German antisemitism, both before and during its radicalization in the Third Reich. Herbert A. Strauss analyzed the enforced emigration of German Jews from the Third Reich. Michael A. Meyer's history of German-Jewish culture in the modern age, in addition to his more specialized studies, offered an indispensable long-term perspective. Can *German-Jewish History*, edited by Meyer with the assistance of Michael Brenner, then be seen as the sophisticated product of an "émigré synthesis," a scholarly agenda created by German-Jewish émigrés whose experience and memory was supported by the post-world War II institutional infrastructure, with the Leo Baeck Institute in New York taking the lead?¹¹² Perhaps such a pointed characterization suggests too easily a causal link between one specific context that helped generate such scholarship and the breadth of its contents, which derived from heterodox motives and approaches.

Although a considerable number of immigrants came to focus on modern German and Austrian history, many chose other themes. Several historians explored Eastern and specifically Russian history. In addition to Ascher, Dallin, Huttenbach, and Laue, it is important to recognize Hans Rogger, who taught at UCLA.¹¹³ French history was researched by Peter Amann, Sabine Jessner, Ruth Kleinmann, and Dora Weiner. Robert Vogel rounds out the list of historians of Britain, which includes Arnstein, Clive, Frank Eyck, and Huttenbach.

Ernst Badian, Erich S. Gruen, and Harald Reiche specialized in ancient history. Gerard Caspary, Hanns Gross, Hanna Holborn Gray, Toni Oelsner, and Reinhold Schumann all dealt with topics of medieval history.¹¹⁴ We find a pronounced interest in the history of humanism, the Renaissance, and the Protestant Reformation as well. Susan Groag Bell, Maria Grossmann, Werner Gundersheimer, and Renée Watkins shared this interest, as did Gerald Strauss.¹¹⁵ Gray did research in these fields while pursuing a distinguished administrative career, which culminated in the presidency of the University of Chicago. Furthermore, several historians worked in the broadly defined area of early modern history, including Hanns Gross, Walter Grossmann, and Theodore Rabb.

The remarkably diverse oeuvres of Rabb, Peter Gay, Walter Laqueur, George L. Mosse, and Peter Paret, to give only a few examples, ultimately defy any categorization along chronological, geographical, or thematic lines. Instead, all these historians pursued questions that were not prescribed by disciplinary boundaries—be they about the character of the Enlightenment, about modernity and the role of art and symbolic politics, or about the history of political ideologies.

There is one more noticeable difference, and thus another moment of discontinuity, in comparison with the first generation: the younger immigrants played a role in expanding the field of history to include geographic areas and non-European topics that had hardly been represented among the older refugee scholars. Benda, Lensen, Rabe, and Schirokauer opened new perspectives on Asian history. Arnade, Lamb, and Friedrich Katz contributed to investigating the history of

the Spanish Empire and Latin American regions. Jonas, Kissinger, Nash, and Trefousse researched the history of the United States and of American foreign policy. Gay, Loewenberg, and Kren promoted the newly developing field of psychohistory, while Gerda Lerner and Renate Bridenthal explored women's history. For Lerner and Bridenthal, there was and is a pronounced link between their personal stories, the experience of National Socialism and the turn to the history of women and the traditions of feminism. Lerner was already beginning to think about issues of gender, discrimination, and otherness before her arrival in the US. This awareness, heightened by evidence of discriminatory practices in America, led her to take an active role in the feminist and civil rights movements. By contrast, Susan Groag Bell's involvement with feminist ideas came, in her words, "purely from my historical studies."¹¹⁶

The contributions to the wide field of the history of medicine and of science also deserve recognition, especially since these research areas were still relatively new in the postwar era and struggling to establish themselves.¹¹⁷ Gert Brieger, for example, directed the Institute for the History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University, where, in 1947, Ilza Veith had gained the first Ph.D. ever in the United States in the field of the history of medicine. Veith became a pioneer in exploring the history of Chinese medicine and acupuncture.¹¹⁸ Ann Beck dealt with medical traditions and imperial policies in Africa, and Otto Marx instructed students in the history of medicine and psychology. Alexander Ospovat became an expert in the history of geology in the decades around 1800, while Gerald Holton added the history of science to his already distinguished portfolio as a physicist. He also contributed to making Albert Einstein's papers accessible to the public.

Intellectual Traditions

A considerable number of the émigrés-turned-historians developed an interest in the history of historiography and in the longer traditions of the discipline they made their own. Fritz Stern opened this field to readers in the 1950s with his collection of historians' texts, entitled *The Varieties of History*, one of his favorites among his many books. Others followed with monographs and anthologies.¹¹⁹ Georg Iggers established himself as a leading authority in the history of historiography as a research field and collaborated increasingly with historians outside Central Europe and the United States.

Iggers's early critique of German-style historicism, both as a set of methodological assumptions and as a political ideology, remained controversial. Still, it reflected an intellectual stance that distinguished many of those who came to America at a young age from the refugee scholars of the first generation. The latter were trained by *Gelehrte* (senior scholars) in Germany who were often

steeped in the traditions of historicism and German idealism. Their academic teachers conveyed to them an appreciation for writing political history in which nations and state actions, embodied by individuals, played a dominant role. Friedrich Meinecke exemplifies this cohort. While his students who escaped to the United States diversified their interests and methodological strategies, they needed to work through these traditions in order to emancipate themselves intellectually. Hans Rosenberg is particularly remarkable in breaking new ground for a broadly conceived social history.¹²⁰ The younger immigrants showed more flexibility and intellectual freedom in their engagement with the historicist heritage. For them, this heritage did not mean a commitment exemplified by their teachers, but was one among a variety of intellectual strands that deserved recognition as much as critique.

The immigrants' fresh curiosity in—and productive distance from—the traditions of the historical disciplines, which they explored and exploited rather than defended or dismissed *per se*, needs to be factored into our understanding of their oeuvres. This stance allowed them to position themselves largely outside what Charles S. Maier has pointedly called the “filiopietistic base lines” of attempts to write the history of historiography primarily as an organic development—that is, as a story that emphasizes precedents, and highlights what the sons and daughters have learned from their elders, and where they departed from them.¹²¹

I would also emphasize the moments of discontinuity that separated the second generation from previous one. Even more so than the older refugee scholars, the younger generation faced the experience of rupture and novelty. Moreover, members of the second generation were profoundly affected by the need to deal with the Holocaust, not only intellectually, but personally, as a part of their families' histories. This experience also accounts for what is implicit in the second generation's writings and seems to go without saying: that they did not—and could not—take intellectual positions marked by a *deutschnational* ideology, the apologetic belief in the righteousness of the German nation, or antisemitic leanings, which had certainly been present in German academia.¹²²

It might be more remarkable that so few historians in our sample were attracted to Marxism. Certainly, some of those who promoted emancipatory ideas in the 1960s and 1970s engaged Marxism as well. But Marxist and socialist ideas seem to have had the greatest appeal for some of the older of the second-generation, largely in the early phases of their lives, and especially so when they came from urban centers such as Berlin, Breslau, and Vienna. This interest was often coupled with an enthusiasm for psychoanalysis. In his younger years, Marx and Freud appeared to the literary historian Walter H. Sokel as the two great “liberators” of the world.¹²³ Most of the younger immigrants, however, shared a disenchantment with socialism. They found Max Weber's writings and the post-World War II sociology more appealing than Marx and were attracted by forms of political philosophy that tackled the challenges of twentieth-century

mass society and authoritarian regimes. They also acknowledged new, unorthodox forms of economic philosophy, exemplified by Albert O. Hirschman, himself an immigrant.¹²⁴

Against this background, the story of the second-generation émigrés can hardly be framed as one in a sequence of intellectual cohorts grounded primarily in the traditions of German historiography. Certainly, some of the younger ones studied with members of the first generation. In the 1940s, Peter Paret cherished lectures by Hans Kelsen, the Austrian-born legal philosopher, and Ernst Kantorowicz, the great interpreter of the mediaeval period.¹²⁵ There is no doubt that individual historians admired the older refugee scholars, as Klemens von Klemperer and Hanna Holborn Gray, the daughter of Hajo Holborn, show in this volume. But only a few outstanding scholars of the first generation enjoyed a broad appreciation in the United States, in particular Felix Gilbert, Hajo Holborn, and Hans Rosenberg, and, in the field of research on humanism and the Renaissance, Hans Baron and Paul Otto Kristeller.¹²⁶

Among the younger immigrants, those with a distinct *bildungsbürgerlich* background and connections were more likely than others to mingle academically and socially with émigrés of the first generation. Such connections mostly developed around individuals such as Gilbert and Hajo Holborn. Here we see social and intellectual circles that created at times a microcosmos of European (and transatlantic) intellectual life in America, especially in New York City. Furthermore, some of the second-generation historians found together to collaborate in scholarly projects, but they did so primarily because they had similar scholarly interests.¹²⁷

Transnational Transfers and Networks

The historians of the second generation not only addressed audiences in North America, their studies reverberated into historiography in Germany; during the Cold War era, this meant primarily West Germany. While this effect cannot be explained solely by the authors' background, their capacity to communicate with colleagues across the Atlantic, along with the personal interest in reestablishing ties to Europe, contributed to the emergence of new transatlantic conversations. From the 1950s on, these took place in an ever-growing, transnational web of exchanges and transfers. This cross-border exchange was made possible by guest professorships in Germany, support from American and German foundations, such as the Ford Foundation, and the input of a new generation of transatlantic brokers.¹²⁸

Personal encounters at a variety of research centers fueled this exchange. Particularly important were the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton; the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, which was created

in 1954; and Harvard's Center for European Studies, founded in 1969. No less important were the German Marshall Fund from 1972 on; the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC, since its inception in 1987; and the American Academy in Berlin, which opened its gates in 1994. Furthermore, the Wiener Library, located in London since 1939, and the Leo Baeck Institute, centered in London, New York City, and London, became indispensable hinges in the transatlantic research on the Holocaust and the history of European Jewry. Moreover, starting in 1958, the Conference Group for Central European History, today's Central European History Society, furthered the transnational dialogue. It originated as the American Historical Association's (AHA) Committee for the Study of War Documents, which sponsored the microfilming of the German records before their return to Germany. Finally, the German Studies Association, which emerged from the Western Association for German Studies, founded in 1976, became an engine of transatlantic exchange.¹²⁹

American historians and German-born academics in the United States willing to reconnect with German academia increasingly utilized the expanding transatlantic topography of scholarship. They engaged scholars from the German-speaking world who departed from older traditions, as Gerhard A. Ritter and Jürgen Kocka illustrate in their essays in this volume. George L. Mosse alone advised an unmatched number of students in the United States, various European countries, and Israel, the country he felt particularly close to.¹³⁰ Prominent scholars from Germany reciprocated this interest. Karl Dietrich Bracher and Ralf Dahrendorf connected with Peter Gay and Fritz Stern already during the 1950s, while spending research time in the United States. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, the brothers Hans and Wolfgang Mommsen, Thomas Nipperdey, and, slightly later, Hartmut Lehmann and Jürgen Kocka were all intrigued by the works of American scholars, émigrés and non-émigrés alike. They conveyed this interest back to German students and colleagues.¹³¹

The mutual interest in exploring the cultural and political history of Germany encouraged the translation of English-language historical studies for European and, in particular, German audiences. Initiatives of farsighted editors, such as Ernst-Peter Wieckenberg at the C. H. Beck publishing house in Munich, facilitated this transfer from the 1960s on. Although many of the historians in our sample spent considerable time in Germany during their career, only one returned for good to Germany: Werner Angress, who settled in Berlin for the last two decades of his life.

However, the impact German scholars had on American historiography at large was limited. It was centered on the oeuvre of a few outstanding scholars, such as Karl Dietrich Bracher, Jürgen Habermas, and Reinhart Koselleck. The reverse effect is more noticeable.¹³² Peter Gay, Georg Iggers, Gerda Lerner, Peter Loewenberg, Michael A. Meyer, George L. Mosse, Peter Paret, Fritz Stern, and Gerhard Weinberg are second-generation historians whose studies influenced students

and scholars of history on an international scale and especially so in Germany. To this impressive list we need to add Arno J. Mayer and Saul Friedländer.¹³³ Through the critical review of German history they provided, with their commitment to the values of civil society, and fostered by their discussions with German colleagues (at times, as in the case of Fritz Stern, also with journalists and members of the political class,) they had their share in what Konrad H. Jarausch and others have called the “cultural democratization of West Germany.”¹³⁴

Identities and Habitus

Members of the second generation pursued their careers as American citizens; a few lived in Canada. Did they remain immigrants, was there something distinct about them? It might be fair to say that most of them had several identities, which could no longer be reduced to that of refugees from Germany. Each individual took his or her own path of Americanization. Many considered themselves Americans with a European or German heritage. Many embraced the transcultural experiences gained during their long journey to America. Often with divergent, if not painful, feelings, many remained emotionally and intellectually connected to their origins. Such connections were also rhetorically constructed, reminiscent of what Joan Scott has described as the “fantasy echo” that makes individuals arrange retrospectively an ever-changing identity.¹³⁵

An in-depth probe into these complicated processes would need to employ psychological, if not psychoanalytical categories. It is not a coincidence that Peter Gay and Peter Loewenberg, both familiar with such categories, have authored particularly sensitive assessments of what the processes of acculturation meant to them. Loewenberg’s essay in this volume attests to this capacity. Gay has described how he came to feeling profoundly “at home” in America, an attitude that he traces back to his youth in Berlin. Others have defined in different terms the twisted road from departure to arrival in America and their existence in this country. Theodor von Laue, for example, was an émigré, but not a refugee. He felt “uprooted from a formal German traditional culture—a positive heritage for me that was free of Nazi crudeness—and tossed into America.” Laue retained the sense of remaining an “in-between person” at university. Toward the end of his life, he confessed that, in spite of having lived in the United States for over half a century, he was “not quite here yet.”¹³⁶

The students and colleagues of the historians in our sample noticed features that distinguished the latter from other academics, though perceptions varied. Some friends of Klemens von Klemperer in his hometown in Massachusetts saw him as the “prototypical American college professor who, like many others, took an occasional trip to Europe.”¹³⁷ For many others, however, the scholars portrayed in this volume retained an aura, or at least a noticeable touch (and charm)

of Europeaness. There remained something distinct about them. Undoubtedly, they did not have the “air of a Teutonic Herr Professor Doktor” that some of the older, first-generation refugee scholars seem to have possessed.¹³⁸ The younger ones also had an accent that marked them as people who had spent their formative years in Brooklyn or New England rather than in Berlin or Vienna.

Still, their personal and professional demeanor had facets that set them apart from their colleagues and peers. They were known to have continuous or newly assumed transatlantic connections, which led to opportunities to travel and lecture abroad. They showed a familiarity with the plurality of Jewish cultures and with themes that the German-style *humanistische Gymnasium*—in essence, a high school with a particular focus on the classics—had cultivated to a greater extent than the average American school. Gerald Holton once confessed how “unpleasant” the instruction at his *Gymnasium* had been for him—and yet how deeply it influenced him in embracing a wide variety of subjects.¹³⁹

This sense of difference and the vestiges of otherness—that is, the former émigrés’ “habitus” (Pierre Bourdieu),¹⁴⁰ their manners, demeanor, taste, and, more broadly, forms of social and communicative behavior—added distinctiveness to their personal and professional appearance. Many of them shared a fondness for German-style coffee and cake on weekend afternoons. Many displayed an academic vigor that their students perceived as European. They had an appreciation of high culture, encapsulated in the German term *Bildung*, and of classical music in particular. They often expressed an avid interest in cultural events on and off campus, and many displayed an impressive ability to quote from the classics and German literature. They were also interested in conveying to family members and students elements of this humanistic heritage. In front of many of his American colleagues and friends, Walter Laqueur concluded the celebration of his ninetieth birthday, arranged at Georgetown University in 2011, by reciting a long quote from Hans Sachs, taken from Richard Wagner’s *Meistersinger*—in impeccable German.¹⁴¹

Yet, both the self-descriptions of former refugees and the assessments from outside defy a reduction to an “illusory sameness established by referring to a category of person . . . as if it never changed.”¹⁴² When George L. Mosse confessed in the 1990s that he would “remain an emigrant,” this statement did not suggest a simple continuity between his early life in Germany and his present, quite the contrary. Mosse pointed to the many factors that shaped his life, from his early political socialization and his homosexuality to his pleasure in living and communicating in different cultures and languages, including German. All of these informed his scholarly interests and the choices he made for himself.

Not unlike Mosse’s characterization of himself as an “anti-nationalist,” Susan Groag Bell identified astutely the complications of demarcating identities when she explained that she felt as though she did not belong to “any nation, race, or religion.” This nonbelonging was a consequence of both her multiple cultural

socializations and the limits inherent in any attempt to define identities in a coherent fashion and then separate them neatly as constitutive factors of one individual's biography:

I have lived in Czechoslovakia, in both the Sudetenland and the heartland of Czech Bohemia in Prague; I have lived in England; and I have lived in the United States. I have been, and could be, a legal citizen of any of these countries and hold passports for all of them. As a child I have also been officially affiliated with Lutheranism and Anglicanism, and my ancestors were Jews. I have thus been unusually fortunate to have had numerous possibilities to create an identity for myself and even to choose which one I would like to consider as primary. But I have also been a German among Czechs, a Continental among Britons, a European among Americans, a Protestant among Jews, and a Jew among Gentiles. So, although I have obviously taken some facets of all of them into myself, I cannot choose any one of these identities above any other, partly because they did not choose me [. . .]¹⁴³

Paths From and To History

Peter Gay once called the cohort of refugees who fled Hitler to the United States a “very heterogeneous crowd.”¹⁴⁴ This characterization is even more appropriate when approaching the second-generation émigrés who became historians in North America. The autobiographical essays assembled in this volume reflect this diversity. They demonstrate how personal narratives and, specifically, departure from National Socialist Germany shaped both the interests that these refugees developed as students and the works they produced as scholars. But they also show that such processes varied in individual, often unpredictable ways.

Certainly, it is useful to “study the historian” before we “begin to study the facts,” as Edward H. Carr recommended in a now famous remark.¹⁴⁵ But there is a multitude of stories to study in that regard, and we can read and construe these stories in many different ways. Sigmund Freud had it right when he wrote to Arnold Zweig that “biographical truth does not exist.” His addendum (“if it did we could not use it”)¹⁴⁶ points to the necessity of caution in defining categories to help understand particular features of an individual's life, as well as the pluralities of factors that cause an ever-changing relationship between elements of continuity and of discontinuity, in the biographies of historians as well as in their contributions to scholarship. This relationship articulates itself in the peripatetic character of the protagonists as “wanderers between several worlds,” as Walter Laqueur puts it in this volume.

The young émigrés' paths to history emerged from age, gender, and talent. They were influenced by family background, socioeconomic factors, and religious and regional identities. Persistence and intellectual curiosity during the complex processes of migration, and of acculturation to new contexts, had an impact on

these paths, as did the expansion of higher education in postwar America. Contingencies and luck played a role in finding a place as a historian. Even when they did not translate their personal stories into their research, the second-generation émigrés had to grapple with a past that possessed a “brooding omnipresence” (Peter Gay) and could not simply be shed.¹⁴⁷ This awareness encouraged several to engage in humanitarian enterprises, to support the civil rights movement from the 1950s on, as Georg Iggers did in his work with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), or to endorse other civic and political causes. Fritz Stern, having experienced illiberalism first-hand in his youth and later researching it as a historian, had good reasons, as late as 1988, to mobilize the public against the danger, articulated by Ronald Reagan, of denigrating what he cherished as a core value of any democratic society: liberalism based on the value of individual freedom and the protection of minorities.¹⁴⁸

Due to their emigration early in life and because of their migration through different cultural spaces and “contact zones,” many of the second-generation émigrés from Germany lived “transcultural lives.”¹⁴⁹ They developed an understanding of the histories of various continents and cultures in ways that were not defined by borders of state, ethnicity, or religion alone. Can we at all gauge their impact on the historical disciplines? We are just beginning to find answers to this question, and readers of this volume will find different ones. Steven Aschheim and Jeffrey Herf emphasize the distinctiveness of the scholarly works of émigrés who come from a German-Jewish background. Helmut Walser Smith argues that the early works of Peter Gay, especially his interpretation of the Enlightenment, derived primarily from Gay’s engagement, in the 1950s, with the ideas of Franz Neumann, Ernst Cassirer, and Erwin Panofsky. Philipp Stelzel sees both similarities and differences between the critical take on German history that several émigrés articulated and that of German historians, as exemplified in the debate about a German *Sonderweg*—that is, about a peculiar path into modernity that ultimately culminated in the National Socialist regime. With a focus on Gerda Lerner’s scholarly oeuvre, Marjorie Lamberti remains skeptical vis-à-vis linking the refugee experience directly with later historiographical positions.

The immediate confrontation with the National Socialist regime early in life, the ensuing emigration, and the forms of acculturation did not create unbroken lines of continuity for the second-generation émigrés. They made a difference because these men and women shared a memory of the past as well as specific forms of cultural capital, competencies, and habitus. These factors further influenced the impressively diverse themes they embraced when they became historians and transatlantic brokers. For their students and colleagues, as for us today, their stories constitute a chapter of how the study of history comes about. Yet, they also offer a panorama of the new and unexpected avenues this study—and its personal origins—opens and will continue to open, again and again.