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ARTICLE

Statelessness as a Political-Existential Predicament in the Lives and Writings of Three German-Jewish Intellectuals

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Abstract

This article investigates the writings of three German-Jewish intellectuals: Kurt Grossmann (1897–1972), Hannah Arendt (1906–75), and Günther Anders (1902–92). It argues that all three thinkers dealt, in their lives as well as their writing, with the construction of a common refugee polis. Yet this engagement was limited by a political-existential predicament that, through their attempts to reclaim their agency, turned their historical and philosophical works into a renegotiation of their own biographies. The article focuses on key chapters in Arendt's *The origins of totalitarianism*, in conjunction with her essay *We refugees*; on Grossmann's books *The Jewish refugee* (co-authored with Arieh Tartakower) and *Emigration: the history of the Hitler-refugees 1933–1945*; and on Anders's essay 'The emigrant'. As victims of National Socialism who fled from Nazi Germany to the US, these authors represent a distinctive view of the transition from the Second World War to the era of the Cold War. Reclaiming agency served as a way to resist subjugation by Nazi race ideology, yet it also circumscribed their belief in the radical potential of the political refugee, resulting in Arendt's focus on totalitarianism, Grossmann's limiting the refugee polis to Jewish refugee organizations, and Anders's inward existential gaze.

I

The persecution of Jews by the National Socialist regime and its allies made the Jewish refugee a staple figure in political and philosophical discourse concerning global migration during the 1930s and 1940s. Many Jewish thinkers of this period were refugees themselves, and this experience reverberates throughout their oeuvre. At the core of this persecution lay the racial ideology of National Socialism, which denied the Jewish refugee any form of selfhood by treating the individual as merely a member of a 'race'. Individuality – the behaviour

or thoughts of one individual, or what one did in private – mattered little to such an ideology; Jews were judged guilty because they were held to share a common extraction. Despite the bogus nature of National Socialist race science, its ideology accelerated the collapse of the private–public distinction. Thinkers as diverse as Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, and Giorgio Agamben diagnosed the dissolution of distinct private and public spheres as a feature of ascendant modernity.[1] In this sense – to borrow a term from the American historian Jeffrey Herf – National Socialist ideology was a 'reactionary modernism': it captured the momentum of the historical forces that constitute modernity by giving it a reactionary spin.[2]

Many contemporary German-Jewish thinkers made comparable arguments. According to their analysis, the complex interplay between the social and cultural forces that constitute modernity gives rise to a number of predicaments. For example, Leo Strauss (1899–1973) postulated a theological-political predicament that plagued the modern individual.[3] According to Strauss, the opposing forces of reason and revelation, which have been apparent since the separation of theology from politics in the early modern period, ultimately undermined the very foundation of a reason-based political order, with chaos as the result. For Strauss, himself a German-Jewish refugee to the US, politics and theology were once entangled but have been separated by modernity; he even blamed the Weimar Republic's weakness when confronted with National Socialism on the 'normative crisis' caused by the supposed disentanglement and separation of reason and revelation.[4]

Arendt had her own version of a predicament tied to the rise of modernity, and implicitly wove it into her writing on refugees and statelessness. Taking a cue from Strauss, she and others identified how the erosion of any division between the political and private spheres gave rise to what I call the political-existential predicament.[5] Both as private individuals and as public intellectuals, these thinkers found themselves ostracized from the social fabric they knew; meanwhile, their persecution by the National Socialist regime and their subsequent statelessness often excluded them from the political realm. In their writings, this tension becomes apparent as the political-existential predicament: the private is political, yet their access to the public sphere is limited because of their status as refugees or stateless people.

This article interprets these German-Jewish thinkers' attempts to reclaim agency by situating them in their unique historical situation: as victims of

[1] See, for example, Giorgio Agamben, *Homo sacer. Il potere sovrano e la nuda vita* (Turin, 2005), p. 7.

[2] See Jeffrey Herf, 'Reactionary modernism: some ideological origins of the primacy of politics in the Third Reich', *Theory and Society*, 10 (1981), pp. 805–32.

[3] The locus classicus of Strauss's musing on the predicament is Leo Strauss, 'The preface to Spinoza's *Theological-political treatise*', in Kenneth Hart Green, ed., *Jewish philosophy and the crisis of modernity: essays and lectures in modern Jewish thought* (New York, NY, 1997), p. 137. On the non-relationship between Arendt and Strauss, see Ronald Beiner, 'Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: the uncommenced dialogue', *Political Theory*, 18 (1990), pp. 238–54.

[4] Strauss, 'Preface', p. 137; Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: for love of the world* (New Haven, CT, 1982), p. 115.

[5] See, for example, Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt, 1962).

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National Socialism who fled from Nazi Germany to the US, they represent a distinctive view of the transition from the era of the Second World War to that of the Cold War. More broadly, the article explores how refugees try to reclaim agency over their private and public lives, and how they have invented a 'refugee political', an assertion of one's political being as a refugee, which Milinda Banerjee and Kerstin von Lingen define and discuss in their introduction to this special issue.[6] This, then, is not just a story about the transatlantic flight of three German-Jewish intellectuals and how they came to terms with refugeedom; it is an exploration of an existential state that is intrinsic to refugee intellectuals' experiences in a globalized modernity.

The philosopher Theodor W. Adorno (1903–69), a leading figure of the Frankfurt School, spent most of the 1930s and 1940s as a refugee, first in the UK (1934–7) and later in the US (1938–53), before returning to (West) Germany. He remarked in his *Minima moralia: reflections on a damaged life* that 'every intellectual in emigration is, without exception, mutilated'. Emigration removes such intellectuals from the context that has provided guardrails for their life of the mind, leaving them simultaneously strained by the challenges of everyday life and utterly confounded by the fact that much of their knowledge has become useless: 'His language has been expropriated, and the historical dimension that nourished his knowledge, sapped'; 'he is always astray'.[7]

Both the destruction of a person's private life and their subjugation under the public gaze of racial ideology gave rise dialectically to a search for a reclaimed agency, a need to rethink the link between the private and public, and the rise of the 'refugee political'. The preoccupation with these questions has its origins in a specific historical context: the transition from the years of Nazi persecution to the beginning of the Cold War.

This article makes three main arguments. First, I show how German-Jewish intellectuals' thinking about refugeedom and statelessness is intrinsically linked to their own experiences: their personal experience of persecution, loss of citizenship, and displacement, and especially their flight from Germany to the United States. Second, I focus on three intellectuals to examine how they dealt with the political-existential predicament: Kurt Grossmann (1897–1972), Hannah Arendt (1906–75), and Günther Anders (1902–92), who were all Jewish refugees and thinkers who wrestled with the refugee question. Third, I argue that their writings on these topics are examples of life-writing and of a constant negotiation between the private and public spheres – a form of wrestling with the political-existential predicament that informed their lives as refugees.

In their public writing, these three thinkers were reclaiming their private agency in the face of a racial ideology that had tried to rob them of their private lives (and of their public lives too, especially their property and citizenship, as Kerstin von Lingen shows in her article in this special issue). They thus conditioned themselves as political refugees inhabiting a refugee polis, an

[6] See the introduction to this special issue: Milinda Banerjee and Kerstin von Lingen, 'The refugee political in the age of imperial crisis, decolonization, and Cold War, 1930s–1950s'.

[7] Theodor Adorno, *Minima moralia: reflections on a damaged life* (London, 2005), p. 14.

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attempt to forge a political community of those expelled from the nation-state system, as Milinda Banerjee and Kerstin von Lingen discuss in their introduction. The refugee polis differs in important ways from older tropes of a similar kind, such as exile, diaspora, and pariah status, all of which have often been used to describe the Jewish experience of displacement and alienation. As we will see, all three thinkers had their misgivings about the political vitality of a global refugee polis, yet because of their particular historical position they could not avoid engaging with it.

This article examines a new dimension of political thought on Jewish refugeedom and statelessness, offers a new reading of some better-known writings (especially in Arendt's oeuvre), and provides an introduction to Anders and Grossmann, who are much less widely known in the anglophone world. In the next section, I provide the theoretical groundwork for my approach via a reading of Arendt's reflections on the collapse of the private and public spheres into the social sphere. This can be linked to the issue of statelessness, to the nation-state system, and ultimately to the existential dimension of refugeedom. I then contextualize her reflections within the shift from Nazi persecution to Cold War anxieties. In the third section, I compare two works by Grossmann (one co-authored with Arieh Tartakower). I explore how his biography shaped his work as a historian, and why, despite being an ardent defender of human rights in the Weimar Republic, he remained myopic towards the suffering caused by colonialism. In the fourth, I provide a reading of Anders's essay 'The emigrant' ('Der Emigrant'), and with it a more general reflection on the existential level of refugeedom. Finally, in the conclusion, I summarize how Anders, Arendt, and Grossmann navigated the political-existential predicament and tried to reclaim their agency.

II

In the 1930s, as the volatile democratic environment gave way to right-wing dictatorships in various European countries, German-Jewish intellectuals connected the topic of refugeedom to the political climate and the electoral successes of distinctively anti-Semitic parties. The National Socialists' ascent to power in January 1933 and the appointment of Adolf Hitler as chancellor of Germany prompted an immediate Jewish flight from the country, mostly among left-wing intellectuals who, before the election, had used their prominent voices to issue warnings about the regime. Although most German Jews were cautiously waiting to see how and whether the National Socialists' anti-Semitic rhetoric would impact their daily lives, others saw the writing on the wall.[8]

The best-selling author Lion Feuchtwanger (1884–1958), on a reading tour at the beginning of 1933, did not return to his home town of Munich but remained in France, where he was interned after the German invasion in 1940. He later migrated to Los Angeles, where he continued his successful

[8] See David Jünger, *Jahre der Ungewissheit. Emigrationspläne deutscher Juden, 1933–1938* (Göttingen, 2016).

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career as an author in Pacific Palisades, not far from Thomas Mann. Kurt Grossmann, a bête noire of much of the German right because of his outspoken pacifism as an activist during the Weimar Republic, fled suddenly from Berlin to Prague in February 1933. In July the 'Law on the revocation of naturalization and deprivation of German citizenship' ('Gesetz über den Widerruf von Einbürgerungen und die Aberkennung der deutschen Staatsbürgerschaft') was passed; in August both Feuchtwanger and Grossmann were denaturalized and stripped of their German citizenship, and their possessions were confiscated.[9]

1933 was also the year in which Hannah Arendt and her husband, Günther Anders, fled to Paris. In 1940, as German troops advanced into France, Arendt was forced to flee again to Marseilles, and then to Lisbon. With assistance from the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, she and her second husband, the communist thinker Heinrich Blücher, were able to board a ship to New York, arriving in May 1941.[10] In the US she worked as an editor for the famed Jewish publishing house Schocken Books, and wrote for the German-language newspaper *Aufbau* and for several Jewish organizations.[11] While developing the ideas that would become *The origins of totalitarianism*, she was also very much involved in practical Jewish politics.

Arendt's well-known and widely discussed concept of totalitarianism includes the dissolution of the public–private distinction as a fundamental aspect. In this section I argue that her exploration of the distinction and its dissolution harboured a hidden layer. As Samuel Moyn has claimed in his recent book, Arendt can rightfully be assigned a seat in the pantheon of Cold War liberals, even though she repeatedly denounced the label 'liberal'.[12] Moyn further argued, however, that Arendt embraced a bizarre mixture of a romanticized vision of the Roman republic and an idolization of the American revolution, and this attitude turned her into an inadvertent Cold War liberal. For Arendt, any recipe for political praxis could be found not in the contemporary world, which in any case had been tainted by the rise of totalitarianism, but only at the roots of the Western political tradition – hence her interest in the Roman republic and the American revolution. Yet, as I will argue in this section, in her writings from the political *Sattelzeit*, following the fall of National Socialism and during the onset of the Cold War, we can uncover a different narrative – one centred on the refugee polis.

Arendt's own experience is key to understanding her engagement with the refugee polis. She remained stateless from 1937 until she received American citizenship in 1951.[13] As Elisabeth Young-Bruehl stated in her authoritative biography: 'Her American citizenship was precious to her; it relieved her of

[9] For more on this, see Klaus Pfeiffer and Joachim Rott, *Die erste Ausbürgerungsliste vom 25. August 1933* (Berlin, 2016).

[10] Ibid., p. 159.

[11] Young-Bruehl, *Arendt*, pp. 169ff; see also Peter Schrag, *The world of Aufbau: Hitler's refugees in America* (Madison, WI, 2019), pp. 38ff.

[12] Samuel Moyn, *Liberalism against itself: Cold War intellectuals and the making of our time* (New Haven, CT, 2023), pp. 115ff.

[13] Young-Bruehl, *Arendt*, p. 113.

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her stateless condition and gave her a role in a republic, the form of government she admired above all others.'[14] Arendt's eighteen years of statelessness were her most politically active. As Mira Siegelberg showed in her acclaimed book *Statelessness: a modern history*, for Arendt the condition of statelessness represented a 'common existential predicament' that, in its devastating individual potential, binds all humanity.[15] Individual existence, too, is bound to the notion of statelessness – at least, for all the thinkers discussed here. In the works of Arendt, Anders, and Grossmann, a collective motive emerges: the political-existential predicament becomes apparent in their respective writings and commentaries, and reveals how political praxis, expressed in words and deeds regarding refugeedom, citizenship, and statelessness, encapsulated their personal experiences of these phenomena.

As Siegelberg has noted, it was after Arendt arrived in the US with a Nansen passport via a US emergency visa that she began to engage more deeply with the question of statelessness.[16] As a recent biography by Thomas Meyer emphasizes, her thought was also deeply intertwined with her work for Jewish rescue and relief organizations in Paris between 1933 and 1940.[17] Both this work and the experience of peril that arose from her legal status and the loss of her German citizenship sharpened her opinions on the question of statelessness and influenced *The origins of totalitarianism*, first published in 1951. In one of the key chapters of this wide-ranging book, Arendt explores the close link between nation-states and statelessness, highlighting that 'both in the history of the "nation of minorities" and in the formation of a stateless people, Jews have played a significant role'.[18] For Arendt, the nation-state principle brought to the forefront the question of minorities, whom she called the 'cousins-germane' of the stateless.[19] By 'nation of minorities', Arendt meant nation-states that were not demographically (but were often politically) dominated by a homogenous population, instead harbouring many different minorities as a result of the minority and peace treaties of the 1920s, especially in eastern and south-eastern Europe. The lack of what she called 'homogeneity of the population and rootedness in the soil' posed an internal problem, undermining the concept of the nation-state from the inside, while 'pan' movements had a corrosive effect on national sovereignty from the outside.[20]

Arendt singled out Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism, believing them to have provided the foundations, respectively, for the triumphs of National Socialism and Bolshevism.[21] After the demise of the Russian, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian empires in the aftermath of the First World War, these different forces started to challenge the nation-state and brought the question of citizenship and minority rights to the forefront. The minority treaties from

[14] Ibid., pp. 113, xiv.
[15] Mira Siegelberg, *Statelessness: a modern history* (Cambridge, 2020), p. 192.
[16] Ibid., p. 186. See also Young-Bruehl, *Arendt*, p. 113.
[17] See Thomas Meyer, *Hannah Arendt. Die Biografie* (Munich, 2023).
[18] Hannah Arendt, *The origins of totalitarianism* (London, 2017; orig. edn 1951), p. 378.
[19] Ibid., p. 351.
[20] Ibid., pp. 351–2.
[21] Ibid., p. 290.

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1919 promised political and cultural equality, as well as freedom of religion, to minorities of the new European nation-states that succeeded the crumbling empires.[22] As Arendt argues in *The origins of totalitarianism*, nation-states' legal obligations to protect their minorities meant little because the principle of the nation-state had become disconnected from these states' sizeable minority populations, who, through their sheer existence, undermined the nation-state and its sovereignty. This meant that 'minorities within nation-states must sooner or later be either assimilated or liquidated'.[23]

The deterioration of minority rights in the 1930s devastated the standing of European Jews. The Holocaust was the most horrible outcome, but the deterioration was reflected in the rise of anti-Semitic politics and policies in most states, which were trapped in the aporia of nation and minority rights. Arendt considered this process inexorable. In this sense, she interprets the relationship between nation-states and minority rights teleologically. (The same critique can be attributed to *The origins of totalitarianism* as a whole.) The historical development from imperialism to nationalism to totalitarianism, including stages in which they overlap, is teleological. This is particularly true of Bolshevism (in its Stalinist guise), a later addendum to Arendt's framework, which originally only incorporated National Socialism. This broadening of its scope was both a bellwether for and a result of the emerging post-war order, which pitted the USSR against the US. Arendt's admiration for the US, with its communitarianism and its republican institutions, was neither uncritical nor blinded by her deep gratitude towards a country that had probably saved her life and spared her from the fate of most European Jews.

In her treatment of the refugee question and statelessness in *The origins of totalitarianism*, Arendt was silent about the existential dimension of these issues. She reserved this subject for her famous essay 'We refugees' (1943), which dealt with many of the same questions but in a more personal way, and detailed their existential aspects in a manner strikingly parallel to Anders's essay 'The emigrant' – as we shall see later.[24] One passage is especially noteworthy:

> Man is a social animal and life is not easy for him when social ties are cut off. Moral standards are much easier kept in the texture of a society. Very few individuals have the strength to conserve their own integrity if their social, political and legal status is completely confused. Lacking the courage to fight for a change of our social and legal status, we have decided

[22] See Carole Fink, *Defending the rights of others: the great powers, the Jews, and international minority protection, 1878–1938* (Cambridge, 2004), esp. part II: 'The minority treaties', pp. 133ff, 151ff.

[23] Arendt, *Origins of totalitarianism*, p. 357.

[24] First published as Hannah Arendt, 'We refugees', *Menorah Journal*, 31 (1943), pp. 69–77. Reprinted and cited here as Hannah Arendt, 'We refugees', in *The Jewish writings*, ed. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman (New York, NY, 2007), pp. 264–74. For a good reading, see Lyndsey Stonebridge, '"We refugees": Hannah Arendt and the perplexities of human rights', in *The judicial imagination: writing after Nuremberg* (Edinburgh, 2021), pp. 101–17. See also the afterword, '"Man denkt an mich, also bin ich": Günther Anders über Emigration und die Gefahr von Welt- und Selbstverlust', in Günther Anders, *Der Emigrant* (Munich, 2021), pp. 53–86.

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> instead, so many of us, to try a change of identity. And this curious behavior makes matters much worse. The confusion in which we live is partly our own work.[25]

Arendt linked this confusion to her diagnosis of the collapse of the private and public into the social sphere. For her, as a refugee, the private was political, but any attempt to connect the political to the public was bound to fail because of the upheaval in a refugee's social, political, and legal status, which in modern times is bound to a nation-state. For a refugee within a nation-state system, the predicament was ubiquitous. For Arendt, the collapse of public and private life into the social sphere was intrinsically tied to the condition of being a stateless refugee, and was the result of the very specific historical conditions associated with the rise of National Socialism. This diagnosis is reminiscent of Strauss's theological-political predicament and its alleged role in the failure of the Weimar Republic. As the intellectual historian Peter Gordon rightly noted, 'what Strauss termed the "theological-political predicament" appears to have left virtually no imprint upon Arendt's thinking'.[26] Yet Arendt found herself diagnosing a similar predicament – one which, she felt, had hampered the Weimar Republic and ultimately paved the way for National Socialism.

This predicament is also indicative of a more general phenomenon, which Arendt described, in a simplified fashion, as a decline from ancient Greece to the pre-war nation-state system that produced the dire situation that stateless refugees faced during the Second World War. She argued that, before modernity, private and public life had been decisively divided between the household and the political realm, 'at least since the rise of the ancient city-state'.[27] The polis, for Arendt, is an ideal model of reasonable deliberation: 'it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be'.[28] While she seemed to be wilfully blind to the exclusion of women from its political life, she romanticized the ancient polis as a prelapsarian ideal in which reasonable deliberations reigned supreme. The blurred border between the private and public spheres was caused by the rise of the 'social realm, which is neither private nor public'. A space existing between the private and public realms, the social realm undercuts the division between them; it is closely linked to 'the emergence of the modern age and ... found its political form in the nation-state'.[29]

Arendt believed that the emergence of the nation-state was tied not only to citizenship and statelessness but also to the emergence of the social realm and the concomitant blurring of distinctions between the private and public

[25] Arendt, 'We refugees', p. 271.

[26] Peter Gordon, 'The concept of the apolitical: German Jewish thought and Weimar political theology', *Social Research*, 74 (2007), pp. 855–78, at p. 857.

[27] Hannah Arendt, *The human condition* (Chicago, IL, 1998; orig. edn 1958), p. 28.

[28] Ibid., p. 198.

[29] Ibid., p. 28.

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realms. This belief provides clues towards both her and other thinkers' positions regarding the political-existential predicament, and it explains why she ultimately could only hint at her own version of the refugee polis. Arendt did not explicitly spell out what this refugee polis might look like; embroiled in the debates of the Cold War, she became more concerned with the experience of modern mass society than with refugees and others living on the margins of society. In her historical analysis, the political refugee became more a canary in the coal mine than a model for the future of political action, a warning about the political upheaval of the 1930s and 1940s:

> For men cannot become citizens of the world as they are citizens of their countries, and social men cannot own collectively as family and household men own their private property. The rise of society brought about the simultaneous decline of the public as well as the private realm. But the eclipse of a common public world, so crucial to the formation of the lonely mass man and so dangerous in the formation of the worldless mentality of modern ideological mass movements, began with the much more tangible loss of a privately owned share in the world.[30]

This quotation summarizes how Arendt linked the figure of the refugee to the decline of the nation-state and the rise of totalitarianism. In her thinking about statelessness, taken to its conclusion, the decline of the nation-state, the advent of totalitarianism, and the question of citizenship (to have it or not to have it) became the pivotal points in a person's access to a political community. Arendt perceived two obstacles to the formation of a refugee polis, or any other political community, beyond the nation-state: a lack of citizenship and exclusion from the possession of private property. Despite her incisive writings on refugees, ultimately she could not envisage a refugee polis where refugees would constitute a full-blown political community.

III

This section focuses on Kurt Grossmann, whose path to the US was meandering, whose private struggles as a refugee provided the foundation for his work on behalf of Jewish refugees, and whose writings serve as another example of the negotiation of the private–public distinction. As I will show, his books demonstrate that, in his view, writing history is always life-writing. Through both his own experience as a refugee and his work for Jewish organizations during the war years, Grossmann became attentive to the refugee political, and came to distrust state actors and their efforts to relieve the plight of refugees.

In January 1933, when Arendt and Anders (then Stern) were still students, Grossmann was already a well-known figure and an avowed opponent of the National Socialists. His situation, therefore, was particularly dire. However, as he is less famous today, especially in the English-speaking world, a short biographical summary is necessary. He was born into a Jewish family from east Prussia and grew up in Charlottenburg (now part of Berlin), where he

[30] Ibid., p. 237.

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attended a secondary school until 1913.[31] A career in commerce and banking brought him to Danzig, where he became involved in advocacy work for war veterans. He achieved some notoriety as the organizer of internationally acclaimed commemorative events for the dead of the First World War (Berlin, 1921–2), followed by four conferences on German–Polish understanding (Danzig, 1923–6). Following his election as secretary general of the German League for Human Rights (DLM) in June 1926, he became the target of fierce political hostility, especially once the DLM began to focus on providing legal assistance to left-liberal publicists. In particular, the DLM supported Carl von Ossietzky (1889–1938) and Walter Kreiser (1898–1958), who had been accused of treason in the sensational Weltbühne trial of 1931, when several influential journalists were brought to court after reporting on Germany's secret rearmament. In his publications, Grossmann attacked the Weimar judiciary, accusing them of treating defendants on the political right too leniently and those on the political left too harshly. After the National Socialists' rise to power, he fled to Prague on 28 February 1933. During this exile, he was involved with the Democratic Refugee Welfare Organization, which provided material and organizational support to thousands of emigrants. He moved to Paris in August 1938; a year later he moved with his family to New York City.

The period that followed was marked by financial difficulties, as Grossmann had to make a living through odd jobs, including one as a sales representative for a maker of neon signs. He worked freelance under changing pseudonyms for German newspapers in exile, including *Aufbau*, run by Manfred George (1893–1965) – the publication for which Arendt also wrote. In April 1943, Grossmann joined the World Jewish Congress (WJC) as an executive assistant. He received US citizenship in 1944, partly thanks to references from Albert Einstein (1879–1955) and Paul Tillich (1886–1965). At the WJC he again devoted himself to refugee work and, together with the Polish sociologist Arieh Tartakower (1897–1982), published *The Jewish refugee* (1944), in which he summarized his experiences of refugee policy and proposed various approaches to solving the problem of Jewish refugees. In addition to immigration to Palestine, which was under the British Mandate, Grossmann and Tartakower advocated worldwide settlement of Jewish refugees and, in line with the WJC's principles, the participation of Jewish organizations in these efforts.[32] After the Second World War, Grossmann travelled to occupied Germany, among other places, on behalf of the WJC. He was disillusioned by this trip: the danger of National Socialism did not seem to him to have passed, and he saw no prospect of a professional future in post-war Germany.

In 1950, he fell out with the WJC over the direction of its post-war activities and his personal position within the organization. Dismissed in November 1950, he relied on his wife, a social worker, for financial support. In 1952 he found employment in the public relations department of the Jewish

[31] This biographical overview follows Lothar Mertens, *Unermüdlicher Kämpfer für Menschenrechte. Das Leben und Wirken von Kurt R. Grossmann* (Berlin, 1997).

[32] For more on this, see Laura Robson and Arie M. Dubnov's article in this special issue, pp. 000–000.

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Agency's New York division, where he worked until 1965. In numerous articles, he called for the acceptance of the Luxembourg Reparation Agreement between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany, which had been signed in 1952. After 1957, he also worked for the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, and made several further trips to the Federal Republic. He died in 1972 while on holiday in St Petersburg, Florida. Despite his pre- and post-war fame, Grossmann has largely been forgotten, particularly in the US. Yet, among his writings, two are of particular interest for this article: *The Jewish refugee*, from 1944, and *Emigration: the history of the Hitler-refugees 1933–1945* (*Emigration. Die Geschichte der Hitler-Flüchtlinge 1933–1945*), from 1969.

After fleeing to the US, despite his numerous positions, Grossmann struggled for years to earn a living. His life as a refugee was one of economic hardship and social alienation. Transplanted across the Atlantic, he found that his pre-war fame had not come with him and his old professional networks had fractured. As he had been a prominent public figure during the Weimar Republic, like Feuchtwanger he lost his German citizenship with the first expatriation list on 25 August 1933. (Arendt and Anders, on the other hand, lost their citizenship only in 1937.) This was the culmination of a years-long judicial campaign to strip German Jews of their political and legal rights. In 1935 a provision in the Nuremberg Laws, next to the infamous stipulations on *Mischlinge* (racial hybrids) and 'mixed marriages', introduced a new legal category of racialized citizenship: the so-called *Reichsbürger* (citizen of the Reich), for those of 'German or kindred blood'. This category contrasted with *Staatsangehörige* (national subjects), and effectively deprived German Jews of their citizenship and rendered them stateless.[33]

Alongside the collapse of the public–private distinction, this experience influenced the two works by Grossmann that deal with the refugee question. The first is the encyclopaedic book *The Jewish refugee* (1944), co-authored with the Polish (later Israeli) sociologist Arieh Tartakower. In more than seven hundred pages it detailed the various migration options for Jewish refugees, mostly through chapters on various countries, as well as more general chapters on 'Fundamental problems in the life of refugees' and 'Intergovernmental aid for refugees'.[34]

At the beginning of the book, the authors shied away from providing an all-encompassing definition of the term 'refugee'.[35] In their attempt to define

[33] Miriam Rürup, 'Dealing with statelessness after World War II', *Jahrbuch des Simon Dubnow Instituts/Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook*, 15 (2016), pp. 265–86, at p. 270.

[34] Kurt R. Grossmann and Arieh Tartakower, *The Jewish refugee* (New York, NY, 1944).

[35] In the foreword, Jacob Robinson, the director of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, which was under the tutelage of the World Jewish Congress, wrote: 'the very definition of "refugee" as a special type of displaced person presents, not only in theory but even more so in practice, tremendous difficulties. It was not always easy to find the line of demarcation between an ordinary immigrant and a refugee. Many measures taken by governments in regard to immigrants affect mostly refugees. While we confined ourselves to a discussion of the Jewish refugee, we were once more faced with the realization that the Jewish refugee is not always identified as such and very often refugees are not classed as Jews when, in fact, it is Jewish refugees who are dealt with. Lastly, the Jewish racial refugee of peacetime should not be confused with the Jewish refugee of wartime. Each

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who or what a Jewish refugee is they seem to have settled on a heuristic approach, drawing on common experience and common practices. They started with the German-Jewish refugee – Grossman's own status – and cited the 1938 Geneva Convention concerning the status of refugees coming from Germany, which employed the following definition:

> (a) Persons possessing or having possessed German nationality and not possessing any other nationality who are proved not to enjoy, in law or in fact, the protection of the German Government;
> (b) Stateless persons not covered by previous Conventions or Agreements who have left German territory after being established therein and who are proved not to enjoy, in law or in fact, the protection of the German Government.[36]

While these legal definitions made no explicit reference to Jewish refugees, Grossmann and Tartakower linked them with a sweeping panorama of 'Jewish flight [that] has been more or less continuous for thousands of years', and they oscillated between claims of continuity and novelty regarding Jews' contemporary experiences. They identified three features distinguishing the Jewish flight from Nazi-occupied Europe from 'previous Jewish migrations, as well as from the general refugee movement of our times'. First, they argued that 'the last possibility of choice has been eliminated'. Previously, Jews could avoid flight by converting to Christianity or Islam, but racial anti-Semitism, as an intrinsic part of National Socialist ideology, prohibited such a resort.[37] Second, they proposed that the magnitude of Jewish flight was unprecedented, even in Jewish history, in which flight and persecution are pervasive themes: 'Now, early in 1944, *nearly all the surviving Jews of Europe*, with the exception of those in the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and a few neutral countries, are either refugees or deportees.' Third, they argued that 'the glaring disproportion between the extent of the problem and the prospects of solving it' was a novel development.[38]

These three aspects took the question of the Jewish refugee to a new level, heightening its urgency and ultimately making it a global task. While Tartakower and Grossmann advocated the establishment of a 'Jewish national home' in Palestine, they were aware that, for the time being, this was not a panacea for the plight of Jewish refugees: 'The building of the Jewish National Home, whose final stage may be expected after the war, may not at once bring about the solution of the Jewish question as such. The majority of the Jewish people will remain scattered all over the world.'[39] As such, the

type has its specific elements, but our study, which covers a period of eleven years, embraces both types' (ibid., p. viii). For more life-writing, see, for example, David Huddart, *Postcolonial theory and autobiography* (London, 2008), pp. 13–19, 37–40.

[36] League of Nations, Convention concerning the status of refugees coming from Germany, Geneva, 10 Feb. 1938, ch. I, art. 1. See also Grossmann and Tartakower, *Jewish refugee*, p. 5.

[37] Grossmann and Tartakower, *Jewish refugee*, pp. 7ff.

[38] Ibid., pp. 8–9, emphasis in original.

[39] Ibid., p. 527.

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purpose of *The Jewish refugee* was to offer a global overview, including opportunities for migration to both well-known and lesser-known places. Among these were 'minor refugee centres' in Latin America and the Far East.[40] Tartakower and Grossmann's inquiry began with (not explicitly Jewish) refugees from Germany, but their scope quickly broadened to a global dimension; yet at the same time it focused on Mandatory Palestine.

In the last chapter of *The Jewish refugee*, dubbed 'The solution', Grossmann and Tartakower advocated a threefold approach. The first aspect was repatriation, 'the least popular' solution but an absolute one, as 'no scheme for the reconstruction of the war-stricken countries of Europe can be entertained which does not include provisions for repatriation'.[41] However, this remained a limited solution, as most refugees would not want to return, either because they were haunted by the past or because they were discouraged by their economic prospects in general, and specifically by their inability to reclaim their previous possessions and businesses. The second approach was absorption into the countries of temporary refuge; again, Grossmann and Tartakower saw this only as a limited solution because of economic constraints and the reluctance of the host societies. The third approach, in which Tartakower and Grossmann placed most hope, was emigration, which they separated into 'infiltration' and 'colonization'.[42] By 'infiltration', they claimed that,

> contrary to common usage, we understand any emigration which does not begin with an agricultural settlement, regardless of whether it is a mass emigration or a limited one, whether it is organized or not, and whether it is carried out independently or on the basis of an agreement concluded with the government of the immigration country concerned.[43]

Grossmann and Tartakower thus understood emigration-as-infiltration to be controlled migration into third countries, via official migration channels, in order to meet the host countries' economic needs. Again, they placed only limited hope in this approach.

Ultimately, while they continuously emphasized the need for a multi-level approach, colonization remained their favoured option. They were open to colonization within other countries, where 'the possibility of modest achievements is not excluded', but their main focus was on Palestine, where a 'Jewish National Home (not to say the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth there, which may be expected as one of the results of World War II)' could be established.[44] However, they were not overly optimistic about the prospects of Jewish colonization, and cautioned that it would require Jewish refugees to renounce their previous lifestyles and to turn to agriculturalism. They were, in fact, proposing the 'New Jew' of the Zionist imagination,

[40] Ibid., p. xii.
[41] Ibid., p. 505.
[42] Ibid., pp. 507–15.
[43] Ibid., p. 507.
[44] Ibid., p. 515. See Jünger, *Jahre der Ungewissheit*.

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concomitant with a renunciation of diaspora life.[45] They believed that this was difficult but possible, citing the US as an example of successful colonization by refugees.

Their paths in life reflect their dismissive view of repatriation. Tartakower migrated to Israel, while Grossmann remained in the US; neither returned to his country of origin. As Laura Robson and Arie M. Dubnov argue in their article in this special issue, the process of repatriation was entangled from its inception with conceptions of internationalist authority and its power to move people around at will.[46] The failure of any internationalist approach to aid the Jews during the war years, as documented in *The Jewish refugee*, ensured that Grossmann and Tartakower would not place their trust in repatriation.

As we will see, Grossmann made the same argument in *Emigration: the history of the Hitler-refugees 1933–1945*, which was published in German in 1968, four years before his death, and which I will analyse as a form of life-writing. In it he returned to the question of refugeedom, and offered a detailed yet highly personal account.[47] Although the book is very informative, it is burdened by its hybrid nature. It attempts to be an objective, comprehensive history of the fate of refugees from Nazi Germany, and later from Nazi-occupied Europe, during the twelve years between Hitler's appointment as Reichskanzler in January 1933 and his death in April 1945. An extensive appendix of documents on refugee policy during those years bolsters its claims to be a work of historical research. Yet episodes from Grossmann's own life appear in various chapters; as he himself wrote in the foreword, it is a 'co-lived book [that] tries to represent all the essential parts about a tragic subject'.[48] Out of this co-living (*Miterleben*), which interweaves Grossmann's life and work with a larger history of migration, there emerges a deep conflation of the political and the private, and of his own personal choices and the migration policies of Allied countries.

Grossmann paid special attention to the Evian Conference and the Bermuda Conference, both failed attempts to find an international solution to the plight of Jewish refugees. The public and political character of these attempts contrasts with his personal and private approach. In *Emigration* it becomes clear that, in Grossmann's view, efforts conducted on an individual, personal level proved to be crucial; unlike rescue missions by private Jewish organizations, Allied politics failed to help the Jews. The book is as much a condemnation of migration politics during the Second World War as it is a narration of

[45] Two articles offer a good overview of the myriad of writings on the New Jew in the Zionist imagination: Yitzhak Conforti, '"The New Jew" in the Zionist movement: ideology and historiography', *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*, 25 (2011), pp. 87–118; Reuven Firestone, 'The New Jew', in *Holy war in Judaism: the fall and rise of a controversial idea* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 179–200.

[46] Laura Robson and Arie M. Dubnov, 'The three Rs of post-war internationalism: refugee, return, repatriation', in this special issue, pp. 000–000.

[47] Kurt R. Grossmann, *Emigration. Die Geschichte der Hitler-Flüchtlinge, 1933–1945* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1969). Originally titled *Flight: story of Hitler's displaced persons, 1933–1945* (*Flucht. Geschichte der Hitler-Vertriebenen, 1933–1945*), the title was changed by the publisher against Grossmann's wishes: see Mertens, *Unermüdlicher Kämpfer*, p. 39.

[48] Ibid., p. 7: 'ein miterlebtes Buch, [das] versucht, alle wesentliche Teile über ein tragisches Thema wiederzugeben'.

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Grossmann's personal story and a justification of past deeds; it champions the refugee political over internationalism, and non-governmental organizations over state actors. Like Arendt, Grossmann saw the Jewish refugee crisis and the lacklustre response to the plight of Jewish refugees as a failure of the nation-state system and its attempts to provide relief on a global level. In his view, refugee organizations, working independently inside that system, were much more successful in their efforts to navigate the intricate political theatre of the Second World War, which was divided not only between Axis and Allied powers but also between colonizing nations and the countries they had colonized. That Grossmann saw colonization as the solution to the problem of the Jewish refugee, however, points to a blind spot in his construction of a refugee polis. For him, membership in the refugee polis was restricted to those displaced from Axis-dominated Europe, while those living under the colonial rule of the Allied countries remained invisible.

IV

This section examines the existential dimension of refugeedom via an essay by Günther Anders. It shows how, both as a refugee in the US and after his return to Europe, he rebuffed the possibility of a refugee polis in favour of a private, non-political existence. Born Günther Stern in Breslau in 1902, Anders was the son of two psychologists. His fate is intertwined with that of Arendt, whom he met in 1925 at the University of Marburg (when he was still called Stern). They both attended a seminar by philosophy's rising star Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), with whom Arendt had a passionate affair.[49] Anders and Arendt married in 1929 and divorced in 1937. For both writers, 1933 was a political and a private caesura; they fled Germany separately and were reunited in the autumn in Paris, where they remained until 1936, when Anders left for the US. As the divorce papers indicate, their marriage started to break down in 1933.[50] Anders struggled to find adequate work in the US, and in 1950 he returned to Vienna with his second wife, living there until his death in 1992.

Anders is now best known as a philosopher of technology or, more accurately, as a critic of technology, especially nuclear power.[51] His meandering signature style often makes it hard to define his work, which spans several genres, from a novel (*Die molussischen Katakomben*, written during the 1930s but published only in 1992) to short stories, anti-war pamphlets, and philosophical treatises. Despite his personal experience, the issue of refugeedom and statelessness plays only a minor role in his wide-ranging oeuvre and his many writings on Jewish history.

Anders's most sophisticated examination of the refugee question is his penetrating essay 'Der Emigrant' ('The emigrant'), originally published in

[49] Young-Bruehl, *Arendt*, p. 60.

[50] Ibid., p. 115.

[51] See especially his magnum opus: Günther Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen* (2 vols., Munich, 1987), I: 'Über die Seele im Zeitalter der zweiten industriellen Revolution' and II: 'Über die Zerstörung des Lebens im Zeitalter der dritten industriellen Revolution'.

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1962 in the highbrow German journal *Merkur*, and recently reissued. In this work, based on his wartime diaries, he probes the existential disintegration that accompanies the act of migrating. His views on the refugee question clearly drew on his own experience as a refugee from Nazi Germany, and so he saw migration almost exclusively as an act of violence and as something forced upon the migrant – not within the conceptual framework associated with migration studies and various social sciences, but rather in the sense that migration was closely linked to coercion, restriction of choice, and loss of liberty in an unfamiliar environment. The emigrant's existence is a thwarted life of plans forfeited, habits abandoned, and loves lost:

> since it was our fate to be chased out of every world in which we found ourselves into the next, and to always saturate ourselves with new content, and indeed with content that did not relate to the old content, the times (assigned to the different worlds) now lie across each other. After each bend, the piece of life preceding the bend became invisible.[52]

As a being subdued by the 'psychology of the absentee' (*Psychologie des Abwesenden*), the emigrant's experience of the passage of time becomes distorted.[53]

Anders was an eminent political and fiction writer, whose novel *Die molussische Katakomben* brought him into conflict with the Communist party and whose later opposition to nuclear power and the Vietnam War garnered much attention in post-war West German society. Yet his thoughts on the figure of the emigrant were surprisingly apolitical; they favoured concrete expositions, often tied to specific situations, while their political background, his own experience of migration and refugeedom, was only ever mentioned in passing. His 'Emigrant' aimed to transcend the autobiographical context of his own experience as a refugee in the 1930s and 1940s and his return to Europe in the 1950s; he instead sought a phenomenology of the emigrant's practical challenges in everyday life. He discussed in depth the linguistic difficulties of switching from a native to a foreign language – what he called *Stammeldasein* ('stammer-being' or 'stammer-existence'). Then he turned to the provisional life-building of the emigrant who hopes to return, and he examined the struggle to find a new, different place in the social hierarchy.

His aim was to build a phenomenology that would underline the dissolution of the political in the private sphere.[54] Within his phenomenology, however, an existential dimension still lurks. Caught in the condition of a 'stammer-being', the emigrant is restricted to private life, and cannot partake in public life or in the deliberations which Arendt held to be constitutive of political life. Social

[52] Anders, *Der Emigrant*, pp. 15–16: 'In anderen Worten: Da es unser Schicksal war, aus jeder Welt, in die wir geraten waren, in eine nächste gejagt zu werden, uns immer mit neuen Inhalten zu saturieren, und zwar mit solchen, die auf die alten nicht verwiesen, liegen nun die (den verschiedenen Welten zugeordneten) Zeiten quer zueinander. Nach jeder Knickung wurde das der Knickung vorausliegende Stück Leben unsichtbar.'

[53] Ibid., p. 507.

[54] Ibid., pp. 43ff.

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class is intrinsic to Anders's model of the 'stammer-being'; as a refugee in the US, his professional prospects as a brainworker and *Bildungsbürger* were seriously hampered by his limited English skills. His nostalgia for a lost social status contrasts starkly with the success story of the English-learning Dachen refugees in the United States, detailed in this special issue by Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang.

Returning to Europe in the spring of 1950, Anders contemplated the implications of his lengthy restriction to the private realm. Entering Switzerland by train from Paris, for the first time since 1933 he was surrounded by the ubiquity of the German language. In his diaries, published in 1967, he noted: 'So they're speaking German again. The first impression: surprise. "Hey, they speak German!" But the next impression: "Impertinence." – Why?'[55]

Anders's reaction was not due to hearing the language most closely associated with National Socialism, nor to perceiving that the language of the perpetrators had become again the language of normal life – of a 'peaceful, lovely land, inhabited by hard-working, efficient, and modern people', as the Austrian-Jewish writer Jean Améry lamented in his famous and controversial essay *Ressentiments*, which detailed his emotional experiences during his numerous travels through post-war Germany.[56] What irked Anders was that over the years German had become almost a private language, and he was now losing this privacy: 'In the seventeen years of absence, the German language had become a private idiom for us: the language of writing and the idiom of the most intimate interaction.'[57] Its return to the social sphere confounded the clear distinction between the private and public. Anders wrote that he suffered from language-schizophrenia (*Sprach-Schizophrenie*), the inevitable mixing of languages in private, everyday life.[58] His musings about language as an existential border complement Arendt's insistence that her mother tongue indissolubly tied her to her German home.[59]

Anders, then, did not negate the political backdrop against which he had to flee. 'The emigrant' is a survey of fragmented lives, no longer a life in the singular but rather in the plural – not *vita* but *vitae*, as he called it. This made it impossible to comprehend oneself and one's surroundings as a whole: 'we can no longer get a grip on the whole thing', he concludes.[60] Just as the mother tongue had been shattered into a private and a public realm, so had his

[55] Günther Anders, *Die Schrift an der Wand. Tagebücher 1941 bis 1966* (Munich, 1967), p. 105: 'Da spricht man also wieder deutsch. Der erste Eindruck: Überraschung. "Du, die sprechen Deutsch." Aber der nächste Eindruck: "Frechheit." – Warum?'

[56] Jean Améry, *At the mind's limits: contemplations by a survivor on Auschwitz and its realities* (Bloomington, IN, 1980), p. 63.

[57] Anders, *Die Schrift an der Wand*, p. 105: 'In den siebzehn Jahren der Abwesenheit war die deutsche Sprache für uns zum Privat-Idiom geworden: zur Schreibsprache und zum Idiom des intimsten Umgangs.'

[58] Ibid.

[59] Albert Reif, *'Was bleibt? Es bleibt die Muttersprache'. Gespräche mit Hannah Arendt*, ed. Hannah Arendt and Günter Gaus (Munich, 1976), pp. 9–34.

[60] Anders, *Der Emigrant*, p. 10: 'das ganze … bekommen wir nicht mehr in den Griff'.

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lives (*vitae*) and his private existence as a former refugee – not political, but relegated to a place outside the political realm.

Anders rejected the refugee polis, seeing it as a construct that rested on a common experience that, for him, simply did not exist. This political solipsism is rooted in his retreat into the private, which ultimately led him towards a hybrid model that combined philosophical phenomenology and life-writing.

V

The philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1906–95), a Lithuanian-French Jew who survived the Second World War in a prisoner-of-war camp in Nazi Germany, and who subsequently dedicated his writings to the ethical question of facing the other, wrote that, 'in every philosophical reflection, every philosophical essay, there are memories of a lived experience which is not rigorously intellectual'.[61] All three of the thinkers presented in this article engaged with the refugee polis through their own experiences. Persecuted by Nazi racial ideology, which negated the private sphere, they were subjected to refugeedom; this formed the basis for their precarious existence, under which they thought, wrote, and negotiated their lives through writing, and under which they envisioned the refugee polis. In doing so, they ultimately reclaimed the agency they were so often denied because of their refugeedom.[62] Life-writing as a reclaiming of agency can thus be an expression and assertion of the refugee polis, a means of retroactively regaining power over history.

This constant negotiation and reclaiming of agency shows itself in different ways. Anders came down on the side of the private: his emigrant is an individual whose politics play hardly any role at all. He rejected a common refugee polis. Any political consequence or political action that might have been derived from his experiences was stifled by his focus on an existential phenomenology of refugee life. To a certain extent his approach reflected the history of the Nuremberg Laws, which based their discrimination on a 'racial' origin which no one could deny. The political persuasion of the Jew, who was subjected to terror and persecution regardless, was only of secondary concern. Anders's focus on the existential aspect of refugeedom is concomitant with the absence from both his life and his writings of any practical work or advocacy on behalf of (German or other) Jewish refugees during the Second World

[61] Emmanuel Levinas, *Is it righteous to be? Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Jill Robbins (Stanford, CA, 2002), p. 96.

[62] See Lauren Banko, Katarzyna Nowak, and Peter Gatrell, 'What is refugee history, now?', *Journal of Global History*, 17 (2022), pp. 1–19, at p. 3; Oliver Bakewell, 'Some reflections on structure and agency in migration theory', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36 (2010), pp. 1689–1708. For more on agency in the context of post-war displaced persons, see Sebastian Huhn, '"Plausible enough": the IRO and the negotiation of refugee status after the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 58 (2023), pp. 398–423. See also Ruth Balint, 'The use and abuse of history: displaced persons in the ITS digital archive', in Rebecca Boehling, Susanne Urban, Elizabeth Anthony, and Suzanne Brown-Fleming, eds., *Freilegungen. Spiegelungen der NS-Verfolgung und ihrer Konsequenzen* (Göttingen, 2015), pp. 173–86.

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War. For him, refugeedom was personal, and a common refugee polis was non-existent.

There remains a surprising gap in Anders's thought, then, and it lies exactly where one finds Grossmann's and Arendt's political praxis on behalf of refugees during the war. Grossmann embedded his own life story into his highly subjective *Emigration*, a prime example of life-writing, while claiming to represent 'all the essential facts about a tragic subject'.[63] Yet his jubilant account of the refugee polis, and of how it was made manifest in the work of private Jewish organizations during the Second World War, was myopic towards the plight of those living under colonial rule. Arendt, meanwhile, was not only the diagnostician of the political-existential predicament but its savviest navigator as well. She also addressed the existential dimension of statelessness and the refugee experience, which can be linked to her thoughts concerning the nation-state system. Yet in Arendt's writings the possibility of a refugee polis emerges as well, perhaps even more comprehensively and inclusively than in Anders's or Grossmann's thought, only to be nipped in the bud by a Cold War ethos that was concerned more with mass society and its discontents than with those whom society spat out, the refugees and the displaced.

The writings of Anders, Arendt, and Grossmann reveal themselves to be an attempt to reclaim agency by constructing a refugee polis, acting against reactionary modernism and its racial gaze. The writing of history converged with life-writing as a form of resistance in the age of refugeedom and statelessness. Yet, instead of fully engaging with the refugee polis, all three ultimately recoiled from its political implications – Arendt by focusing on totalitarianism, Grossmann by limiting the refugee polis to Jewish refugee organizations, and Anders by turning his gaze inward towards a broken existence. This study has thus revealed the radical possibilities in these transnational German-Jewish visions of a refugee polis, but also their limitations and ultimate failure.

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[63] Grossmann, *Emigration*, p. 7: 'alle wesentlichen Tatsachen über eine tragisches Thema'.

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