Austria as a Cold War Refuge: Reassessing the Historiography

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ABSTRACT

This state-of-the-field article examines the historiography of Austria as a Cold War refuge. It starts by identifying research trends in Austrian migration history and relating these to general developments in research on contemporary Austrian history. The state of the field reflects general temporal foci of historians and has surged at moments when migration became more prominent in public debates as was the case in the early 1990s and again since 2015. Against this backdrop, both generally and regarding migration history, the postwar decade is the most thoroughly researched period of the Cold War. Still, a closer look at the history of DPs and expellees in postwar Austria reveals a fragmented scholarship; the recent renewed interest in the topic has the potential to broaden and deepen our knowledge. During the Cold War, Austria successfully protected its image as a haven for refugees. Since the 1990s, however, historians have begun revisiting and de-mythologizing this master narrative of Austria's Cold War history. Their findings clearly demonstrate that Austria always aimed to be a country of transit only and that public discourse about refugees repeatedly turned negative over time—not only in the later stages of the Cold War but already in regard to the Hungarian refugees of 1956. Despite substantial progress in the past decade, studies addressing the country's history as a refuge from the 1960s until the end of the Cold War are still scarce. While publications on major crisis-related refugee movements to Austria continue to grow in number, there is a lack of analysis addressing long-term developments and integrating their findings into the broader history of migration in Austria (especially labor migration since the 1960s). Furthermore, studies aiming to overcome the East–West focus in Austria's migration history by applying a global perspective are only in their infancy.

KEYWORDS: Austria, refugees, migration, historiography, Cold War

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Introduction

Austria was a country of immigration in the years after 1945 and still is. Even if certain politicians and considerable parts of society think otherwise, academics from the various disciplines of migration studies have never raised doubts about that.[1] Historians not explicitly studying migration, however, have long ignored immigration as a defining element of postwar Austria. Historical research on migration to Austria after World War II commenced in the 1980s, making use of freshly declassified archival sources. Nevertheless, apart from selective mentioning of well-known events like those of 1956, only a few authors of broader narratives of Austrian history have incorporated the findings of migration studies into their publications.[2] Comprehensive historical accounts of migration in Austria, the country's role as a refuge, and the development of Austrian refugee policy are yet to be written.[3]

Not least because of the so-called refugee crisis of 2015/16 and its effects on public and academic debate about migration, publication efforts have recently increased. Several promising BA, MA, and PhD theses on migration and refugees in Austria are already complete or in progress. The forthcoming publications of young scholars specializing in migration studies will substan-

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1 Until World War II, net emigration from Austria was the rule, but immigration predominated after the war. Since the mid-1940s, 4.5 million migrants have entered the country, of whom 1.3 million settled there. Apart from the up to 1.65 million refugees in postwar Austria, of whom at least 350,000 stayed, since the 1960s labor migration and its long-term consequences (including family reunifications) have contributed the greatest number of people to the Austrian population. Naturalizations peaked at the end of the postwar decade and again in the post-millennium. Leaving aside the immediate postwar situation, the share of people with foreign citizenship in Austria peaked at 4.1 % in 1974. It temporarily declined after that before increasing again to 8 % in the 1990s. It is continuing to rise.

2 "To date, the history of migration and the experiences of migrants have not been integrated into the hegemonic version of Austrian history. With few exceptions, they are not visible in school textbooks or in the mainstream representations of the history of the Second Republic, neither in museums nor in public spaces such as memorials or street names." This assessment is based on a review of the general literature on Austrian history since 1945. See DIRK RUPNOW: The History and Memory of Migration in Post-War Austria: Current Trends and Future Challenges, in: GÜNTER BISCHOF, DIRK RUPNOW (eds.): Migration in Austria, New Orleans—Innsbruck 2017, pp. 37–65, for the quote, p. 41. A prominent exception from the rule is: OLIVER RATHKOLB: Die paradoxe Republik: Österreich 1945–2015, Wien 2015. Short overviews can be found in edited volumes on Austrian contemporary history. See, for example, GABRIELA STIEBER: Migration und Zwangsmigration in Österreich, in: STEFAN KARNER, LORENZ MIKOLETZKY (eds.): Österreich; 90 Jahre Republik. Beitragsband der Ausstellung im Parlament, Innsbruck et al. 2008, pp. 101–113.

3 For overviews written by social scientists in consideration of the historical background, see HEINZ FASSMANN, RAINER MÜNZ: Einwanderungsland Österreich? Historische Migrationsmuster, aktuelle Trends und politische Maßnahmen, Wien 1995; RAINER BAUBÖCK: "Nach Rasse und Sprache verschieden": Migrationspolitik in Österreich von der Monarchie bis heute, Wien 1996.

tially enrich our knowledge of the subject. This essay, however, is mostly limited to historical studies that have already been published. The first section discusses general trends in the study of contemporary Austrian history and historians' engagement with the field of migration. Thereafter, a detailed assessment of the state of the field proceeds chronologically, focusing on the central questions historians have addressed when studying migration in the periods under consideration. The second section, on the postwar decade, discusses the imbalance in the research efforts regarding the different groups of refugees and how their treatment differed depending on their ethnicity. The third section focuses on studies of refugees from communist states and historians' de-mythologizing of the predominantly positive image neutral Austria has of itself as a refuge during the Cold War. The fourth section deals with the later phase of the Cold War (overlapping with the incipient globalization of our times), during which Austria's policies and public attitudes toward refugees underwent a change that has not yet been sufficiently studied. This essay links the growing historiography on refugees from Eastern Europe to the findings of research on the effects of labor migration and policy on foreigners. Furthermore, it sheds light on the understudied question of how refugees from the global South have been received in Austria and suggests potential avenues for future research. Occasionally, reference is made to studies on Germany for which there are no equivalents in the Austrian historiography. The conclusion summarizes the key achievements of the historiography to date and highlights desiderata.

Austrian Contemporary History and Migration since 1945: Remarks on Research Trends

The only monograph specifically about refugees in post-1945 Austria was published in 1985. Written by a former Austrian official, Eduard Stanek, it is essentially a memoir. His conclusion that Austria, despite all the burdens of its "refugee problems" has been a "generous country of asylum and shall remain one,"[4] was the point of departure for later historical research. Historians gradually attempted to add nuance to and revise the long-cultivated Austrian master narrative about the country's role as a Cold War refuge. The military historian Hubert Speckner studies the Austrian armed forces' assistance to refugees in the second half of the twentieth century, praising the military's indispensable humanitarian engagement in times of "refugee crises."[5] The popular narrative of a country that is (at least historically) especially welcoming to refugees is omnipresent in public memory and popular history books, but it conflicts with

4 EDUARD STANEK: Verfolgt, verjagt, vertrieben: Flüchtlinge in Österreich von 1945–1984, Wien et al. 1985.

5 HUBERT SPECKNER: Von drüben …: Die Flüchtlingshilfe des Österreichischen Bundesheeres in den Jahren 1956 bis 1999, Wien 2006.

the persistent political aim of remaining merely a transit country for refugees. During the Cold War, the political refugee (usually an escapee from communism) became a symbol of Austrian generosity that remained largely unchallenged until the 1990s.[6]

One can identify the following phases in the way the history of refugees in Austria and the history of migration have been addressed by historians: Until recently, research on the history of Austria since 1945 focused primarily on the occupation period (1945–1955). After a research boom in the 1980s that made extensive use of Austrian and Western sources of various origins, the Eastern European "archival revolution" that followed the end of the Cold War in 1989–1991 introduced studies of the Soviet perspective that prolonged historians' extensive focus on the years of occupation. The refugees of the immediate postwar period in Austria were addressed in research on Austria under Allied occupation, albeit in a very unbalanced way, as will be detailed below. Another chapter of Austria's migration history that has been a permanent focus of historians is that of the Hungarian refugees of 1956.[7] These research efforts are clearly related to the availability of declassified archival sources.

Another force driving historical studies on refugees in Austria was the country's changing policies regarding asylum seekers and other foreigners in the years 1991–1993. This period was perceived at the time to be experiencing a "migration crisis" by politicians and significant parts of the country's media (as it was in other Western European countries). In fact, the growing number of foreigners in Austria was much more a result of labor migration and its long-term consequences than it was of the growing number of asylum seekers, who nevertheless dominated the discussion. Against the background of receiving war refugees from disintegrating Yugoslavia, Austrian discourse was shaped by growing xenophobia (promoted by the political right's initiation of an anti-foreigner referendum, "Austria First") and counter-initiatives like the memorable *Lichtermeer* demonstration in 1993. Until the early 1990s, the subject of migration after the occupation period had been primarily addressed by social scientists. The volume *Asylland wider Willen* (Asylum Country against Its Will), edited by Gernot Heiß and Oliver Rathkolb, was published in 1995. With this provocative title, the historians were responding to changes in Austria's asylum law and the country's policies on foreigners in general as well as the increasingly heated public debate over migration. Many chapters of the book covering events after 1956 are not based on original research. Some of them are instead based on personal memories albeit with an analytical approach. Despite these limitations, the book effectively questioned Austria's self-culti-

6 Patrik-Paul Volf: Der politische Flüchtling als Symbol der Zweiten Republik: Zur Asyl- und Flüchtlingspolitik seit 1945, in: zeitgeschichte 22 (1995), 11/12, pp. 415–436.

7 For an overview of historiography on Austria in the Cold War, see Maximilian Graf, Agnes Meisinger: Österreich im Kalten Krieg: Forschungsstand und Desiderata, in: Maximilian Graf, Agnes Meisinger (eds.): Österreich im Kalten Krieg: Neue Forschungen im internationalen Kontext, Göttingen 2016, pp. 9–48.

vated image as a haven for refugees and pointed to recurring disapproval of migration in the twentieth century.[8] Interestingly, despite the volume's ambitious approach and broad scope, and the growing availability of declassified archival sources, no substantial increase in research efforts followed its publication. Furthermore, the edited volume was the first and last overview of Austria's history as a country of asylum for more than twenty years.

The phrase *Asylland wider Willen* was originally coined by Thomas Albrich in a 1988 summary of the history of displaced persons (DPs) in postwar Austria, which neatly portrayed the country's initial reluctance to host and integrate people stranded on Austrian territory in 1945.[9] Heiß and Rathkolb's application of this epithet to the entirety of twentieth century Austrian history as a refuge is debatable, but it was not challenged at the time. In an essay published in 2009, Andreas Weigl dissented mildly from the thesis of *Asylland wider Willen* and emphasized that, in an international comparison, Austria had pursued a liberal refugee policy until the late 1990s.[10] Despite ample room for controversy over Austria's migration history, historians' have not yet adequately engaged in discussion of the actual humanitarian merits, the negativity of the national discourse about refugees (especially in the last two decades of the twentieth century), and the country's asylum policies, which should be studied in international comparison.

Historical writing on migration reflects some general problems with contemporary history as a discipline in Austria. In the mid-1990s, the historian Thomas Angerer diagnosed a reluctance among his colleagues to address the most recent periods of history. He observed a general reluctance to address the history of the Second Republic beyond the early 1960s.[11] In my view, this reluctance still exists to some degree.[12] However, migration history increasingly

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8 GERNOT HEISS, OLIVER RATHKOLB (eds.): Asylland wider Willen: Flüchtlinge in Österreich im europäischen Kontext seit 1914, Wien 1995.

9 THOMAS ALBRICH: Asylland wider Willen: Die Problematik der Displaced Persons in Österreich 1945–1948, in: GÜNTER BISCHOF, JOSEF LEIDENFROST (eds.): Die bevormundete Nation: Österreich und die Alliierten 1945–1949, Innsbruck 1988, pp. 217–244.

10 Until the Kosovo conflict of the late 1990s, Austria received more refugees in relation to its population than any other West European country. ANDREAS WEIGL: Migration und Integration: Eine widersprüchliche Geschichte, Innsbruck et al. 2009.

11 THOMAS ANGERER: An Incomplete Discipline: Austrian Zeitgeschichte and Recent History, in: GÜNTER BISCHOF, ANTON PELINKA et al. (eds.): Austria in the Nineteen Fifties, New Brunswick 1995, pp. 207–251. For a similar but more recent assessment of the Austrian historiography on the Cold War, see GÜNTER BISCHOF: Vom Elend der österreichischen Geschichtsschreibung zum Kalten Krieg, in: REINHARD KRAMMER, CHRISTOPH KÜHBERGER et al. (eds.): Der forschende Blick: Beiträge zur Geschichte Österreichs im 20. Jahrhundert. Festschrift für Ernst Hanisch zum 70. Geburtstag, Wien et al. 2010, pp. 371–390.

12 This is true at least in my fields of research, for a full assessment, see the state-of-the-field volume by MARCUS GRÄSER, DIRK RUPNOW (eds.): Österreichische Zeitgeschichte / Zeitgeschichte in Österreich: Eine Standortbestimmung in Zeiten des Umbruchs, Wien—Köln 2021.

constitutes an exception, and the available research has grown over the past two decades. The first museum exhibitions and research initiatives on labor migration commenced in the early 2000s.[13] In 2013, Dirk Rupnow deplored the absence of the topic of migration from the writing of contemporary Austrian history. He called for a transnational history of Austria as a migration society and himself initiated research projects on labor migration to the country.[14] Several articles and exhibitions resulted from these initiatives, and Rupnow's contributions to the field must be viewed as cutting edge, especially with regard to the history and memory of labor migration to Austria.[15] A monograph synthesizing the results of these endeavors would be a valuable contribution to the field. Specialized PhD theses have already been turned into concise monographs.[16] The remarkable progress of the historiography of labor migration is not the primary concern of this essay on the state of the field, but it seems reasonable to link some of the findings on labor migration to scholarship on the history of refugees in Austria, where surprisingly little research had been done on the period after the 1960s until the sea change brought about by the most recent "refugee crisis."

Since 2017, four edited volumes have been published that aim to provide an overview of Austria as a refuge and of the country's migration history in

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13 HAKAN GÜRSES, CORNELIA KOGOJ et al. (eds.): Gastarbajteri: 40 Jahre Arbeitsmigration, Wien 2004; VIDA BAKONDY (ed.): Viel Glück! Migration heute: Wien, Belgrad, Zagreb, Istanbul, Wien 2010; VLADIMIR IVANOVIĆ: Die Beschäftigung jugoslawischer Arbeitskräfte in Österreich in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren, in: zeitgeschichte 40 (2013), 1, pp. 35–48; VLADIMIR IVANOVIĆ: Geburtstag pišeš normalno: Jugoslovenski gastarbajteri u SR Nemačkoj i Austriji 1965–1973 [Geburtstag Is Written the Normal Way: Yugoslav Guest Workers in West Germany and Austria 1965–1973], Beograd 2012.

14 DIRK RUPNOW: Deprovincializing Austrian Contemporary History: Plädoyer für eine transnationale Geschichte Österreichs als Migrationsgesellschaft, in: zeitgeschichte 40 (2013), 1, pp. 5–21.

15 Additionally, it offers a survey of research institutions and archives dedicated to migration. RUPNOW, History and Memory; DIRK RUPNOW: Geschichte und Gedächtnis der Migration in Österreich: Gegenwärtige Trends und zukünftige Herausforderungen, in: STEFAN KARNER, BARBARA STELZL-MARX (eds.): Migration: Flucht—Vertreibung—Integration, Graz—Wien 2019, pp. 227–242; also see CHRISTIANE HINTERMANN: Marginalized Memories: The (In)visibility of Migration History in Public Space in Austria, in: BISCHOF/RUPNOW, pp. 243–255; VIDA BAKONDY: "Austria Attractive for Guest Workers?" Recruitment of Immigrant Labor in Austria in the 1960s and 1970s, in: BISCHOF/RUPNOW, pp. 113–137; WOLFGANG MEIGHÖRNER (ed.): Hier Zuhause: Migrationsgeschichten aus Tirol. Tiroler Volkskunstmuseum 2.6.–3.12.2017, Innsbruck 2017.

16 For example, an excellent study on female labor migration from Yugoslavia to Austria helps to correct a gender imbalance in the pre-existing narrative which focused predominantly on male guest workers. VERENA LORBER: Angeworben: GastarbeiterInnen in Österreich in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren, Göttingen 2016; for an English summary, see VERENA LORBER: To Come into the Focus: Female "Guest Workers" from Former Yugoslavia in Austria (1960–1980), in: BISCHOF/RUPNOW, pp. 161–185.

modern times (mostly covering the period since the late nineteenth century).[17] Most of the existing studies are based on archival sources, media accounts, and oral histories. However, especially when addressing the most recent past, historians need to combine traditional historical approaches with innovative methodologies and interdisciplinary viewpoints. The four edited volumes include contributions by artists (photojournalists), experts working in the field of migration, geographers, legal scholars, political scientists, and sociologists. Their work has significantly influenced historical studies, and their methods could be (and in some cases already are, as recent publications show) inspiring for those historians who do not shy away from addressing the most recent past. The increasing prevalence of such edited volumes that bring together a diversity of voices follows a pattern of historical writing in Austria and elsewhere. Contemporary debates are having an enormous impact on research and even more so on publication agendas. While the current and unprecedented boom in publications does not necessarily correspond with substantial advances beyond the state of knowledge achieved before 2015, several recent articles based on original research and fresh archival (and other) sources, as well as ongoing research mostly conducted by younger scholars, offer new interpretations and apply innovative methodologies. This essay is thus appearing at the crossroads of traditional historical scholarship and a modern, interdisciplinary migration history.

Postwar Austria as an Unlikely Refuge: Rejection and Ethnic Differentiation

The history of the Second Austrian Republic started when there was already an unprecedented number of foreigners within the territory of the re-established country. Although statistical data for the period is incomplete, it is estimated that in 1945/46 there were up to 1.65 million people, many of them de facto stateless, stranded in Austria. They made up more than a quarter of the total Austrian population of the time. Usually given the label DPs, many of them were former forced laborers and prisoners of war who had been brought to Austrian territory under Nazi rule. Others were Jewish Holocaust survivors and postwar Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe. They were joined by a huge number of so-called *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans or German-speakers) expelled from their former homes, mostly in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Due to its coinage and usage by Nazi Germany, the term *Volksdeutsche* (subsuming all persons considered "German" outside Germany's pre-1937 borders)

[17] Bischof/Rupnow; Börries Kuzmany, Rita Garstenauer (eds.): Aufnahmeland Österreich: Über den Umgang mit Massenflucht seit dem 18. Jahrhundert, Wien 2017; Karner/Stelzl-Marx, Migration; Senol Grasl-Akkilic, Marcus Schober et al. (eds.): Aspekte der österreichischen Migrationsgeschichte, Wien 2019. Also see the thematic issue of Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften 31 (2020), 1: Migrationswege.

is highly problematic and usually avoided nowadays. In this article, *Volksdeutsche* is solely understood as a term used in this period—and subsequently adopted by historians—to refer to German-speaking expellees stranded in postwar Austria. The vast majority of DPs left the country within two years, not least thanks to the repatriation efforts of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). UNRRA's successor, the International Refugee Organization, continued the resettlement of DPs. The repatriation and resettlement process slowed down in 1951, and almost 400,000 expellees and DPs remained. As many scholars have demonstrated, Austria initially wanted all the DPs to leave the country. This stance first changed in 1946, when some 80,000 people were granted citizenship. Most of them were *Volksdeutsche* (who had not been transferred to occupied Germany in the immediate postwar period and could not otherwise be repatriated) who could help to satisfy the country's economic needs. The remaining *Volksdeutsche* were finally given the option of taking Austrian citizenship in the mid-1950s. All other DPs had to apply for and be granted citizenship on a case-by-case basis. At least 350,000 expellees and DPs remained in Austria permanently, representing five percent of the population as of the year 1961. The overwhelming majority of them were eventually granted Austrian citizenship.[18] One can hardly imagine a better starting point for writing the history of a country of immigration. Despite this, scholarly research on DPs and expellees has remained surprisingly limited and selective. Furthermore, even today, the history of this significant aspect of Austria's migration history has not yet been sufficiently incorporated into the country's general history.

Recently, Philipp Strobl and Nikolaus Hagen published an essay calling for "new perspectives" and research innovations on DPs in Austria.[19] They state that

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[18] For brief research-based overviews, see ALBRICH, Asylland wider Willen; GABRIELA STIEBER: Die Lösung des Flüchtlingsproblems 1945–1960, in: THOMAS ALBRICH, KLAUS EISTERER et al. (eds.): Österreich in den Fünfzigern, Innsbruck et al. 1995, pp. 67–93; DIETER BACHER, NIKLAS PERZI: Die Chance auf eine neue Heimat: Zwangsarbeiter, DPs und Vertriebene auf dem Gebiet der Republik Österreich 1944–1950, in: KUZMANY/GARSTENAUER, pp. 175–205; ANDREA STRUTZ: Displaced Persons nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg: Migration und Resettlement-Programme als Lösungsansatz, in: KARNER/STELZL-MARX, Migration, pp. 91–102.

[19] PHILIPP STROBL, NIKOLAUS HAGEN: New Perspectives on Displaced Persons (DPs) in Austria, in: zeitgeschichte 47 (2020), 2: Displaced-Persons-Forschung in Österreich und Deutschland: Bestandsaufnahme und Ausblicke, pp. 165–180. Their essay is the introduction to the thematic issue. Unfortunately, Strobl and Hagen do not provide the reader with a thorough overview of the existing literature in the state-of-the-art section of their piece. Hence, my essay on the state of the field devotes only a little attention to what has been covered by Strobl and Hagen and discusses recent research they did not mention. After the completion of this state-of-the-field article, Strobl and Hagen co-edited a volume containing several articles with promising new perspectives. Their own contribution in that volume, however, does not go beyond the article quoted above. PHILIPP STROBL, NIKOLAUS HAGEN: Neue Perspektiven der DP-Forschung in Österreich, in:

> "the cultural, economic, and social impact of DPs and their contribution to the country's postwar society is grossly under-researched and mostly unknown. The 'marginalization of DPs' in the Austrian historiographical discourse surprises, especially since DPs occupied a 'Scharnierfunktion' ('threshold position') in the process of establishing new democratic societies in post-war Europe [...] Their vast number alone suggests that they must have affected and influenced the formation of European post-war societies."[20]

However, Thomas Albrich, the Austrian pioneer in historical research on DPs, had already reached almost the same conclusion back in 1988.[21] There has been surprisingly little progress in research on DPs in Austria in the past three decades, notwithstanding that relevant archival sources were available throughout the whole period.

Strobl and Hagen highlight that Jewish DPs in postwar Austria are the "most thoroughly investigated group." Their assessment that "[t]he focus, however, has only been on the onwards movement,"[22] is only partially accurate. Of course, transit to other countries was a major research focus because that is what the majority of Jewish DPs wanted. However, the existing studies cover many more aspects of the refugee experience, including daily life in the camps and a variety of conflicts (with Austrian society, among DPs, and with emigration organizations). It is nevertheless true that long-term studies of the trajectories and life stories of DPs are scarce.

Most of the Jewish DPs in postwar Austria were Holocaust survivors from former concentration camps on Austrian territory or others who had fled from Eastern Europe. The latter group is at the intersection of the postwar and early Cold War refugee experience in Austria. Albrich's groundbreaking study on the Jewish exodus through Austria appeared in the 1980s during the boom in research on Austria under Allied occupation.[23] He and some of his students have continued to work on DPs since then. In contrast to other fields of Austrian contemporary history, their research has always focused on the role of international networks and organizations and thus relies on a broad range of

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NIKOLAUS HAGEN, MARKUS NESSELRODT et al. (eds.): Displaced Persons-Forschung in Deutschland und Österreich: Eine Bestandsaufnahme zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts, Berlin 2022, pp. 35–59.

20 STROBL/HAGEN, p. 168.

21 Albrich stresses that despite the enormous problems caused by the sheer number of DPs in the reborn Austrian state, there is no all-encompassing study of the overall complex of those problems. He adds that even definitive books on the history of postwar Austria did not adequately cover the DP question in its actual political, economic, and social significance in the early years of the Second Republic. ALBRICH, Asylland wider Willen, pp. 217–218.

22 STROBL/HAGEN, p. 172.

23 THOMAS ALBRICH: Exodus durch Österreich: Die jüdischen Flüchtlinge 1945–1948, Innsbruck 1987.

archival and oral history sources.[24] Susanne Rolinek's 2007 book *Jüdische Lebenswelten 1945–1955: Flüchtlinge in der amerikanischen Zone Österreichs* is an impressive research achievement.[25] Still today (and increasingly since 2015), publications continue to appear that focus on the Jewish DPs' onward movement, life in the camps, and their interactions with Austrian society.[26]

Jewish emigration through Austria decreased with the imposition of the Iron Curtain across Europe, but it never ceased entirely and resumed on an even greater scale in the mid-1960s as Soviet Jews began emigrating through Austria. More than 250,000 people migrated though Austria (mostly on the way to Israel and the USA). As many as seven or eight thousand stayed in Austria. This important chapter of Austria's Cold War history has been studied in a project by Gabriele Anderl, Evelyn Klein, and Hannes Leidinger. Unfortunately, the project team's monograph has not yet been published.[27] Another study by Ruth Orli Moshkowitz is based on oral histories and focuses on refugees who decided not to travel on to Israel or the USA, but rather to stay in Austria or remigrate there. These individuals greatly contributed to the re-establishment of the Viennese Jewish community.[28]

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24 See the many specialized chapters in the following publications: THOMAS ALBRICH (ed.): Flucht nach Eretz Israel: Die Bricha und der jüdische Exodus durch Österreich nach 1945, Innsbruck et al. 1998; THOMAS ALBRICH, RONALD W. ZWEIG (eds.): Escape through Austria: Jewish Refugees and the Austrian Route to Palestine, London 2002; SABINE ASCHAUER-SMOLIK, MARIO STEIDL (eds.): Tamid Kadima—immer vorwärts: Der jüdische Exodus aus Europa 1945–1948, Innsbruck et al. 2010. For a more complete assessment of the historiography of Jewish DPs in postwar Austria, see STROBL/HAGEN.

25 SUSANNE ROLINEK: Jüdische Lebenswelten 1945–1955: Flüchtlinge in der amerikanischen Zone Österreichs, Innsbruck et al. 2007.

26 DANIELLE SPERA, WERNER HANAK-LETTNER (eds.): Displaced in Österreich: Jüdische Flüchtlinge seit 1945 / Displaced in Austria: Jewish Refugees since 1945, Innsbruck et al. 2017; HERIBERT MACHER-KROISENBRUNNER: We hope to go to Palestine: Das jüdische DP-Lager Admont 1946–1949, Graz 2018; ANNE MITTELHAMMER: Zwischen Leben—Politische Machtstrukturen und Konflikte in den Lagern der jüdischen Displaced Persons in Italien und Österreich 1944–1951, Hamburg 2018.

27 For information about the project, see http://www.zukunftsfonds-austria.at/abstracts/P08-0422_abstract.pdf (2020-10-15). For published summaries, see HANNES LEIDINGER: Jüdische Emigration aus der Sowjetunion, in: KARNER/STELZL-MARX, Migration, pp. 137–146; GABRIELE ANDERL, VIKTOR IŠČENKO: Die jüdische Emigration aus der Sowjetunion via Österreich, in: STEFAN KARNER, ALEXANDER TSCHUBARJAN (eds.): Österreich—Russland: Stationen gemeinsamer Geschichte, Graz—Wien 2018, pp. 241–251; recently, see WOLFGANG MUELLER, HANNES LEIDINGER, VIKTOR ISHCHENKO: "When Israel Was in Egypt's Land": Jewish Emigration from the USSR, 1968–1991, in: zeitgeschichte 49 (2022), 3, pp. 343–365.

28 RUTH ORLI MOSHKOVITZ: "Ich bin nur froh, dass die Sowjetunion uns nicht zurückgenommen hat": Bucharisch-jüdische (Re)-Migration nach Wien im Kontext transnationaler Vergeschlechtlichung und Rassifizierung, MA-thesis, University of Vienna, 2016. For published summaries, see RUTH ORLI MOSHKOVITZ: Wien als Transitstadt sowjetisch-jüdischer Migration, in: Gedenkdienst (2016), 1 (76), pp. 3–4; RUTH ORLI

The most important group of postwar refugees who stayed in Austria, at least in numerical terms, is the *Volksdeutsche*. In view of their large numbers, the relatively limited historiography on their reception and integration demands an explanation. It seems that their expulsion from their homes abroad and their fate in postwar Austria were an uneasy topic for Austrian historians. Initially, their experiences were primarily studied by legal scholars and sociologists.[29] Historians began to take an interest in the 1980s. The most widely cited study among the recent scholarly publications is Gabriela Stieber's 1997 book on postwar refugees in Carinthia and Styria.[30] She also wrote articles covering the period 1945 to 1960 that generalized her findings at the national level.[31] Stieber's research was mostly based on archival sources produced by the British occupation power, the Austrian state, and regional authorities. Several other local and regional studies of the *Volksdeutsche* in Austria exist,[32] but this body of scholarship, while of comparable quality, is considerably smaller than its German counterpart.[33] A book like Andreas Kossert's intensely discussed *Kalte Heimat*[34] could hardly be written for the case of Austria based on the current state of the relevant research. Existing (usually regional) studies have established a solid knowledge about the initial rejection of the *Volksdeutsche* and their often protracted life in the camps, but much less is known about the process of their gradual integration into the Austrian workforce and then as Austrian citizens. A nationwide history of their integration (or, in this case, assimilation) has not yet been written, which means that a defining chapter of Aus-

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MOSHKOVITZ: "Dropping Out" in Vienna: Soviet Jewish Migration to the USA until 1989, in: SPERA/HANAK-LETTNER, pp. 124–135.

29 To name the most formative: TONY RADSPIELER: The Ethnic German Refugee in Austria 1945–1954, The Hague 1955; BRUNHILDE SCHEURINGER: 30 Jahre danach: Die Eingliederung der volksdeutschen Flüchtlinge und Vertriebenen in Österreich, Wien 1983. For a bibliography of older studies, see GERTRUD KRALLERT: Kommentierte Bibliographie zum Flüchtlings- und Vertriebenenproblem in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, in Österreich und in der Schweiz, Wien 1989.

30 GABRIELA STIEBER: Nachkriegsflüchtlinge in Kärnten und der Steiermark, Graz 1997.

31 STIEBER, Die Lösung des Flüchtlingsproblems.

32 NIKLAS PERZI: Aufnahme und Abschub: Die Sudentendeutschen in Niederösterreich 1945/46, in: Jahrbuch für Landeskunde von Niederösterreich (2016), pp. 135–233; GABRIELA STIEBER: Flüchtlingsnot und Flüchtlingshilfe in Kärnten nach 1945, Klagenfurt 1999; ELISABETH SALVADOR-WAGNER: Heimat auf Zeit: Das volksdeutsche Flüchtlingslager Haiming 1946–1960, Innsbruck 1996. For mention of additional literature, including MA theses on DPs, see STROBL/HAGEN.

33 For a brief comparison of the historiography on the integration of expellees in Austria and the two Germanies, see MATTHIAS STICKLER: Vertriebenenintegration in Österreich und Deutschland—ein Vergleich, in: MICHAEL GEHLER, INGRID BÖHLER (eds.): Verschiedene europäische Wege im Vergleich: Österreich und die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945/49 bis zur Gegenwart. Festschrift für Rolf Steininger zum 65. Geburtstag, Innsbruck et al. 2007, pp. 416–435.

34 ANDREAS KOSSERT: Kalte Heimat: Die Geschichte der deutschen Vertriebenen nach 1945, München 2008.

trian migration history is gradually fading into oblivion. It seems that Austria's postwar distancing of itself from everything "German" also affected research on this group that was initially unwanted but nevertheless became an integral part of Austrian society within two decades. For some historians, the whole topic probably seemed a bit too sensitive or reactionary to be addressed. However, in recent years several studies have approached this multilayered and complex issue in a fresh and timely way.[35]

The historiography has diagnosed a preference for non-Jewish, German-speaking refugees in postwar Austria's citizenship policy.[36] The *Volksdeutsche* were eventually granted privileged access to Austrian citizenship while the number of Jews granted citizenship remained negligible. This picture in black and white, however, leaves out a long-neglected group of DPs from the Soviet Union (and elsewhere)[37] who were used as forced labor during World War II but refused repatriation, were not resettled elsewhere, and finally stayed in Austria. Interest in that group received a push in the early 2000s because of the establishment of the so-called *Versöhnungsfonds* (reconciliation funds) that offered forced laborers long overdue compensation.[38] Many of the studies based on oral histories and the written testimonies produced for the application process for compensation seems to have been produced in vacuum and obliv-

35 On the generally belated Austrian debate over the expulsion of the Sudetendeutsche from Czechoslovakia, see OLIVER RATHKOLB: Verdrängung und Instrumentalisierung: Die Vertreibung der Sudetendeutschen und ihre verspätete Rezeption in Österreich, in: BARBARA COUDENHOVE-KALERGI, OLIVER RATHKOLB (eds.): Die Beneš-Dekrete, Wien 2012, pp. 138–151. For fresh studies aiming to overcome this dilemma in a timely way, see MELANIE DEJNEGA: "Heimat" im Gepäck? Die Bedeutung der Migrationserfahrung in Lebensgeschichten "deutscher Vertriebener" in Österreich, PhD Diss., University of Bielefeld, 2018, https://pub.uni-bielefeld.de/record/2942631 (2022-09-08); GAELLE FISHER: "Ethnic Germans," "Expellees" or "Old Austrians": Identity Narratives and Memory Politics of Germans from Bukovina in Austria since 1945, in: MAREN RÖGER, ALEXANDER WEIDLE (eds.): Bukowina-Deutsche: Erfindungen, Erfahrungen und Erzählungen einer (imaginierten) Gemeinschaft seit 1775, Berlin 2020.

36 This is the consensus of existing scholarship. With an eye on the continuities from First to Second Republic, see HANNELORE BURGER: Heimat- und staatenlos: Zum Ausschluss (ost-)jüdischer Flüchtlinge aus der österreichischen Staatsbürgerschaft in der Ersten und Zweiten Republik, in: KUZMANY/GARSTENAUER, pp. 156–174.

37 On Polish DPs in Austria, see ANDRZEJ PILCH: Das Problem der polnischen Displaced Persons in Österreich nach dem 2. Weltkrieg, in: JÓZEF BUSZKO (ed.): Österreich – Polen: 1000 Jahre Beziehungen, Kraków 1996 (Studia Austro-Polonica, 5), pp. 343–363. On resettlement to Great Britain, see BARRY MCLOUGHLIN: Eine zweite Chance, eine zweite Heimat? Die Übersiedlung ehemaliger Zwangsarbeiter von Österreich nach Großbritannien 1945–1955, in: DIETER BACHER, STEFAN KARNER (eds.): Zwangsarbeiter in Österreich 1939–1945 und ihr Nachkriegsschicksal: Die Auswertung des Aktenbestandes des "Österreichischen Versöhnungsfonds." Ein Zwischenbericht, Innsbruck et al. 2013, pp. 230–270.

38 STEFAN KARNER, WALTER M. IBER (eds.): A Heavy Legacy and Wiedergutmachung: Compensation and Restitution in Austria. The Final Balance of the Schüssel Government, Innsbruck et al. 2019.

ious to other historical research on migration.[39] The focus of research conducted in this context has been on forced labor until 1945 and the fate of those DPs who were repatriated to the Soviet Union. Dieter Bacher, on the other hand, has shown that the documentation of the *Versöhnungsfonds* offers new possibilities for research on the fate and trajectories of former forced laborers in postwar Austria. The oral histories of the experiences of DPs are considerably more colorful than the rather impersonal documents produced by the state at the time. Although it was difficult for them to stay, many former forced laborers decided to build a new life in Austria despite the lack of state support. The first state programs for those who had decided not to leave were initiated only in the late 1940s. The total number of non-German-speaking DPs who became Austrian citizens is unknown, but existing statistics imply that in total at least 15 percent of the postwar refugees who were granted citizenship must have been non-Germans. Among those who eventually integrated into Austrian society were people who had worked on farms as forced laborers during the Nazi era or who had started families with the local population "illegally" (in the Nazi sense of the word). The most important reason for the decision to refuse repatriation to the USSR was of course the "fear of persecution" upon return.[40] In the early postwar period, this very real fear became an essential element in the definition of "refugee" in the Geneva Convention of 1951 and provided the starting point for Western-style national and international Cold War refugee regimes.

Immediately after the end of World War II, disagreement among the former Allies over treatment of DPs and their repatriation (especially to the Baltic republics, whose annexation by the Soviet Union was never recognized by the United States) turned into a battlefield of the incipient Cold War. The history of this dispute has not only been addressed by Austrian researchers like Walter Iber, Stefan Karner, and Peter Ruggenthaler, who analyzed Soviet sources that have become available in recent decades,[41] but also by international scholars. Lukas Schemper shows how UNHCR feared bilateral Austrian-Soviet agree-

39 The works quoted below are not mentioned in STROBL/HAGEN.

40 DIETER BACHER: Eine neue Heimat: Eine Motivanalyse in Österreich verbliebener Zwangsarbeiter anhand des Aktenbestandes des "Österreichischen Versöhnungsfonds," in: BACHER/KARNER, pp. 271–323; DIETER BACHER: Der Zwangsrepatriierung entkommen: Lebensgeschichtliche Biografien in Österreich verbliebener Zwangsarbeiter, in: PETER RUGGENTHALER, WALTER M. IBER (eds.): Hitlers Sklaven—Stalins "Verräter": Aspekte der Repression an Zwangsarbeitern und Kriegsgefangenen. Eine Zwischenbilanz, Innsbruck et al. 2010, pp. 289–309; DIETER BACHER: Verschleppt in eine neue Heimat: Die Integration ehemaliger ziviler Zwangsarbeiter in Österreich nach 1945, in: KARNER/STELZL-MARX, Migration, pp. 77–89.

41 WALTER M. IBER, PETER RUGGENTHALER: Sowjetische Repatriierungspolitik in Österreich, in: RUGGENTHALER/IBER, pp. 247–280; STEFAN KARNER, PETER RUGGENTHALER: (Zwangs-)Repatriierungen sowjetischer Staatsbürger aus Österreich in die UdSSR, in: STEFAN KARNER, BARBARA STELZL-MARX (eds.): Die Rote Armee in Österreich: Sowjetische Besatzung 1945–1955, Wien 2005, pp. 243–273.

ments on forced repatriation in connection with the conclusion of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955 through which Austria regained its sovereignty.[42]

Clearing the remaining postwar refugee camps in Austria was facilitated by the 1960 International Refugee Year, as described by Peter Gatrell in *Free World?*.[43] Substantial international co-funding of housing programs finally ended the protracted process of clearing out the unsustainable refugee camps, which had already done much damage to Austria's reputation for the treatment of refugees (not only because of conditions in the camps, but also because of the interrogation of refugees and other alleged mistreatment). International scholars stress these shortcomings of Austria's postwar refugee policy.[44] Tara Zahra even calls the DPs, expellees, and Jews in Austria "prisoners of the postwar."[45] A balanced, nuanced narrative (going beyond the success stories about the integration of expellees and the criticism voiced in international studies) would require further multi-archival research. For example, an in-depth reading of case files could diversify the usually rather state-centered perspectives on the treatment of DPs. The story of DPs and expellees in postwar Austrian society is largely unwritten (especially for the period after 1955). Moreover, future studies on refugees in postwar Austria should be less group-centered (in contrast to the current research, which is dominated by separate studies of the fate of expelled *Volksdeutsche*, Jews, and non-German-speaking DPs) and aim at a fuller, more general understanding of the development of Austrian and international refugee regimes during the early Cold War.

From Cold War to Détente: Political Refugees and Myths

Postwar and Cold War overlapped in Austria under Allied occupation. The first refugees from communist rule arrived in Austria while the postwar exodus of Jews and the expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe was still under way. The communist takeovers in Yugoslavia (1945), Hungary (1947), and Czechoslovakia (1948) resulted in a continuous influx of several thousand people per month throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s. Only a few articles and book sections have dealt with this migration, and our knowledge of it is at best fragmentary. Some information can be found in studies of Austria's bilateral relations with the refugees' home countries.[46] In a monograph on Austrian-Slovak

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42 LUKAS SCHEMPER: Der Hohe Flüchtlingskommissar der Vereinten Nationen, Österreich und die Repatriierung sowjetischer Flüchtlinge, in: GRAF/MEISINGER, pp. 49–71.

43 PETER GATRELL: Free World? The Campaign to Save the World's Refugees 1956–1963, Cambridge 2011.

44 Ibid., pp. 109–110, 214–215.

45 TARA ZAHRA: "Prisoners of the Postwar": Expellees, Displaced Persons, and Jews in Austria after World War II, in: Austrian History Yearbook 41 (2010), pp. 191–215.

46 On Hungary, see ANDREAS GÉMES: "Wie zwei geschiedene Eheleute": Österreichisch-ungarische Beziehungen in den 1950er Jahren, Graz 2010, pp. 19, 23–24.

relations, David Schriffl shows that it was difficult to distinguish the various groups of refugees after 1945 from each other.[47]

In 2008, Edda Engelke published a book based on the protocols of the interrogations of Yugoslav refugees who arrived in the Austrian province of Styria. It provides deep insight into their motives for flight, their persecution in Yugoslavia, and the violent and bloody character of the border in the early postwar period.[48] Francesca Rolandi provided us with a comparative study of the reception Yugoslav refugees received in Austria and Italy in the first postwar decade.[49] Attitudes toward refugees from Yugoslavia changed, not least due to the geopolitical repositioning of Yugoslavia after the Tito-Stalin split in 1948, which resulted in improving relations with Austria. Starting in the first half of the 1950s, many Yugoslavs were denied status as political refugees and were regarded as economic migrants. The same was true of Hungarians arriving in Austria during the period of liberalization in Hungary prior to the revolution in the autumn of 1956. These are important revelations about the evolution of Austria's policies for granting or denying asylum. They foreshadowed the practices and debates about asylum that re-surfaced in the early 1980s and onward. Austria's popular image as a haven for Cold War refugees was not shaped by the first postwar decade under Allied occupation. At that time the country was in fact an unlikely but essential refuge *wider Willen*.

Central for shaping the myth of neutral Austria as an especially welcoming refuge was the country's reception of approximately 180,000 refugees in 1956/57 after the Soviet crackdown on the Hungarian Revolution. All comers were granted political asylum, but no more than 20–30,000 of them stayed in Austria permanently. In proportion to Austria's population, this was more than remained in any other country of the world. International anti-communist solidarity assured that most of the Hungarian refugees could quickly move onward, leaving behind the deplorable living conditions in the camps where they were

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47 Schriffl's study also takes note of Jewish refugees from the Slovak part of the country in the 1940s and 1950s. DAVID SCHRIFFL: Tote Grenze oder lebendige Nachbarschaft? Österreichisch-slowakische Beziehungen 1945–1968, Wien 2012, pp. 353–379. Refugees from Czechoslovakia have also been dealt with in articles and in publications on the Viennese Czechs. RADOSLAV ŠTEFANČÍK: Politische Flüchtlinge aus der Tschechoslowakei im Zuge der ersten großen Nachkriegsmigration nach Österreich, in: Bulgarian Historical Review (2013), 3–4, pp. 90–110; HELENA BASLER, MARIE BRANDEIS et al. (eds.): Die Wiener Tschechen 1945–2005: Zur Geschichte einer Volksgruppe, Wien 2006; KARL BROUSEK: Wien und seine Tschechen, Wien 1980; MARTIN NEKOLA: Tschechinnen und Tschechen in den Flüchtlingslagern in Österreich nach dem Jahr 1948, in: HAGEN/NESSELRODT, pp. 293–310.

48 EDDA ENGELKE: "Jeder Flüchtling ist eine Schwächung der Volksdemokratie": Die illegalen Überschreitungen am jugoslawisch-steirischen Grenzabschnitt in den Fünfzigerjahren, Wien 2008.

49 FRANCESCA ROLANDI: Escaping Yugoslavia: Italian and Austrian Refugee Policy toward Yugoslav Asylum Seekers after World War II, in: WOLFGANG MUELLER, KARLO RUZICIC-KESSLER et al. (eds.): The Alps-Adriatic Region 1945–1955. International and Transnational Perspectives on a Conflicted European Region, Wien 2018, pp. 85–109.

initially sheltered. Not only traditional countries of immigration like the United States, Canada, and Australia (as they were perceived despite their rigid immigration quota systems of the time) but also Great Britain, West Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, and many other countries across the globe received considerable numbers of Hungarian refugees via Austria.[50] Among the more recent studies, the contributions of the Hungarian historian Ibolya Murber are particularly notable. Murber's work is based on research in state and regional archives, media analysis, and oral histories, and has been published in the form of a transnational regional study,[51] two edited volumes[52] and generalizing summaries of her work.[53] She provided us with detailed statistics (for example, about the social background of refugees) and insights into the functioning of the refugee regime at the regional level. Other scholars have written regional studies on the initial reception of refugees and crisis management, the camps, the domestic and international resettlement of the refugees, and the integration of those who stayed in Austria.[54]

In the mid-1990s, Brigitta Zierer was the first to effectively challenge what was up to then a rather uncontested master narrative about the exceptionally warm welcome given to Hungarian refugees in Austria. Her analysis of Austrian media shows that, by late 1956, when it became clear that not all refugees would move on to other destinations, the discourse changed. The refugees, whom the media had initially been portrayed as heroic "freedom fighters," were increasingly denounced as "ungrateful" and "parasitic." Austrians' initial willingness to be helpful quickly faded away as the "victims of communism"

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50 See the chapters by Ferenc Cseresnyés, Edda Engelke, Peter Eppel, András Lénárt, Ibolya Murber, and Kornél Zipernovszky in: Ibolya Murber, Zoltán Fónagy (eds.): Die ungarische Revolution und Österreich 1956, Wien 2006. For monographs including the refugee topic, see Andreas Gémes: Austria and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution: Between Solidarity and Neutrality, Pisa 2008; Manfried Rauchensteiner: Spätherbst 1956: Die Neutralität auf dem Prüfstand, Wien 1981; also, see Erwin A. Schmidl (ed.): Die Ungarnkrise 1956 und Österreich, Wien 2003; Peter Haslinger: Zur Frage der ungarischen Flüchtlinge in Österreich 1956/57, in: Gerhard Seewann (ed.): Migrationen und ihre Auswirkungen: Das Beispiel Ungarn 1918–1995, München 1997, pp. 147–162.

51 Ibolya Murber: Flucht in den Westen 1956: Ungarnflüchtlinge in Österreich (Vorarlberg) und Liechtenstein / Magyar menekültek Ausztriában (Vorarlberg) és Liechtensteinben 1956, Feldkirch 2002.

52 Murber/Fónagy; Ibolya Murber, Gerhard Wanner (eds.): Europäische Aspekte zur ungarischen Revolution 1956, Feldkirch 2006.

53 For a recent summary of her work, see Ibolya Murber: Betreuung und Integration von Ungarnflüchtlingen in Österreich 1956/57, in: Karner/Stelzl-Marx, Migration, pp. 103–120.

54 For example, see Edda Engelke: "Einem besseren Leben entgegen?": Ungarische Flüchtlinge 1956 in der Steiermark, Innsbruck et al. 2006; Leopoldine Götz: Volksaufstand in Ungarn 1956: Ein Jahr der Bewährung für die Stadt Traiskirchen, Schwarzach 2006; Alexandra Haas: Ungarn in Tirol: Flüchtlingsschicksale 1945–1956, Innsbruck et al. 2008.

began to compete with them for jobs and accommodation.[55] From that moment on, the "We've already done so much for refugees" argument was ever present in the discourse on the issue—first in 1956/57 with regard to the postwar DPs and expellees, then later and even today in regard to the 1956 Hungarian refugees and more recent refugee moments of Austrian history.

Much less attention has been devoted to other instances of mass claims of asylum in Austria during the Cold War. This is in part because the documents have only slowly been declassified, but it is also reflective of the more generally limited research on Austrian contemporary history since the 1960s. While the re-sealing of the Hungarian border to Austria in 1957 did not prevent other refugee movements across the Iron Curtain, the annual influx until the year 1968 amounted to only about 4,000 people a year. No historical studies of Austria's refugee policy with regard to them exist. But it is safe to say that Austria (despite considering certain refugee groups economic migrants only) successfully cultivated an image as a haven for refugees even though the country primarily served as a station in transit. Admittedly, however, this was the role assigned to neutral Austria by the West in the Cold War, not least because it facilitated Jewish emigration from the USSR.

The best overview of the next major wave of refugees, which followed the crushing of the "Prague Spring" in August 1968, has been provided by Silke Stern.[56] Between August and late October 1968, some 162,000 Czechs and Slovaks came to Austria (and recent studies suggest the number was as high as 200,000 by the end of 1968).[57] A second influx of refugees from Czechoslovakia followed in 1969, when "normalization" gained momentum there. The exodus all but stopped when the regime in Prague closed the border in October 1969. In total, only 12,000 Czechs and Slovaks applied for political asylum in

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55 BRIGITTA ZIERER: Willkommen Ungarnflüchtlinge 1956?, in: HEISS/RATHKOLB, pp. 157–171. For more details and the comparison to Romanian refugees in 1989/90, see BRIGITTA ZIERER: Politische Flüchtlinge in österreichischen Printmedien, Wien 1998. Zierer's findings have been adopted by most studies that follow up on her work. On Austrian media in the Cold War with additional insights on coverage about refugees, see BERTHOLD MOLDEN: Die Ost-West-Drehscheibe: Österreichs Medien im Kalten Krieg, in: MANFRIED RAUCHENSTEINER (ed.): Zwischen den Blöcken: NATO, Warschauer Pakt und Österreich, Wien et al. 2010, pp. 687–774.

56 SILKE STERN: Die tschechoslowakische Emigration: Österreich als Erstaufnahme- und Asylland, in: STEFAN KARNER, NATALJA TOMILINA et al. (eds.): Prager Frühling: Das internationale Krisenjahr 1968. Vol. 1: Beiträge, Wien et al. 2008, pp. 1025–1043; KARL PETERLIK: Tausende Visa pro Tag ausgestellt, ibid., pp. 1163–1166; KLAUS EISTERER: The Austrian Legation in Prague and the Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968, in: GÜNTER BISCHOF, ANTON PELINKA et al. (eds.): Neutrality in Austria, New Brunswick, NJ 2001, pp. 214–235.

57 For a more recent contribution, see SARAH KNOLL: Einer neuen Zukunft entgegen—TschechoslowakInnen in Österreich um 1968/69, in: Die vielen Geschichten der Migration: Blog des Forschungsverbundes Migration, 25.10.2018, http://first-research.ac.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/15_Knoll_CSSR1968_69.pdf (2020-10-15).

Austria after that, and it is estimated that of these, only 2–3,000 stayed in Austria permanently.[58]

Even though the editors of *Asylland wider Willen* claim otherwise,[59] the reception of Czechs and Slovaks was less contested than that of the Hungarian refugees of 1956/57. In 1968/69, as recently highlighted by Austrian and Czech historians, public sympathy for the "Prague Spring" in economically prosperous Austria (generally speaking) engendered a more enduring solidarity with those who fled the military intervention.[60] The more negative interpretation in *Asylland wider Willen* of the reception of the Czech and Slovak refugees probably results from the context of the time in which it was published. It may also result from persistent historical stereotypes about the relationship between Austrians and Czechs that has led to their being labeled "begrudging neighbors."[61] Another explanation could be that 1968 was somehow gradually incorporated into narratives that were shaped by later intra-Austrian disputes about the country's reception of Charter 77 dissidents in the 1970s and 1980s. These disputes are reflected in the writings of those involved in the support of dissidents.[62] In contrast to previous scholarship (mostly based on archival sources and memoirs of the actors involved), Ondřej Haváč's recent study on Czech refugees in Austria from 1968 to 1985, which also uses oral histories, paints a more positive picture of the Czechoslovaks' reception and integration, more so in terms of their integration into Austrian society and not so much into the Viennese Czech community.[63]

Despite a revisionist impulse sparked by the debates about asylum policy in the 1990s, historians have made only limited progress in revising the popular image of Austria as a role model of Cold War asylum policy. In general, until the 1980s, the percentage of refugees from communist countries who received an initial grant of asylum remained high. Many of the refugees wanted to move elsewhere anyway, and Austria served as what it always wanted to be: a transit country. In the end, the dominant national narrative, that Austria was, and is, an exceptionally welcoming safe haven for refugees, is little more than a myth.

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58 STERN.

59 GERNOT HEISS, OLIVER RATHKOLB: Vorwort, in: HEISS/RATHKOLB, pp. 7–15, here p. 11.

60 NIKLAS PERZI, HILDEGARD SCHMOLLER, OTA KONRÁD, VÁCLAV SMIDRKAL: Einleitung, in: NIKLAS PERZI, HILDEGARD SCHMOLLER et al. (eds.): Nachbarn: Ein österreichisch-tschechisches Geschichtsbuch, Weitra 2019, pp. 11–18, here p. 18.

61 For a synthesis, see ARNOLD SUPPAN: 1000 Jahre Nachbarschaft: "Tschechen" und "Österreicher" in historischer Perspektive. Eine Synthese, in: Geistes-, sozial- und kulturwissenschaftlicher Anzeiger: Zeitschrift der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 151 (2016), 2, pp. 5–324.

62 PŘEMYSL JANÝR: Tschechoslowakei 1968—Charta 77, in: HEISS/RATHKOLB, pp. 182–188; for the best analysis, see BENJAMIN GILDE: Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983: Neutraler Vermittler in humanitärer Mission, München 2013, pp. 297–304.

63 ONDŘEJ HAVÁČ: Czech Refugees in Austria 1968–1985, in: Prague Papers on the History of the International Relations (2016), 1, pp. 82–97; VLASTA VALEŠ: Die tschechoslowakischen Flüchtlinge 1968–1989, in: HEISS/RATHKOLB, pp. 172–181.

As soon as refugees were perceived to be a burden, financial or otherwise, or to have intentions of staying in large numbers, the public and political discourse about refugees turned negative. The master narrative of Austrian history remembers only the initial humanitarian efforts, and, as a result, the reception of every wave of refugees seems to follow the same predictable playbook. In the aftermath of the events of 2015, Sarah Knoll and I published articles that aimed to de-mythologize the prevailing positive commemoration of Austria's handling of past "refugee crises" by documenting the recurrent changes in tone of public discourse over time.[64]

Labor Migration, Changing Global Migration Patterns, and the End of the Cold War

Austria's reluctance to host refugees became more visible beginning in the 1980s, but historians have not yet sufficiently addressed the underlying reasons for this change. From the perspective of a Cold War historian, the process of détente with the Soviet bloc changed perceptions of the socialist regimes and Western Europe's relations with them. This happened even in Austria, which had a strong anti-communist imprint. Détente is one potential reason for the less welcoming reception for refugees from those countries, but there are certainly other important factors. Global economic developments and their repercussions in Austria shaped public and political attitudes toward labor migration. Changes in global migration patterns must also be considered.

The aforementioned remarkable progress in the research on labor migration to Austria shows that once the postwar DPs and expellees were absorbed into the Austrian workforce, employers began recruiting labor abroad, although somewhat later than their West German counterparts. After a national compromise setting the provisions for the employment of foreign workers (the Raab-Olah agreement of 1961, concluded between Austria's major trade union and the chamber of commerce), bilateral agreements with Spain (1962), Turkey (1964) and Yugoslavia (1966) were signed. The agreement with Yugoslavia resulted in especially rapid growth in the number of so-called guest workers. Intended to serve only the temporary needs of the Austrian job market, the

64 For critical reassessments, see MAXIMILIAN GRAF, SARAH KNOLL: Das Ende eines Mythos? Österreich und die Kommunismusflüchtlinge, in: KUZMANY/GARSTENAUER, pp. 206–229; MAXIMILIAN GRAF, SARAH KNOLL: In Transit or Asylum Seekers? Austria and the Cold War Refugees from the Communist Bloc, in: BISCHOF/RUPNOW, pp. 91–111. Knoll is currently working on her PhD, focusing on Austria and the refugees from communism in 1956, 1968, 1981, and 1989/90, especially the role of NGOs and international organizations. Without them, hardly any of the refugee flows could have been accommodated. For details, see https://zeitgeschichte.univie.ac.at/forschung/drittmittel-projekte/oesterreich-und-kommunismusfluechtlinge-1956-198990-die-arbeit-von-ngos-und-unhcr/ (2020-10-15); SARAH KNOLL: Calling for Support: International Aid for Refugees in Austria during the Cold War, in: zeitgeschichte 48 (2021), 3, pp. 387–407.

people who came to Austria as guest workers eventually constituted the largest category of immigrants to Austria since the arrival of the postwar refugees. The first peak of foreign labor in Austria was reached in 1973 when 230,000 foreign workers, almost 9 percent of the total workforce, were employed in Austria. The oil crisis in 1973 resulted in a halt to recruitment of labor abroad. The number of foreign workers allowed was frozen at the level of 1973. While a quarter of the foreign workers lost their residence and work permits, these limitations did not reduce the number of foreigners in Austria in the long term, for example because of family reunifications. By the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s, the foreign workforce in Austria was on the rise again, numbering around 260,000 people. Given the increasing demand for labor and the wars in the former Yugoslavia, the number of foreigners living in Austria ultimately exceeded 700,000 in the 1990s.[65]

Even though the recruitment of foreign labor is primarily a story of migration from south to north, the Austrian historiography of refugees and migration primarily focused on east–west movements. Austria was not affected initially by postcolonial migration, unlike France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Portugal. Starting in the 1970s, however, Austria began accepting Chileans, Kurds, Asians from Uganda, and Indochinese "boat people,"—in small numbers, but percentage-wise comparable to other Western European countries. Historical research on Austria has not thoroughly examined the changing global migration patterns,[66] but some books offer a starting point for future research: Sigrun and Herbert Berger, former activists of the Austrian "Chile Solidarity Front," have published reflections on the reception and trajectories of Chilean refugees in Austria.[67] Thomas Schmidinger offers some first insights into the Kurdish diaspora in Austria.[68] Nevertheless, a study of the reception of the "boat people" in Austria along the lines of Frank Bösch's landmark article on their arrival in Germany[69] is lacking in Austrian historiography. The arrival of the "boat people" coincided with the next major influx of refugees from Eastern Europe, this time from Poland.[70]

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65 On Austrian *Ausländerpolitik* (policy on foreigners) in general (unfortunately, heavily biased ideologically), see LISA GRÖSEL: Fremde von Staats wegen: 50 Jahre "Fremdenpolitik" in Österreich, Wien 2016.

66 HOMAYOUN ALIZADEH: Österreichische Flüchtlingspolitik der 70er Jahre, in: HEISS/RATHKOLB, pp. 188–194, which is little more than a summary of STANEK.

67 SIGRUN BERGER, HERBERT BERGER (eds.): Zerstörte Hoffung, gerettetes Leben: Chilenische Flüchtlige und Österreich, Wien 2002; SIGRUN BERGER, HERBERT BERGER: Solidarität mit Chile: Die österreichische Chile-Solidaritätsfront 1973–1990, Wien 2003.

68 THOMAS SCHMIDINGER: Von den kurdischen Bergen in die Alpen—Vom Tigris an die Donau: Kurdinnen und Kurden als Teil der Migrationsgeschichte und Diversität Österreichs, in: GRASL-AKKILIC/SCHOBER, pp. 270–283.

69 FRANK BÖSCH: Engagement für Flüchtlinge: Die Aufnahme vietnamesischer "Boat People" in der Bundesrepublik, in: Zeithistorische Forschungen 14 (2017), 1, pp. 13–40.

70 For a first study based on archival sources, see MAXIMILIAN GRAF: Humanitarianism with Limits: The Reception of Refugees from the Global South in Austria in the 1970s, in: zeitgeschichte 49 (2022), 3, pp. 367–387.

From the summer of 1980 on, the independent trade union Solidarność pushed the Polish regime close to collapse. In the end, the regime only survived by imposing martial law in December 1981. Throughout the year 1981, the number of Polish asylum seekers in Austria grew exponentially. However, right from the start, considerable numbers of Austrian citizens and politicians regarded the Poles as unwelcome labor migrants. Austria's tabloid press pressured the government to take action. The government stopped the influx by suspending visa-free travel, which had been in effect for Polish citizens since 1972. After the Polish experience, Vienna repeatedly warded off "unwelcome" migration by tightening visa requirements. As in 1956 and 1968, Austria wanted to serve as a transit country only and demanded international assistance for playing that role. This time, however, the international community was less responsive, and many refugees remained in Austria permanently. Studies based on recently declassified documents show that this refugee moment of Austrian history is crucial to understanding the changes in the country's asylum policies that followed. In the late 1980s, the number of Polish asylum seekers was rising again. By then their acceptance rate had declined to a mere seven percent, which shows that the trend toward a more restrictive asylum policy had continued.[71] The history of this development has yet to be written.

Ironically, what was perceived as a "migration crisis" at the end of the Cold War was eclipsed by another positively remembered refugee moment at the Austrian-Hungarian border. The transit of East German refugees through Hungary and Austria on their way to West Germany in the summer of 1989 is quite well researched. Austrian historiography has addressed this topic primarily in the context of the opening of the border,[72] an event which is a con-

71 SARAH KNOLL: Flucht oder Migration? Polnische Flüchtlinge in Österreich 1981/82, in: PETER RUGGENTHALER, WANDA JARZĄBEK (eds.): Österreich—Polen: Stationen gemeinsamer Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert, Graz 2021, pp. 223–238; MAXIMILIAN GRAF: Fluchtbewegungen nach Österreich im Zuge der "polnischen Krise" 1980–1982, in: KARNER/STELZL-MARX, Migration, pp. 123–136. Before the publication of these two articles, Oliver Rathkolb in particular stressed the relevance of the Polish refugees. E.g., see OLIVER RATHKOLB: Austria: An Ambivalent Attitude of Trade Unions and Political Parties, in: IDESBALD GODDEERIS (ed.): Solidarity with Solidarity: Western European Trade Unions and the Polish Crisis, 1980–1982, Lanham 2010, pp. 269–288.

72 MAXIMILIAN GRAF: Die Welt blickt auf das Burgenland: 1989—Die Grenze wird zum Abbild der Veränderung, in: MAXIMILIAN GRAF, ALEXANDER LASS et al. (eds.): Das Burgenland als internationale Grenzregion im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert, Wien 2012, pp. 135–179; MAXIMILIAN GRAF: Eine neue Geschichte des "Falls" des Eisernen Vorhangs: Die Öffnung der österreichisch-ungarischen Grenze 1989 in Langzeitperspektive und ihre unmittelbaren Folgen für die DDR, in: Jahrbuch für Mitteleuropäische Studien 2014/2015, Wien 2016, pp. 347–371; MAXIMILIAN GRAF: The Opening of the Austrian–Hungarian Border Revisited: How European Détente Contributed to Overcoming the "Iron Curtain," in: BERNHARD BLUMENAU, JUSSI M. HANHIMÄKI et al. (eds.): New Perspectives on the End of the Cold War: Unexpected Transformations?, London 2018, pp. 138–158; MAXIMILIAN GRAF: Das Paneuropäische Picknick im Kontext: Wie Österreich zum Tor in die Freiheit werden konnte, in: STEFAN KARNER, PHILIPP LESIAK (eds.): Der erste Stein

stituent element of many books about 1989.[73] Additionally, eyewitness accounts and studies of aid organizations' assistance to the East German refugees have been published.[74] Oral histories enable the reconstruction of individual motivations and refugee experiences.[75] Since all of the East Germans moved on to West Germany, they were exempt from the discourse about asylum policy, which was already becoming heated at the time. When the number of asylum seekers from Romania increased in late 1989, the reaction of the public and politicians was similar to their greeting of the Poles in 1981, and was often downright xenophobic.[76] While the opening of the Austrian-Hungarian border for the East Germans is well covered in the literature, the very first studies of the "closing" of the Austrian border to Romanians in 1990, based on multi-archival research, was published only recently by Sarah Knoll.[77]

Intensifying labor migration, the increasing number of foreigners living in Austria, and the opening of the countries of the East resulted in a fear of asylum seekers and heated debates about their continuously growing numbers. The concerns led to a new asylum law and changes in the laws on residence rights in 1991/92, which implemented today's practice of recognizing safe third countries, among other things.[78] Accordingly, the war refugees from former Yugoslavia were treated as "de facto refugees" (since they had traveled through at least one safe country, Slovenia) and were granted temporary permission to stay and work in Austria in 1992/93. Many of them (especially those from

aus der Berliner Mauer: Das Paneuropäische Picknick 1989, Graz—Wien 2019, pp. 33–59. Also, see MICHAEL GEHLER: Bonn—Budapest—Wien: Das deutsch-österreichisch-ungarische Zusammenspiel als Katalysator für die Erosion des SED-Regimes 1989/90, in: ANDREA BRAIT, MICHAEL GEHLER (eds.): Grenzöffnung 1989: Innen- und Außenperspektiven und die Folgen für Österreich, Wien et al. 2014, pp. 135–162.

73 For the best study of the border opening in 1989, see ANDREAS OPLATKA: Der erste Riss in der Mauer: September 1989—Ungarn öffnet die Grenze, Wien 2009.

74 TOBIAS MINDLER, JOHANNES STEINER: Grenzenlose Menschlichkeit: Wie das Rote Kreuz Burgenland 1989 den DDR-Flüchtlingen half, Eisenstadt 2014; WOLFGANG BACHKÖNIG: Sommer 1989 …—… durch den Eisernen Vorhang in die Freiheit: Zeitzeugen aus drei Staaten erzählen, Munderfing 2019.

75 JULIANE HOLZHEIMER: Grenzen der Grenzüberschreitung: Eine Analyse lebensgeschichtlicher Interviews mit DDR-Flüchtlingen des Jahres 1989, in: BRAIT/GEHLER, pp. 245–261.

76 BERND MATOUSCHEK, RUTH WODAK: "Rumänen, Roma … und andere Fremde": Historisch-kritische Diskursanalyse zur Rede von den "Anderen," in: HEISS/RATHKOLB, pp. 210–238. Also, see ZIERER, Politische Flüchtlinge.

77 SARAH KNOLL: Österreichs "humanitäre Tradition"? Asyl- und Flüchtlingspolitik zwischen regionalen Reaktionen und globalen Veränderungen, in: Geschichte und Region / Storia e Regione 30 (2021), 2, pp. 41–62. Archival sources about the Austrian armed forces' role have been studied by: SPECKNER.

78 For the government's position as portrayed by the Minister of the Interior, see FRANZ LÖSCHNAK: Menschen aus der Fremde: Flüchtlinge, Vertriebene, Gastarbeiter, Wien 1993. On the parallel German debate, see PATRICE G. POUTRUS: Umkämpftes Asyl: Vom Nachkriegsdeutschland bis in die Gegenwart, Berlin 2019.

Bosnia) stayed permanently. The first studies have already been written about the connection between the earlier labor migration from Yugoslavia and the assistance to Yugoslav refugees provided in the 1990s by the networks of their countrymen in Austria.[79] Meanwhile, historians have started to assess the integration of the "Generation In-Between"[80] from the former Yugoslavia, but their story goes beyond the scope of this essay on the state of the field of Austria's history as a refuge in the Cold War.

Conclusion and Desiderata

Despite a certain reluctance on the part of Austrian historians to address their country's most recent past, historical research on refugees and migration is making substantial progress and is overcoming the former marginalized status of this formative element in Austrian history. Although research generally has been limited by the availability of archival sources, individual scholars and their students have long been interested in particular aspects of Austria's migration history. Public debate about asylum and refugee policies in the first half of the 1990s, and with even greater vehemence since 2015, has provided an impetus for research and publication efforts focused on migration. Over the past three decades, historians have engaged in a reassessment of Austria's self-perception as a haven for refugees. Whether the popular narratives of Austrian history will incorporate the critical academic consensus remains to be seen. If historians were to discuss the history of migration—and the polarization of the public and political discourse on these issues—in (popular) publications, they could make their conclusions about Austrian history more widely known and thereby perhaps contribute to a more nuanced, reasonable debate. What connects the sections of this essay is the incontrovertible fact that Austria (grudgeingly) was and is a country of immigration—regardless of denials and occasional attempts to prevent it. The question of who can be considered a political refugee, and therefore a symbol of neutral Austria's identity as a refuge, and who is an economic migrant, is not new, but has existed since the beginning of the Cold War.

Following a general pattern of Austrian contemporary history, the history of migration during the occupation period has been more thoroughly researched than that during the other periods. Quantitative and qualitative imbalances in the historiography of the different postwar refugee groups prevail, but the

79 HASAN SOFTIĆ: Arbeit—Neubeginn—Flucht: Die Entstehung der bosnischen Community in Enns, in: KUZMANY/GARSTENAUER, pp. 230–252.

80 RAINER GRIES: Integration von Flüchtlingen aus Jugoslawien in den 1990er-Jahren: Die "Generation In-Between"—Aufriss der Forschung, in: KARNER/STELZL-MARX, Migration, pp. 181–191; EVA TAMARA ASBOTH, SILVIA NADJIVAN: Neither Here Nor There—*Ni ovde, ni tamo*: Religiously Connoted Social Media Self-Representations of "Generation In-Between", in: BISCHOF/RUPNOW, pp. 187–212; JELENA GUČANIN, MAGDALENA GARTNER et al. (eds.): In unseren Worten: Lebensgeschichten von Wienerinnen aus der ganzen Welt, Wien 2021.

research clearly shows that all groups were initially rejected and that the Austrian state's treatment varied depending on the respective ethnicities of those stranded on the country's territory after World War II. The extent to which this treatment of different ethnic (and confessional) groups of refugees evolved over time deserves further investigation. Although the integration of expellees and DPs into Austrian society is understudied and still not adequately covered by general accounts of Austrian history, the extant historiography generally portrays this process as a success story. The international perception of Austria's dealings with refugees was, and is, less positive, both in the archival sources of the time and in the studies based on them. Postwar Austria reluctantly and protractedly mastered the most substantial postwar integration effort, however, it rejected being a country of immigration and had not yet coined its role as a country of first asylum. A more synthesizing approach to postwar and early Cold War refugees in Austria, set against the background of internal discussions and the making of the Geneva Convention, might make the cultivation of Austria's image as a Cold War refuge from 1956 onward even more unlikely. Granting asylum to all Hungarian refugees was a political decision taken amidst a remarkable and indispensable humanitarian effort that substantially increased Austria's reputation in the West.

While the refugee movements across the Austrian-Hungarian border in 1956 and 1989 have received much scholarly attention and are regularly commemorated in a celebratory way, other refugee moments, in 1968, 1981, and 1990, are still comparatively understudied. Recent research into those events supports the critical revision of Austria's record as a Cold War refuge that has been undertaken since the 1990s. Additionally, scholars' usual focus on crises and individual refugee movements has resulted in a lack of long-term studies on refugees in Austria in general. Such research would be important, because refugee moments like those in 1956, 1968, 1981, and 1989/90 may make changes in political and public attitudes obvious, but do not necessarily reveal the processes at their roots. Furthermore, we hardly know anything about how Austrians perceived changing global migration patterns and the need to deal with refugees from the global South. Historians should engage with the intercommected controversies over asylum, labor migration, and policy on foreigners against the backdrop of global economic developments and their repercussions. Doing so will enable a better understanding of the evolution and changes in Austria's refugee policies, past and present.

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