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### Becoming German: Lessons from the Past for the Present

**Background:**

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Conflict and Concord: Ethnicity and Class in the Coal Mining Communities of the Ruhr and Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1880-1924

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The debates in Germany over the role of „foreign“ workers, and, in particular, the discussion over how and the extent to which such workers should be integrated into German society often dominated the headlines during my research stay. Only occasionally did BSE, Hoof and Mouth Disease and the CDU struggles over the next Chancellor candidate push the *Zuwanderungsdebatte* off the front pages of the leading German newspapers. While I personally was thankful, given my research interests, that the issues of foreign labor and integration were enjoying a revived relevance, the relationship between Germans and foreigners continues to be discussed in public, as Ulrich Herbert noted a few years ago, „without any sense of history.“<sup>1</sup>

In particular, popular notions that Germany „ist kein Einwanderungsland“ (is no land of immigration) or that the foreign worker phenomenon first began with the recruitment of Turkish workers in the 1960s betray a rich, if troubled history of foreign labor that dates to the beginnings of the modern German state in the late nineteenth century. From the 1870s onwards hundreds of thousands of foreigners, including numerous Dutch, Italians, Slovaks, Hungarians, Masurians and most notably Poles,<sup>2</sup> were working in the growing German industrial centers of the Ruhr basin, Berlin and Saxony. By the turn of the century many areas within these regions were strikingly multi-ethnic and the legacy of these migrants can still be seen today. For instance, the local dialect in the communities of the Ruhr region where I conducted most of my research contains many ethnic influences. In Bochum, the city where I lived, names such as Kaczmarek and Szymanski appear with the same frequency as more traditional „German“ names.

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<sup>1</sup> Ulrich Herbert, *Arbeit, Volkstum, Weltanschauung: über Fremde und Deutsche im 20. Jahrhundert*, (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1995), p. 218. Cited in Diethelm Blecking, „Polish Community before the First World War and Present-Day Turkish Community Formation – Some Thoughts of a Diachronistic Comparison,“ *Irish and Polish Migration in Comparative Perspective*, eds. John Belchem and Klaus Tenfelde, edit. asst. Brian McCook, (Klartext: Essen, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> The Masurians and Poles were Prussian citizens, however, culturally they were considered to be an alien element, particularly the Poles.

Though limited attempts have been made to retell this earlier history to the general public, often they provide only broad generalizations that are either uniformly negative or far too optimistic. In the case of the former, the horrendous treatment of foreigners at the hands of the National Socialists, and the increased public awareness of this thanks to the recent controversies over forced labor restitution, has led many to conclude that German-minority relations in the pre-Nazi period were equally as bad, merely serving as a prelude of things to come. In the case of the latter, certain ethnic groups, such as the Ruhr Poles, have been accorded a storied status as a „successful“ ethnic group that seamlessly melted into German society and one that present day minorities could and should emulate. For example, in opening an exhibit on the history of Ruhr Poles in 1997, the then Minister President of North Rhine-Westphalia Johannes Rau described the integration of Poles as a „success story of American dimensions,“ in particular, noting the achievements of Polish players on the popular *Schalke 04* football team during the 1930s. While a graceful anecdote, the fact that the Poles in the early 20th century were under constant police surveillance and, more specifically, that the „Polish“ players on *Schalke* were Masurians from East Prussia, not Poles, tends to contradict such an idealized picture of Polish integration.<sup>3</sup>

Among academics there has been a more thorough exploration of German/minority relations over the last two decades, however, sizeable disagreement still exists over the extent to which minorities were able to integrate into German society.<sup>4</sup> As a consequence, there remains a pressing need for a deeper exploration of the historical relationship between Germany and its minority groups, particularly given the influence such findings can have on present-day debates. Why does a given minority group accept or reject assimilation into German culture? How does the state and state policy promote or hinder integration? How do ethnic workers empower themselves in a foreign environment? All of these questions are of particular contemporary relevance. As a result, my research year was spent attempting to find answers to these and other questions by examining the historical development of the Polish community in the Ruhr basin during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Blecking, „Polish Community...“ Blecking also notes another similar example of the utilization of Poles in 1989 when the then Federal Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble made specific reference to „the pit-workers from Poland and their families in the Ruhr region“ in discussing the useful role sport could play in integrating foreigner workers. Further, the historian V.M. Stefanski, in discussing the use of Poles in the early 1980s debate over Turkish workers, notes that former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt claimed that, „we have digested the Poles, so we should be able to digest the guest workers.“ See Valentina-Maria Stefanski, *Zum Prozess der Emanzipation und Integration von Aussenseitern: Polnische Arbeitsmigranten im Ruhrgebiet*, (Dortmund: Forschungsstelle Ostmitteleuropa and der Universität Dortmund, 1984), p.1.

<sup>4</sup> For general overviews of issues related to foreign labor in Germany see, Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasonal Workers/Forced Laborers/GuestWorkers* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1990); Klaus Bade, *Ausländer, Aussiedler, Asyl in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, (Hannover: Niedersächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1994.); Klaus Bade, ed. *Auswanderer, Wanderarbeiter, Gastarbeiter : Bevölkerung, Arbeitsmarkt und Wanderung in Deutschland seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, (Ostfildern : Scripta Mercaturae, 1984). For more specific case studies see Christoph Klessmann, *Polnische Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet, 1870-1945*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1978); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, „Die Polen im Ruhrgebiet bis 1918“ *Moderne deutsche Sozialgeschichte* ed. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1966); John L. Kulczycki, *The Foreign Worker and the German Labor Movement: Xenophobia and Solidarity in the Coal Fields of the Ruhr, 1871-1914*. (Providence, R.I.: Berg Publishers, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> This exploration is part of my larger dissertation project of examining the different adaptation strategies utilized by Polish migrant workers in the Ruhr and northeastern Pennsylvania. Between 1880 and 1924, thousands of Poles from the eastern provinces of Germany migrated to seek employment in the rapidly expanding coal industries of both to both regions. By 1914, approximately 400,000 Poles lived in the Ruhr basin and 200,000 settled in the anthracite regions of northeastern Pennsylvania. My dissertation charts how national and class identities developed in their respective environments and later influenced Polish desires to integrate, focusing in depth on the Polish experience in the realms of work, local society and politics, religion, ethnic association and family life.

From my research, numerous parallels between the past and the present come to the fore, particularly with regard to the role of the state in attempting to direct the integration of various minority groups.<sup>6</sup> Beginning in the late 1880s and especially during the 1890s, the increasing number of Poles migrating from the eastern provinces of Germany<sup>7</sup> to the Ruhr caused considerable consternation among many Prussian officials in western Germany. Whereas previously the influx of Poles into the Ruhr aroused little attention, by the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century official concerns were voiced that Poles were „flooding in“ and posed the risk of creating a „state within a state.“ These worries were complemented by arguments circulating within the general population, asserting that the Poles were stealing jobs, depressing wages and lowering the overall cultural standards of the communities in which they lived.

In response to the perceived threat posed by these foreign workers, Prussian officials in the West adopted a progressively uncompromising strategy of Germanization, borrowed in part from Prussian policies already in force in the East yet also tailored to local conditions. In essence, the goal of this policy was to instill in Poles a German „spirit“ by circumscribing expressions of Polish political and cultural life.<sup>8</sup> In the two decades before World War I, laws and ordinances were passed that severely restricted the use of the Polish language, even in religious matters, mandated exclusively German language education for Polish children and practically forbade pastoral care at the hands of ethnically Polish priests. Further, Poles and their organizations were closely observed by the German police, surveillance that lasted well into the Weimar period.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time as attempts were made by the state to constrain the development of Polish political and cultural life, officials also began adopting „divide and conquer“ strategies aimed at creating a „successful“ migrant type. An archetype that could then be utilized to justify further restrictions on those portions of the migrant population who proved resistant to outright assimilation. The best example of this was the avid support the state lent to the creation of a separate Masurian identity in western Germany.

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<sup>6</sup> In undertaking my research, I was greatly aided by German scholars who over the course of the past two decades have been at the forefront of a movement to reassess the role of minorities in Germany. In particular, I was extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to work with historians that have dealt in matters relating to ethnic minorities and foreign labor, including Klaus Bade at the Institute for Migration and Intercultural Studies in Osnabrück and Klaus Tenfelde at the Institute for Social Movements in Bochum. In addition my research was also greatly aided by many archivists in the archives in which I worked. In particular, those from the North-Rhine Westphalian Staatsarchiv in Muenster deserve special thanks.

<sup>7</sup> The four German eastern provinces (rough present-day equivalents in Polish) from where Poles migrated were Posen (Poznan), West Prussia (Pomorze), East Prussia (Kaliningrad/Mazury) and Upper Silesia (Slask). Hereafter, only the English translation of the German names for these areas will be used.

<sup>8</sup> The primary originator of the harsher line taken towards Poles in the Ruhr was the Oberpräsident of Westphalia, Heinrich Konrad von Studt. Von Studt had served in various positions in the Prussian East before coming to Münster in 1889 and was an advocate of Germanizing the Poles as quickly as possible. In 1896, in a letter to the Prussian Interior Minister, von Studt called for the „strict surveillance of Polish agitation and associational activity, the removal of nationally minded Polish priests, the limiting of the use of the Polish language in public assemblies as well as only German language instruction in school.“ Although von Studt left Münster in 1899 to become the Prussian Culture Minister, his replacements held firmly to von Studt’s policies.

<sup>9</sup> A good example of the restrictive regulations on language is the *Reichsvereinsgesetz* of 1908, which mandated the use of the German language in all public Polish meetings. One exception was made for political meetings related to Reichs- and Landtag elections. Other laws and police orders prohibited the open display of Polish national symbols, pictures and clothing and banned certain Polish songs and newspapers. Police surveillance grew increasingly sophisticated over the period of Polish migration to the Ruhr. Whereas prior to 1909, local police were primarily responsible surveillance, after 1909 a centralized office under the Police President in Bochum was created to coordinate surveillance across the Ruhr. The reporting activities of this office lasted until the late 1920s.

During the 1880s and generally until the turn of the century, the Polish-dialect speaking, evangelical Masurians who came from East Prussia, were treated by the state as Poles, due to their language. In official census statistics the Masurians were counted as Poles and if they were specifically referred in reports, officials most often called them „evangelical Poles.“ By the turn of the century, however, official Prussian treatment of the Masurian population changed. Poles from Posen, West Prussia and Upper Silesia continued to be defined by their mother tongue as Poles.<sup>10</sup> Masurians, on the other hand, were for statistical and reporting purposes now geographically defined as „the native population of the same-named region“ of East Prussia.<sup>11</sup> Through this new conception, authorities essentially Germanized the Masurians per fiat.

In order to win the Masurians to the German cause, the government also undertook more concrete steps. Special treatment and economic support was accorded to institutions that fostered the development of a purely Masurian identity. During the 1890s, the state provided financial support to Polish speaking evangelical pastors who cared for the Masurians and their number in this decade was higher than the number of Polish speaking Catholic priests in the Ruhr.<sup>12</sup> Through these pastors, Masurians received a church service in Polish every 14 days. By comparison, Poles were generally only granted a Polish mass on an ad hoc basis, usually around Easter. After the turn of the century, support for Masurian parishes was permanently incorporated into the budget of the Ministry for Spiritual, Educational and Medical Affairs.

The government also supported the development of a distinct Masurian press and local libraries. The development of such newspapers is particularly interesting. Whereas in the 1890s the first Masurian paper was called the „Polski Przyjaciel,“ or Polish friend, after the turn of the century Masurian papers bore titles such as „Altpreußische (Old Prussian) Zeitung“ and „Heimatgrüße“. Increasingly these papers, which were printed partly in German and partly in Polish, proved useful to spreading historically questionable propaganda that attempted to prove the Germanic origins of the Masurian community. As the first issue of „Heimatgrüße“ declared in 1911, „Our old and distant homeland was and remains German like other areas of our great and beautiful Fatherland; our forefathers were German, we are German and our children shall remain German!“<sup>13</sup>

Further support was given to the development of East Prussian friendly societies, organizations designed to provide limited financial and social support to „loyal“ Masurian workers while offering protection from the dangers of Social Democratic or Polish agitation. These organizations also underwent an evolution over time. Whereas when they were first founded, these organizations were named „polnische-evangelischer Arbeiterverein“ and „evangelisch-polnischer Unterstützungverein,“ their names were later changed and the word „polnisch“ was replaced by „ostpreußisch.“

The attempt to establish a „good Masurian“/„bad Pole“ dichotomy also found support among various segments of German society. In 1899, immediately after a strike in Herne by primarily young Polish mine workers, a National Liberal newspaper demanded that „these noble Polish gentlemen, who along with all sorts of smells and crude lifestyles, serve to lower our wages and lower the spiritual and moral standards to an alarming level, these men

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<sup>10</sup> Poles from Upper Silesia were occasionally treated as a separate group as well, however, no generalized attempt was fostered an Upper Silesian identity on the part of the government in the West.

<sup>11</sup> Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf, LA Essen 101.

<sup>12</sup> This is particularly interesting since the Masurian population in the Ruhr was roughly one-half that of the Polish.

<sup>13</sup> Staatsarchiv Münster (STAM), OP Münster Polizei 5426.

and women, who often cannot read or write...must know...that they are only tolerated guests here in Germany“. Against this characterization of Poles, the same article noted that the Masurians were „striving to lift themselves up to German standards everywhere“. <sup>14</sup> Other nationalistic groups such as the Society for the Protection of the Eastern Marches, which had numerous members in the Ruhr, proposed more radical solutions vis-a-vis Poles. At the same time, such groups supporting education outreach initiatives for the Masurians in order to inform them of their German heritage and the dangers of the Polish national movement.

Perhaps most surprising, the Catholic Church also grew to support the anti-Polish policies of the government. Whereas in the initial stages of the Polish migration to the Ruhr, the relationship between Church officials and Poles was cordial, by 1900 this picture changed dramatically. Increasingly the Church, under pressure from the government, supported increased restrictions on various expressions of Polishness. In 1904, for example, the Church in the Ruhr went so far as to ban the use of Polish at baptisms, funerals, weddings and in the preparation for the first communion. To this, the Church also severely cut back on the number of Polish language masses and ethnically Polish priests.

Altogether, the policies implemented towards the Poles and the Masurians led to two different integration paths. The attempts to turn the Poles into good Germans through laws and police supervision made their adaptation to Ruhr society more difficult, though not impossible. For most Poles, especially those from the lower classes who previously possessed much more of a regional, rather than national identity, the discrimination of the state and society encouraged them to assume a stronger Polish identity. This increase in national consciousness is best witnessed by the rapid growth of Polish ethnic associations. Whereas in 1895 there were approximately 100 such organizations in the Ruhr region, by 1912 there were 1,038. <sup>15</sup>

Ironically, the mounting pressure placed on Poles and the subsequent ethnic mobilization also eventually brought about a greater participation of Poles in the larger social life of the Ruhr. In the workplace, Poles founded their own trade union in order to defend their interests. This same union, however, also later worked closely with the Christian and particularly the Socialist trade unions in order to defend the general worker interest. <sup>16</sup> Politically, Poles proved successful in mobilizing themselves as an ethnic bloc, particularly in local Church elections. Whereas in 1904, Poles had no representatives on Church councils in Dortmund, by 1912 they controlled approximately 15% of the seats, a figure that represented their actual percentage in the local Catholic population. Many of such seats, however, were increasingly „won“ not through outright competition, but as a result of local compromises between German and Polish Catholics, a trend that indicates that Poles were increasingly accorded equal respect by their German co-religionists. <sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> STAM, Kreis Gelsenkirchen 53. The name of the paper is not given.

<sup>15</sup> STAM 5758, "Zahlenmässige Angaben über das Polentum im rheinisch-westfälischen Industriebezirke," from PP Bochum March 15, 1913. Often overlooked by scholars of nationalism is the role émigré communities played in forging national identity during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly among Eastern Europeans. In many respects, it can be persuasively argued that modern Polish national identity was forged as much in the pits of the Ruhr as in the palaces of the Polish nobility or in the conspiratorial circles of the Polish intelligentsia.

<sup>16</sup> The Polish trade union, the third largest miner's union in Germany, was founded in 1902 and by 1912 had organized over 30,000 workers. The best examples of cooperation among the unions representing Ruhr miners occurred during the strikes of 1905 and 1912. Eventually, the close cooperation between the Polish trade union and the socialist Alter Verband led to discussions by 1916 of a possible merger of the two organizations. This ultimately never occurred, and after the war the importance of the Polish trade union declined. For further information see John Kulczycki, *The Polish Coal Miners' Union and the German Labor Movement in the Ruhr, 1902-1934* (Providence: Berg, 1997).

<sup>17</sup> STAM 6037 – 1904 Statistics of the Regierungs-Präsident Arnsberg; STAM 5758 – 1912 Statistics of the Regierungs-Präsident Arnsberg.

Ultimately, this experience before World War I can be viewed as an example of „negative“ integration. In defending their ethnic identity, Poles necessarily left behind a homogenous ethnic subculture that previously only had limited contact with Ruhr society. Through the utilization of the ethnic resources at their disposal, Poles were eventually able to achieve a level of equality and integrate within certain areas of Ruhr society, such as at work and in the local parish. The Polish example in this period is also interesting for highlighting how ethnic solidarity does not, in the long run, necessarily lead to increased separatism.

After World War I, the Poles were put to new tests brought about in particular by the reestablishment of the Polish state and the subsequent increase in Polish/German tensions as well as by the general economic weakness of the Ruhr coal industry. The post war climate soon caused divisions within the Polish community and by the early 1920s approximately one third of the Polish community chose to return to Poland. Of these Poles, many were from the middle to lower middle class who had been active in Polish nationalist groupings or persons who migrated to the Ruhr after 1900 and thus had fewer roots in the local community. For the remainder of Poles, however, the decision whether to remain in the Ruhr was more difficult. During the course of their stay in the Ruhr, many assumed other identities based in the workplace or in local society that complemented their increased awareness as Poles. In the end, approximately another third migrated from the Ruhr region, comprised generally of younger Poles who sought better employment opportunities in the coal pits of northern France. Interestingly, the Poles who chose to stay in the Ruhr were those who already before the war generally had better contacts with their German surroundings, such as Poles who were active in worker organizations or church affairs.<sup>18</sup>

The adaptation of the Masurians took a different course. The attempt by the state to create a distinct Masurian identity was successful. However, because of the relatively free space accorded the Masurians, there was little incentive for interaction with local society and the Masurian community remained relatively isolated before World War I. Although government reports and the German press constantly asserted that the Masurians could easily be „melted“ into German society, a report of the Bochum Police President shows that by 1914 only 12.5% percent of Masurian men were active in German friendly associations.<sup>19</sup> This figure is even less impressive when one considers that in 1912 in Gelsenkirchen-Buer, a center of Masurian settlement, approximately 12% of the Masurian men were members of the Polish trade union.<sup>20</sup> Overall, the majority of Masurians were significantly less active in local society and politics. For example, while in 1912 there was an ethnic organization for every 277 Poles, statistics show that there was only one such organization for every 2,316 Masurians. In number of seats held on Church councils, the statistics are similar. Whereas in 1912, the Poles held 6.1% of seats on local Catholic administrative councils throughout the Ruhr region, the Masurians controlled only 0.35% of the seats on councils of the local evangelical parishes.<sup>21</sup>

The tendency of Masurians to remain „unter sich“, or to themselves, aroused significant

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<sup>18</sup> In terms of those who chose to leave the Ruhr, options lists from Wanne show that the rate of persons born between 1860 and 1880, i.e. those that would have most likely come into the Ruhr before 1900, was almost half the rate of persons who were listed as being born between 1880 and 1914. Further, an examination of Address Books in Gelsenkirchen, Oberhausen and Bochum show that nearly all leaders of Polish political organizations had left the Ruhr by the end of 1922, while approximately 50% of those of religious organizations remained. See also Klessmann, pp. 161-168

<sup>19</sup> STAM, OP Münster Polizei 5426, Report of the PP Bochum, March 13, 1914.

<sup>20</sup> Stadtarchiv Gelsenkirchen, from Police Revier Reports for Buer for 1912.

<sup>21</sup> STAM 5758, „Zahlenmäßige Angaben über das Polentum im rheinisch-westfälischen Industriebezirke,“ from PP Bochum, March 15, 1913.

consternation among those circles that supported the Masurian community in the years immediately prior to the War. In 1910, the National Liberal *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* lodged a strong critique against the government's policy towards the Masurians, noting that „when the ‘true German character’ of the ‘Old Prussian’ is so certain...then we do not understand why their actual amalgamation into German society is still artificially postponed [since] the deeper their solidarity with a great people, the less the danger exists that they will fall into the hands of the Poles“.<sup>22</sup> In 1914, the primary spiritual caretaker of the Masurians, the Reverend Mueckely, wrote in a letter to the Bochum Police President that the attempt to instill a German character in the Masurian workers through the Masurian friendly societies was a complete failure and that such organizations posed a danger of fueling separatist sentiment. Further, in contrast to his earlier stand, Mueckely proposed that the process of integration would be speeded if the number of Polish language services for the Masurian community was reduced.<sup>23</sup>

After World War I such a reduction did in fact take place. Generally, however, it was not any active policy that encouraged the Masurian community to finally integrate more fully into German society, but instead post-war developments, particularly the plebiscite held to determine the new border between Poland and East Prussia. Although some Masurians did vote for Poland, the vast majority opted for Germany due to economics, as well as, the fact that the Masurians could protect their ethnic identity significantly better under German rule.

As a whole, the attempt by the state to actively influence the process of social integration of eastern minorities is extremely interesting for the varied results it brought forth. The negative position taken against the Poles never led to their hoped for Germanization, but instead led to a much stronger Polanization. Because the government viewed almost every expression of Polish identity as being nationalistic and anti-German, it was difficult for a moderate Polish patriotism to develop that could promote integration and combat an increasingly popular chauvinistic Polish nationalism. Nevertheless, the need to confront the pressures of the state did eventually lead to greater Polish participation in local Ruhr society and Poles eventually were able to obtain equal treatment within certain areas comprising their lifeworld, such as at work or in the local Church parish. Those Poles who ultimately chose to remain and eventually assimilate into German society were generally those who were active in areas where Poles could, through their own efforts, attain a level of equality.

The Masurians show us a different example. The state allowed the Masurians a high level of autonomy in which they could further develop their identity because the state believed that with time the Masurians would themselves see the benefits of assimilation. Eventually, the state was correct, however, the process of Masurian assimilation took vastly longer than was foreseen. With no particular incentive to integrate, most Masurians remained generally isolated from local society until after World War I.

The lessons exhibited by these East European workers a century ago and in particular the two different integration trajectories taken by Poles and Masurians remain important for current discussions about *Zuwanderung* and integration. First, as in the past, Germany will in the future continue to be a land of immigration. Just as foreign labor was critical to supplying the coal that drove the German industrial economy, so too are foreign workers needed, particularly given demographic trends, to support the German service economy of the future. The need for such workers, however, should not lead to a system whereby certain ethnic groups are accorded preferential treatment over others since such a system will simply breed

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<sup>22</sup> STAM, OP Polizei 5426, *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, Nov. 1, 1910.

<sup>23</sup> STAM, OP 5426. See report of Mueckely dated April 24, 1914.

resentment among those left out, without guaranteeing greater integration of the preferred group. Further, when workers do come to Germany, they will need to feel that they can build a stable existence, free from time limits and ultimately citizenship barriers that simply serve to prevent any type of social integration.

Second, in pursuing an effective policy towards foreigner workers, the state must be particularly careful in its attempts to influence the process of integration. As the migration historian Klaus Bade recently intoned in a *Süddeutsche Zeitung* article, the process of immigration, cannot be „regulated like street traffic.“<sup>24</sup> By extension this remark should be applied to integration as well. Too overbearing a policy runs the danger, as in the past with the Poles, of encouraging the resentment of those migrants who wish to protect aspects of their value system. At the same time a political course in which migrants are simply left on their own and not engaged by the state can also effectively cause a ghettoization of a given group, as seen by the case of the Masurians. Overall, while the state necessarily must play a role in fostering an environment where integration can happen, there are ultimately limits on the state's ability to direct integration outcomes.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, because of such limits it is vitally important that ordinary Germans and migrants themselves establish more points of contact. Outside of the workplace, contact between Germans and migrants, many of whom have now lived in Germany for decades, remains limited and until this changes the integration process will remain incomplete. As a consequence, there must be an increase in grass-roots initiatives that attempt bridge this gulf. The experience of the Poles shows us that the willingness of natives and migrants to cross ethnic divides and engage each other within their local communities, even when to disagree, is as important as any state policy in promoting social integration.

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<sup>24</sup> Philip Grassmann, „Experten loben Gesetzentwurf zur Zuwanderung“ *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, January 16, 2002.