

Introduction

Everybody is talking about the “Jewish Question”. But if you ask what the Jewish question really is, then out of a hundred respondents fifty will awkwardly remain silent or stammer something insufficient, and from the other fifty you will hear different answers.¹

With this remark Sigbert Feuchtwanger², the lawyer and Vice President of the Jewish Cultural Community of Munich, captured a quintessential problem of the so-called ‘Jewish Question’ (*Judenfrage*)³ as it was debated in Germany in the early twentieth century. His comments suggested the multitude of issues at stake. What seems most revealing about Feuchtwanger’s statement, published in July 1917, is that in an Empire faced with famine, the burden of total war and a government in crisis, the Jewish Question was on the public agenda at all. In this thesis, I examine how the Jewish Question functioned in German political discourse and German politics. Focusing on the years of the First World War, I explore the ways in which the Jewish Question sheds light on Germany’s liminal period between its autocratic-militaristic past and parliamentary-republican future. Jewish questions revealed the paradoxes of German state-building and the difficulties of breaking down older forms of corporate identity for the sake of national-cultural homogeneity. Using the Jewish Question, I aim to reassess the difficult birth of the Weimar Republic.

In what follows, I will begin by outlining the origins of the Jewish Question in German states in order to argue that the term was not, as is commonly assumed, solely

1 ‘Die “Judenfrage” führt jeder im Munde. Aber fragst du, was eigentlich die Judenfrage ist, so werden von hundert Befragten fünfzig verlegen schweigen oder Unzulängliches stammeln, von den anderen fünfzig wirst du verschiedene Antworten hören.’ Sigbert Feuchtwanger, ‘Grundsätzliches zur deutschen Judenfrage’, *Neue jüdische Monatshefte* 1, no. 19 (10 Juli 1917): 543.

2 Sigbert Feuchtwanger (1886–1956) lawyer in Munich, editor of *Jüdischen Echo* and Vice President of the Jewish Cultural Community of Munich (*Israelitische Kultusgemeinde München*, IKG), emigrated to Palestine in 1937. For Feuchtwanger’s profile see *Deutsche Biographie* [<https://bit.ly/2LVUgXx>, accessed 18/05/18].

3 In order to demonstrate the complexity of the term, its associated meanings and how it was used by various agents, the Jewish Question and Jewish questions will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis. When denoting the plural form, the q will not be capitalised.

an antisemitic trope imposed on the Jews. Rather, I contend, it was a multivalent and contingent term, which was also invoked frequently by Jews. The intractability of the Jewish Question, I argue is reflected in the modern scholarly literature where different interpretations of the Jewish Question abound. More often, it is referenced in connection with the rise of Nazism, or in the debate on the German-Jewish symbiosis without a detailed analysis of what the term meant, or how it functioned. Addressing this omission by analysing the function of the Jewish Question in German politics, I focus on political ideas and practices in their cultural context. Lastly, I explain the scope selected for this thesis from the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 to the ratification of the Weimar constitution in August 1919. In these seminal years the Jewish Question was no longer confined to public intellectual debates (see chapter one) but became a practical concern in German domestic and foreign policy (see chapters two to five). These discussions on practical Jewish questions in the Foreign Ministry and Reichstag, I argue, became *de facto* debates about the future of the German state. They revealed the hopes, fears and preoccupations in Germany's path from Empire to Republic.

In principle, the Jewish Question should have ended with Jewish emancipation, that is, when the civil and political rights of German Jews were enshrined within the 1871 constitution, which founded the German Empire.⁴ Whilst Jewish emancipation began even earlier in German states, it was a long and gradual process. Westphalia was the first German state to issue a royal decree to abolish taxes imposed on Jews in 1808. In 1811, a Jewish emancipation edict was issued in the Grand Duchy of Frankfurt. The following year, Prussian Jews were granted civil and (limited) political rights. After 1848, however, the suppression of the revolutions brought a series of reactionary measures which included revoking or limiting Jewish rights.⁵ When the Jewish Question (*Judenfrage*) first appeared in print in 1838 and reached prominence as a popular catchword in 1842, it concerned the question of the legal equality of Jews in the Prussian state.⁶ By 1871, after years of advances and set-backs in the struggle for emancipation, the Jewish Question in Germany, had effectively been resolved. The term should have lost its momentum and eventually faded from public discourse entirely. Yet quite the opposite occurred. Following Jewish emancipation, the term was no longer used to discuss Jewish political and civic rights *de jure*, however it was frequently tied into debates about *de facto* Jewish equality.

4 The emancipation of the Jews in the 1871 constitution was a principle adopted from the 1869 North German Confederation constitution. On the 22 April 1871 Jews in all of Germany were emancipated when the constitution was extended to Bavaria.

5 For a list of these emancipation edicts and which German states later rescinded these rights see Raphael Mahler, *Jewish Emancipation: A Selection of Documents*, Pamphlet Series Jews and the Post-War World 1 (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1942).

6 Jacob Toury, "'The Jewish Question' A Semantic Approach", *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 11, no. 1 (1 January 1966): 92.

After ceasing to be a political-constitutional question about emancipation, the Jewish Question moved into what Peter Pulzer has termed the ‘unofficial sphere.’⁷ Institutional discrimination continued against Jews in spite of legal equality. They were barred from entering the officer corps in the military, professions in politics, the civil service and public universities.⁸ Where the Jewish Question no longer focused on the legal equality of the civil and political rights of Jews, it became about their place and social equality within German society. Antisemites picked up on the Jewish Question, framing it in cultural language and as a question of race.⁹ The suggestion that Jews were of a different race undermined the Enlightenment model according to which Jews had become members of the state on the basis of religious equality.¹⁰ Moreover, it challenged the trend amongst the majority of German Jews towards conversion and mixed marriages.¹¹ Around the same time, Zionists also began to invoke the Jewish Question as a catchword. Zionists turned an externally imposed question into an internal one and used it to question the Jewish diaspora and advocate for a Jewish state.¹² By the turn of the century, the term was re-defined within Zionist circles as the quest for a Jewish homeland and the revival of a Jewish national and cultural identity.¹³

Lacking any concrete practical political meaning since emancipation, the Jewish Question became a multivalent term appropriated by a multitude of agents for different purposes. With the outbreak of the First World War, the term altered as the singular *Judenfrage* was often replaced by its plural form, *Judenfragen*. ‘Does a Jewish Question exist? Strange question! We see it everywhere! One almost wants to say: there are just so many Jewish questions’ wrote Arthur Cohen, Professor of Economics and Finance at the Technical University of Munich.¹⁴ The prominence of Jewish questions after the outbreak of the war was further illustrated by the publication of a three-

7 Peter Pulzer, *Jews and the German State: The Political History of a Minority, 1848–1933* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 19.

8 Ibid.

9 See for example Dühring Eugen, *Die Judenfrage als Racen-, Sitten- und Culturfrage. Mit einer weltgeschichtlichen Antwort*, 1st ed. (Karlsruhe und Leipzig: Verlag von H. Reuther, 1881).

10 For a useful transnational analysis of Jewish emancipation and its relationship with Enlightenment values see Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014).

11 Donald L. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 98.

12 Leon Pinsker was the first to suggest that the ‘Jewish Question’ could only be resolved through the founding of a Jewish homeland in *Autoemancipation! Mahnruf an seine Stammesgenossen von einem russischen Juden* (1882). However, his pamphlet forms one of three seminal works in the development of the Jewish national homeland movement. Moses Hess’s *Rom and Jerusalem* (1862) proposed that Jews should sacrifice emancipation over nationality and return to Palestine. In 1896, Theodor Herzl’s *Judenstaat* more fully developed a plan for the founding of a Jewish homeland as a solution to the Jewish Question.

13 Buber was a seminal figure in the Zionist movement who advocated for a cultural, national, Jewish revival. See Martin Buber, *Drei Reden über das Judentum* (Frankfurt am Main: Rütten & Loening, 1911).

14 Arthur Cohen, ‘Die Judenfrage – Eine Minoritätenfrage’, *Neue jüdische Monatshefte* 3, no. 7/8 (19 Januar 1919): 164.

part series in July 1919 on the theme of the Jewish Question in the future Europe in the German-Jewish magazine, *Ost und West*.¹⁵

Rather than speaking to Jewish particularity, the Jewish Question began to be recognised as an expression of larger contemporary political issues, tied into questions pertaining to minority rights, national autonomy and homogeneity. Arthur Cohen argued that the Jewish Question was not unique to the Jews but present in other social and national groups. He equated it with the ‘minority question’:

The Jewish Question is only an example of the heterogeneity of the masses. The antagonism between Jews and non-Jews is not special: everywhere, where two diverse groups co-exist, the same phenomenon of antagonism appears.¹⁶

Written at the end of the war, Cohen invoked the Jewish Question to expose the limits of the modern state and the increasing desire for greater homogeneity. In another article, Helene Hanna Cohen, a journalist based in Munich and close friend of Julius Berger,¹⁷ opined that the Jewish Question related more broadly to the concept of the nationality principle, defined as groups without states.¹⁸ Ludwig Quessel, a representative of the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD) in the Reichstag, considered how the encounter with the masses of Eastern European Jews during the war revealed that the Jewish Question had ‘always’ been ‘not only a social, but also a national problem.’¹⁹ He re-framed the term as a question of the emancipation of Eastern European Jews and the rights of Jews to Palestine. The work of Quessel and his contemporaries illustrated the multivalence of the Jewish Question in Germany.

The First World War marked a pivotal moment in German history, raising vital new questions in the spheres of domestic as well as foreign policy. As the fortunes of war shifted, so did borders, populations and national allegiances. In a period of acute and almost constant political crisis, the German government faced issues concerning citizenship, minority rights and religious as well as national identity. I will analyse these concerns through the lens of the Jewish Question, that is, on-going debates about the status of the German-Jewish population in German politics and society. From a term

15 Leo Winz, ‘Die Judenfrage im künftigen Europa, I: Anschwellen die judenfeindlichen Strömungen’, *Ost und West: Illustrierte Monatsschrift für das gesamte Judentum* XIX, no. 7/8 (Juli 1919): 162–66.

16 Cohen, ‘Die Judenfrage – Eine Minoritätenfrage’, 165.

17 Julius Berger founded a successful construction firm, Julius Berger Tiefbau AG. In the 1970s it merged with Bilfinger, one of the largest construction companies in Germany. Berger also participated in the Paris Peace Conference as an Industrial representative. Less is known about Helene Hanna Cohen. Evidence of their relationship can be found in Seymour Drescher and Allan Sharlin, eds., *Political Symbolism in Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of George L. Mosse* (New Brunswick, London: Transaction Books, 1982), 94.

18 Helene Hanna Cohen, ‘Die Judenfrage in Der Internationale’, *Neue jüdische Monatshefte* 2, no. 6 (25 December 1917): 136.

19 Ludwig Quessel, ‘Die Judenfrage als nationales Problem’, *Neue jüdische Monatshefte* 2, no. 13 (10 April 1918): 299.

on the margins of public discourse, the Jewish Question in the course of World War One re-entered the realm of mainstream parliamentary politics shaping domestic and foreign political theory and praxis.

The Jewish Question, I contend, casts important new light on Germany's difficult path towards a new democratic and pluralistic constitution in 1919. One of my principal aims in this book is to offer a novel interpretation of the role that the much discussed 'problem' of German Jewry played in the political debates and decisions that paved the way for the Weimar Republic. The significance of the Jewish Question, as one of many questions that arose in the formation of the modern state in Germany, is that it provides an understanding of the complex political processes that developed throughout the First World War. The Jewish minority was a unique group that grappled with its place in the German polity. They were members of a community that transcended national boundaries whilst being, at the same time, citizens of Germany. The Jewish Question provides unique insights into German political debates about the fraught relationship between the nation and the state.

The core of the book focuses on three distinct moments, between 1914 and 1919, when the Jewish Question catalysed a debate on the German nation-state. These moments are: the involvement of Zionists in German foreign policy, the 'Jew census' (*Juden-zählung*) and the debate on minority rights in the Weimar constitution and at the Paris Peace Conference. Taken as a whole, they reveal the struggles and preoccupations of Germany in its transition towards a pluralistic, democratic Republic. Whilst events tend to be recorded and remembered based upon the final outcome, often to the detriment of history, this book shifts away from the final outcome and turns to hidden processes. These distinctive moments may not have fundamentally altered the *status quo*, nor did they lead to any specific legislative changes. However, they shed light on three possible roads which Germany could have taken in its political development. From the potential of Imperial Germany as a greater colonial power in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, to a country institutionalising antisemitic²⁰ policies to, alternatively, a multi-ethnic Republic recognising the rights of national minorities.

German states have had an enduring presence of Jewish communities since the fourth century.²¹ This language, but also cultural, affinity of (Ashkenazi) Jews to Germany, in spite of their mass emigration east in the tenth century, arose time again binding the Jewish Question intimately to the German Question. It explains why in a country where the Jewish minority represented approximately 1% of the German population, at the time of unification in 1871, Jewish questions became a part of the

20 I spell antisemitism without a hyphen to denote a modern form of Jew-hatred. See Shmuel Almog, 'What's in a Hyphen?', SICSA Report: Newsletter of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism 2 (1989): 1–2 [<https://bit.ly/2SjROvf>, accessed 16/07/19].

21 David Levinson, *Jewish Germany: An Enduring Presence from the Fourth to the Twenty-First Century* (Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2018).

political agenda. The Jewish Question can provide an insight into the distinctive anxieties, expectations and concerns shaping German politics. As Peter Gay noted, ‘the so-called Jewish Question had no reality in isolation. It was part of, and a clue to, the larger question: the German Question.’²²

The Jewish Question was certainly not the only issue framed as a question within Germany. Others included the *soziale Frage*, *Bauernfrage*, *Frauenfrage*, *Arbeiterfrage*, *Pollenfrage*.²³ The Jewish community was not the only minority group to receive attention in parliamentary debates. Poles were in fact the largest national minority group in Germany.²⁴ In addition, there were Alsatians, Danes, Wends, Sorbs. As the largest religious minority, the Catholics also featured prominently in these discussions. The period of the *Kulturkampf* against the Catholic, and by association the Polish minority under Bismarck, testifies to the centrality of other minority concerns in German politics as does the Zabern Affair in 1913 in Alsace-Lorraine.²⁵

What made the Jewish Question unique, however, was that the identity of the Jewish population was far more complex than these other groups. Not always mutually exclusively, Jews saw themselves as a religious community, a community of kinship (*Stamm*), an ethnic community and national community, which spanned across geographic boundaries. Unlike the Polish,²⁶ Danish and Alsatian minorities in Germany, Jews identified as Germans, as ‘insiders’ and whenever permitted, acted as such.²⁷

The insider status of Jews was also reflected in their engagement with German politics. Unlike the other religious and national minorities such as the Catholics, the Danes, Poles and Alsatians, the Jewish community was not represented by a single

22 Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and Other Germans. Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 19.

23 On the shift towards thinking in questions in the nineteenth century see Holly Case *The Age of Questions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018); Holly Case, ‘The “Social Question,” 1820–1920’, *Modern Intellectual History* 13, no. 3 (2016): 747–75. For a contemporary account on the difference between these questions and the Jewish Question see Winz, ‘Die Judenfrage im künftigen Europa’, 164.

24 The Polish minority numbered just over three million, meaning in 1871 they represented approximately 8% of the total German population. See Volker R. Berghahn, *Imperial Germany, 1871–1914: Economy, Society, Culture and Politics* (Providence, RI and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1994), 111.

25 On Bismarck’s *Kulturkampf* and the role it played in German unification see Eley Geoff, ‘Bismarckian Germany’ in *Modern Germany Reconsidered, 1870–1945*, ed. Gordon Mantel (London: Routledge, 1992), 1–32, especially 20–25. On the Zabern Affair and the political outcry see David Schoenbaum, *Zabern 1913: Consensus Politics in Imperial Germany*, 1st ed. (London: Harper Collins, 1982).

26 The Polish minority sat in between the Jewish and Danish minority. They were neither stateless nor did they have a nation. Polish labourers and landowners, like Jews attempted a ‘cultural synthesis’ in Germany. This however was different for Polish aristocrats who maintained a strong Polish national identity. See Berghahn, *Imperial Germany*, 110–118.

27 Anthony McElligott writes, ‘The Jews of Weimar, then [...] felt German, which is all we need to know’. Anthony McElligott, *Rethinking the Weimar Republic: Authority and Authoritarianism, 1916–1936* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 238. See also Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), i–viii.

political party.²⁸ Since unification, the Danes in Schleswig-Holstein were represented by the Danish Party and consistently held one seat in the Reichstag. Poles living to the east of Germany, despite being a Catholic majority, were represented by a separate party, the Polish Party, which never held less than thirteen seats in the Reichstag. To the west, the French-speaking minority in Alsace-Lorraine had political representation in the Reichstag, numbering never less than ten seats. Germany's largest religious minority, Catholics, were represented by the Catholic Centre Party, which continued even after the war to consistently and successfully secure representation in the Reichstag.²⁹ At the end of the war, as German territory in the north, east and west was ceded to Denmark, Poland and France respectively these parties disbanded, no longer deemed necessary. In contrast, the Jewish community, due to a lack of consensus, was unable to form a united political party despite several attempts.³⁰

Unlike other minority groups, the Jewish minority did not have a distinct representation in parliament. Politicians of Jewish descent did not act more generally on behalf of Jewish sectional interests. However, as most were representatives in the Liberal parties (the National Liberal Party and the Progressive Party), Jews tended to vote for these parties.³¹ Following a nadir in Jewish politics (starting around 1880) marked by the end of the dominance by Liberal parties,³² Bismarck's shift in political alliances towards the Catholic Centre Party and the growth of organised political antisemitism, a number of Jewish politicians began to alter their focus. Jewish politicians engaged in Jewish affairs and held political positions alongside acting as representatives of newly founded Jewish defence organisations such as the Central Association for German

28 On the attempts by the Jewish community to form a political party see Jacob Toury, 'Organizational Problems of German Jewry: Steps towards the Establishment of a Central Organization (1893–1920)', *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 13, no. 1 (1968): 57–90. For Zionists efforts at political representation in German politics see Yehuda Eloni, 'The Zionist Movement and the German Social Democratic Party, 1897–1918', *Studies in Zionism* 5, no. 2 (1984): 181–199.

29 On pre-1945 political parties in Germany see Vincent E. McHale, ed., *Political Parties of Europe*, vol. 1 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983), 400–438.

30 In December 1900 the attempt to form a 'general Jewish Diet' failed miserably due to a lack of consensus. See Toury, 'Organizational Problems of German Jewry', 64. See also Marjorie Lamberti, 'The Attempt to Form a Jewish Bloc: Jewish Notables and Politics in Wilhelmian Germany', *Central European History* 3, no. 1–2 (1970): 73–93.

31 On Jewish voting behaviour and political participation in Germany see Pulzer, *Jews and the German State*; Ernest Hamburger, *Juden im öffentlichen Leben Deutschlands: Regierungsmitglieder, Beamte und Parlamentarier in der monarchischen Zeit, 1848–1918*, Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 19 (Tübingen: JCB Mohr Paul Siebeck, 1968); Jacob Toury, *Die politischen Orientierungen der Juden in Deutschland: von Jena bis Weimar*, Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 15 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1966). On how Jews in the latter years of the Weimar Republic used their votes strategically in an effort to save the Republic see Anthony D. Kauders, 'Weimar Jewry', in *Weimar Germany*, ed. Anthony McElligott, Short Oxford History of Germany (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 234–59.

32 In 1880 the National Liberal Party split. The left-wing fraction of the party joined the Progressive Party to form the German Free-minded Party.

citizens of the Jewish faith, (*Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*, CV) founded in 1893.³³

Compared to their relative size in the population, Jewish politicians were well-represented in the Reichstag during the Wilhelmine period.³⁴ Between 1867 to 1916 approximately 1.73 % of all delegates in the Reichstag were of Jewish descent, this included Jews that were baptised.³⁵ Deputies of Jewish descent sat in political parties from the right to the left of the political spectrum.³⁶ However, the majority sat in the Liberal parties.³⁷ This changed in the Reichstag in 1893 when the Social Democratic Party held the highest membership figures of Jewish deputies.³⁸ The concentration of Jews within these left-leaning parties was largely due to the willingness of these parties to allow Jews to stand as candidates. This, however, varied considerably in each state where the system of franchise differed.³⁹ Throughout the Wilhelmine period Jewish representation in the Reichstag and State Diet gradually increased. As this book traces Germany's transition towards a parliamentary democracy, it also reflects on the participation of German Jews in politics. It illustrates the influence they were able to exert over domestic and foreign policy during the war culminating with the birth of the Weimar Republic which heralded a new era for German Jewish political participation as they took a dynamic role in the life of the Republic.

Historiography

The five years that this book covers have attracted much scholarly attention, not least in the past few years. With the recent centenaries of the beginning and end of the First

33 Other organisations included the Kartell-Convent of German Students of the Jewish Faith (*Der Kartell-Convent der Verbindungen deutscher Studenten jüdischen Glaubens*, KC) founded in 1896 and the Alliance of German Jews (*Verband der deutschen Juden*, VdJ) founded in 1904. On other forms of Jewish defence see Ann Goldberg, *Honor, Politics and the Law in Imperial Germany, 1871–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

34 In 1871, the Jewish share in the total population was 1.25 %. It declined to 0.95 % by 1914. Berghahn, *Imperial Germany*, 102.

35 Out of 3000 deputies, 52 were of Jewish descent. On the distribution of these deputies in political parties see Hamburger, *Juden im öffentlichen Leben Deutschlands*, 250–54.

36 These parties included the Conservatives (*Konservative*), German Imperial Party (*Reichspartei/Freikonservative*), National Liberals (*Nationalliberale*), German Progress Party (*Fortschrittspartei/Freisinnige*) and the German People's Party (*Süddeutsche Volkspartei / Deutsche Volkspartei*). See *ibid.*, 252–53.

37 These Liberal parties included the National Liberals and the Free-minded Union (*Freisinnige Vereinigung*) and the Free-minded People's Party (*Freisinnige Volkspartei*), which having split, reunified in 1910.

38 Whilst this figure applies to the overall majority, most baptised Jews sat in the National Liberal Party. Amongst professing Jews, most were Social Democrats. See *ibid.*, 254.

39 Pulzer, *Jews and the German State*, 106–48.

World War, research on this period has been given renewed significance.⁴⁰ Moreover, with the global rise of populist movements and, in particular, the support for right-wing parties, there has also been a recent international interest in German history, especially the years of the Weimar Republic.⁴¹ Both of these topics – the First World War and the Weimar Republic – have their own historiographical debates. Recent scholarship on the First World War, for example, continues to engage with the causes of the outbreak of the war and the parties responsible.⁴² Research on the Weimar Republic is often guided by its weaknesses that led to the rise of Nazism.⁴³ These are not, however, the questions asked within this book. I instead investigate how practical Jewish questions shaped Germany's geopolitical aims during the First World War. And rather than studying the Weimar constitution with an aim to assessing why the Republic failed, I examine what Jewish questions in the constitutional debates revealed about Germany's political development.

Each individual chapter engages with distinct moments that have their separate historiographical debates including the involvement of Zionists in German foreign policy,⁴⁴ the 'Jew census' (*Juden-zählung*)⁴⁵ and the debate on minority rights in the Weimar constitution and at the Paris Peace Conference,⁴⁶ respectively. I, however,

40 Christopher M. Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper, 2013); Margaret MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace: The Road to 1914* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2014); Margaret MacMillan, Anand Menon, and Patrick Quinton-Brown, 'Introduction: World Politics 100 years after the Paris Peace Conference', *International Affairs* 95, no. 1 (2019): 1–5.

41 Martin Kettle, 'The Political Landscapes of Brexit Britain and Weimar Germany Are Scarily Similar', *The Guardian*, 16 May 2019 [<https://bit.ly/2JmvrDT>, accessed 15/07/19]; Dominik Peters, 'Was Weimar für den umgang mit der AfD lehrt', *Spiegel*, 6 February 2019 [<https://bit.ly/2JxwPm2>, accessed 15/07/19].

42 Andreas Gestrich and H. Pogge von Strandmann, *Bid for World Power? New research on the outbreak of the First World War*, Studies of the German Historical Institute London (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

43 For a comprehensive review of this scholarship see Peter C. Weber, 'The Paradoxical Modernity of Civil Society: The Weimar Republic, Democracy and Social Homogeneity', *Voluntas* 26 (2015): 629–648.

44 Isaiah Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism 1897–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Zosa Szajkowski, 'The Komitee für den Osten and Zionism', in *Herzl Year Book*, ed. Raphael Patai (New York: Herzl Press, 1971), 199–240.

45 Michael Geheran, 'Rethinking Jewish Front Experiences', in *Beyond Inclusion and Exclusion: Jewish Experiences of the First World War in Central Europe*, ed. Jason Crouthamel, Tim Grady, and Julia Barbara Köhne (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2019), 111–43; Timothy L. Grady, *A Deadly Legacy: German Jews and the Great War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017); Peter Appelbaum, *Loyal Sons: Jews in the German Army in the Great War* (London and Portland: Valentine Mitchell, 2015); David J. Fine, 'Jewish Integration in the German Army in the First World War' (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012); Derek Penslar, 'The German-Jewish Soldier: From Participant to Victim', *German History* 29, no. 3 (2011): 423–44; Jacob Rosenthal, *Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten. Die Juden-zählung im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2007); Werner T. Angress, 'The German Army's "Juden-zählung" of 1916: Genesis – Consequences – Significance', *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 23, no. 1 (1978): 117–38.

46 Karen Schönwälder, 'The Constitutional Protection of Minorities in Germany: Weimar Revisited', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 74, no. 1 (1996): 38–65; Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); David Engel, 'Perceptions of Power – Poland and World Jewry', in *Simon Dubnow Institute*

bring these distinct moments together through the perspective of the Jewish Question to analyse Germany's political development in a period of momentous change.

Although the period of 1914 to 1919 in German history features several mature historiographical debates, they have all contributed to one of the most controversial and significant scholarly debates of the twentieth century, the *Sonderweg* thesis. The historiographical debate, which is nearing its sixtieth anniversary, is based on the notion that Germany followed a peculiar (*Sonder*) path (*weg*) towards modernity. Starting in the 1960s, Fritz Fischer argued that the aggressive war-aims of German decision-makers testified to Germany's responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War. Contributing to this debate, historians of the 'Bielefeld School' began to assess when Germany's peculiar development began. They studied the failure of the 1848 revolution and the delayed modernisation of Germany's political structures.⁴⁷ British historians David Blackbourn, Geoff Eley and Richard Evans subsequently criticised the *Sonderweg* thesis for being ahistorical. They found evidence that a 'silent bourgeois revolution' had taken place in Germany and argued that the country was not unique in experiencing dynamic capitalism, materialism and cultural despair.⁴⁸

Against the determinism of Fischer and Wehler that Germany was on a special path (*Sonderweg*) towards authoritarian governance and following the work of Eley and Blackbourn, my work refutes the argument of German exceptionalism. By illustrating the multivalence of the Jewish Question, especially its invocation by Jews, I contend that one cannot trace a linear development of the Jewish Question in Germany that culminates in the Holocaust. The antisemitic strain of the German right in Wilhelmine Germany was not more visceral than in the Russian Empire or the Habsburg lands. Moreover, the Dreyfus Affair (1984–1906) and the Leo Franks Affair (1913–1915) illustrate that antisemitism was rife and could have vicious consequences in the democratic Republics of France and America.⁴⁹

Yearbook, 1st ed. (Stuttgart und München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2002), 17–29; Erwin Viehhaus, *Die Minderheitenfrage und die Entstehung der Minderheitenschutzverträge auf der Pariser Friedenskonferenz 1919* (Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1960).

47 Robert Moeller, 'The Kaiserreich Recast? Continuity and Change in Modern German Historiography', *Journal of Social History* 17, no. 4 (1984): 655; Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Das deutsche Kaiserreich, 1871–1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973); Jürgen Kocka, 'German History before Hitler: The Debate about the German *Sonderweg*', *Journal of Contemporary History* 23, no. 1 (1988): 3–16.

48 David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Richard J. Evans, *Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany* (London and New York: Croom Helm; Barnes and Noble, 1978).

49 Both affairs divided their respective publics. During the Dreyfus Affair in France, a Jewish Alsatian Officer was accused of treason and falsely convicted. In America, Leo Franks, a Jewish factory worker, was sentenced to death for a murder he did not commit. When his sentence was overturned, despite his innocence, he was lynched. See Ruth Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island* (London: Allen Lane, 2010); Leonard Dinnerstein, *The Leo Franks case*, revised ed. (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2008).