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THE LOST EAST:
SILESIAN EXPELLEES IN WEST GERMANY AND THE FANTASY OF RETURN, 1945-1970

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

One-fifth of the postwar West German population consisted of German refugees expelled from the former eastern territories and regions beyond. My dissertation examines how and why millions of expellees from the province of Silesia came to terms with the loss of their homeland. Revising the traditional expectation that this population was largely interested in restoring prewar borders as a means to return to the East, I offer a new answer to the question of why peace and stability took root in West Germany after decades of violent upheaval.

Before Bonn recognized Poland's postwar border in 1970, self-appointed political and scholarly spokespeople for the expellees lost no occasion to preach the "right to the homeland" (*Heimat*) and advocate for a revolutionary migration, in which all expellees would return to the lands that had once been inside Germany's 1937 borders. Confronting the generally accepted theory that expellees either thought like their leaders or lost interest in the East because of material prosperity in the West, I examine a wide range of neglected archival holdings, periodicals, circular letters, memory books, travel reports, and unpublished manuscripts to show how, through fantasizing about the old *Heimat*, expellees steadily came to terms with the permanence of their exile. Discarding what might imperil their own victim status, they generated idealized imagery of a *Heimat of memory*: a timeless, pristine, and intimate space without Slavs, Jews, or Nazis. The *Heimat of memory* was threatened by what they imagined as its dark inverse, a *Heimat transformed*: disordered, decaying, foreign, and dangerous, allegedly due to the influence of Russian armies and Polish settlers. Applying theories of memory and nostalgia, my dissertation demonstrates how, though expellees never surrendered their "right" to the *Heimat of memory*, they also came to realize that the lost world they mourned no longer existed to be recovered in the transformed spaces of physical reality.

We open with an historical overview of German history in Silesia before the expulsion. Further background is then offered through exploring the official narrative of border revision devised by self-proclaimed expellee spokespeople who, after the founding of the Bonn Republic in May 1949, received funding and support from the state. However, at the same time that official narratives dominated publications about the German East and exerted considerable political influence, expellees continued to deal with their loss and realize the impossibility of return. This process had already begun in 1945, when hundreds of thousands of eastern Germans managed to briefly return, witness the drastic changes in the former *Heimat*, and then return to tell others that there was no going back. Through reflection on what the homeland had been, through establishing continuity via a new sense of *Heimat* whenever they gathered, and through traveling back to see the changed spaces of western Poland for themselves, expellees steadily came to realize through the 1950s and 1960s that their professed "Right to the *Heimat*" was in fact a right to the *Heimat* that they imagined in memory, rather than to a space that they could never return to inhabit. In light of these findings, it becomes self-evident why most expellees showed quiet resignation when Bonn recognized the Polish western border in 1970. Though expellee spokespeople continued to demand territorial restitution, most expellees had come to realize long before that the East was truly lost. Peace and even understanding thus became possible along a border that had known such hatred and bloodshed.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Inspiration for this project began in the undergraduate classroom, when my professor unveiled a map of early-modern Prussia and narrated that millions of Germans had once inhabited vast eastern lands. Then, at the end of World War II, they were forced out. And the lecture moved on. This left me wondering: who were these people, what became of them, and why were they absent from my knowledge of history? I had never heard of Pomerania or East Prussia before, but from that day onward intellectual curiosity compelled me forward through a decade of research. Seeking answers in scholarly literature, I discovered no explanation that satisfied my questions, perhaps in part because the issue remains so politicized in Germany and Poland, perhaps because of the reigning unawareness of the history of the "German East" outside of these countries. So I continued to read, my questions evolved and multiplied, and my conviction grew: it is impossible to understand postwar Europe without examining the fate of these borderlands and their inhabitants. It is my hope that the results of my work will shed some light on how, after the horrors of Nazi genocide and postwar ethnic cleansing, and during the worst of the Cold War, peace became possible on Europe's most violent border.

As my dissertation research proceeded, it quickly became clear to me that I was in fact working on two distinct projects. Based upon the findings in this first project, a second book is already in the works, a history of travel in the ethnically cleansed borderlands of western Poland over the sixty years after the traumas of the Second World War. Through a comparative analysis of travel accounts written from a wide range of ethnic, religious, and social, and political backgrounds, this new work will move beyond familiar, top-down narratives of bipolar rhetoric and posturing to showcase this understudied region as a space of transnational interchange, reflectivity, and healing. Countless librarians, archivists, scholars, and friends assisted me in the

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INTRODUCTION

In the wake of Nazi racial atrocities during the Second World War, roughly twelve million ethnic Germans fled or were expelled from a vast swathe of Central and Eastern Europe, where many of their families had lived for centuries.[1] Uprooted from the spaces of their *Heimat* (homeland), they came to form roughly twenty percent of the postwar population in the four German partition zones. Over three million of them came from Silesia, a verdant and industrial province about the size of Switzerland, which had fallen under Polish administration due to the Allied powers' agreement at Potsdam in August 1945 to detach the quarter of Germany's 1937 territory east of the Oder [Odra] and Lusatian Neisse [Nysa] rivers.[2] In the face of so great a loss in the German East (easily dwarfing Germany's much smaller and ethnically mixed territorial losses after World War I), political and scholarly spokespeople for those "expelled from their homeland" (*Heimatvertriebenen*) lost no occasion to demand a "return home" (*Heimkehr*), despite the likelihood that another mass migration would plunge Germany and Poland into ethnic conflict yet again. Walter Stein, the expelled mayor from the Silesian town of Parchwitz [Prochowice], pushed hard for a revision of the borders so that his old constituency could return to the lost "Garden of Eden" from which they had been expelled.[3] Disturbed by a rumor he had

[1] This is the most common statistic, but precise numbers remain unknown. See the discussion in chapter one.
[2] "Potsdam Agreement, Article XIII," in *Germany under Occupation, Illustrative Materials and Documents*, ed. James K. Pollock and James H. Meisel (Ann Arbor: George Wahr, 1947), 19-20. Joachim Rogall estimates 3,181,200 Silesian expellees in Germany as of 1950, with 2,091,200 in the western zones and 1,090,000 in Soviet zone. See "Krieg, Vertreibung und Neuanfang. Die Entwicklung Schlesiens und das Schicksal seiner Bewohner von 1939-1995," in *Schlesien und Die Schlesier*, ed. Joachim Bahlcke, 156-225 (München: Langen Müller, 2000), 170. To maintain continuity with how the Germans under study thought about the places they had left behind, this study refers to sites by their prewar German names and offers postwar Polish designations in brackets each time a site appears for the first time in a chapter. Use of Polish names with German names in brackets occurs rarely and deliberately, such as when a site receives its Polish designation in a German source. Since 1945, the towns, rivers, and regions of Silesia are known predominantly by their Polish names. A list of German and Polish names appears in the appendix.
[3] wst [Walter Stein], "Kloster Leubus. Ein Beitrag zum Parchwitzer Jubiläumsjahr 1957," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 7 (April 10, 1957), 102. The problematic term "expulsion" (*Vertreibung*, which came to dominate in expellee circles by the end of the 1940s) invokes imagery of a lost paradise. Less popular was the idea that those *expelled*

heard in 1956 among Polish exiles in the West "that the desire for return among millions of German expellees dwindles more and more and that their integration in West and East Germany proceeds more and more quickly," he protested that surely such "Polish propaganda lies" were mere wishful thinking, meant to secure Polish claims to the lands they had occupied. "The Poles should get to know our big *Heimat* meetings sometime," he bragged.[4] In the end, however, it was Stein who had been blinded by wishful thinking. Contrary to every expectation, there never was a great revolution of the expellees. The millions never flooded over the Iron Curtain to seize back their lost homes. At the very *Heimat* gatherings that Stein had advocated, expellees had been steadily coming to terms with the fact that they could never go back to live in the places they had come from.

Just how and why did expellees reach such an understanding about themselves, their past, and their future? It is instructive to look at what happened when Georg Ludwig and his fellow expellees from Liegnitz [Legnica] crowded together into an overfilled restaurant room in Munich in September 1953 to listen to the narration of their old neighbor, the bookseller Kurt Anders. Instead of chanting out political demands, Anders turned on his slide projector and led them on an imaginary journey back "through the intimate corners, streets, and parks of our unforgettable *Heimat* city." As Anders himself later recalled, through two hours and over one hundred slides of the prewar city, members of the audience added cries of recognition: "Yes, I lived in that house. We shopped there all the time. And that was often where we strolled." The whole experience left Anders with a complicated sense of the very meaning of *Heimat*. Exiled together in the West and

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shared a form of guilt which had prompted their expulsion. See Hans Henning-Hahn and Eva Hahn, "Vertreibung," in *Politische Mythen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, ed. Heidi Hein-Kircher and Hans Henning Hahn, 167-188 (Marburg: Herder Institut, 2006), 176-177; Jerzy Kranz, "Wunden, Wahrheiten und Narben," in *Verlorene Heimat. Die Vertreibungsdebatte in Polen*, ed. Klaus Bachmann and Jerzy Kranz, 242-253 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1998), 252-253.

[4] Walter Stein, "Unser Weg nach Schlesien! Die Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands und die Wiedergewinnung der deutschen Ostgebiete," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 8, no. 19 (October 10, 1956), 306.

unable to set foot in the real city of Liegnitz, the close-knit company in that cramped Bavarian restaurant had actually become "a piece of *Heimat*" for each other. Ludwig also recognized that the meaning of *Heimat* had changed. Though he was supposed to be leading a local cell of the Silesian *Landsmannschaft* (an association devoted to the return of a specific lost eastern territory), he spread the politically unserviceable reflection that they had indulged in returning to a *Heimat* in their hearts that was distinct from the distant physical *Heimat* that they had left behind.[5] Silesian exiles across West Germany steadily came to the same realization: two images of *Heimat* were developing simultaneously, drawing ever further apart. They transfigured *Heimat* into an idealized realm that they could possess whenever they closed their eyes. This consoled them amid growing awareness that the physical *Heimat* east of the Oder and Neisse rivers was diverging away, becoming a foreign space that they could never possess again.

Already by December 1945, the word of Silesia's transformation was spreading quickly. When an expelled priest encountered a married couple from his flock who had spent the months after the war in their old *Heimat* Lauban [Lubań] (a village just twenty kilometers inside the Polish-administrated territories), he wrote to the others in the West that "I saw in my mind an image of our beloved little city, certainly no longer recognizable and not to be depicted here. Lauban and the surrounding area give an altogether Polish impression. New Polish businesses and street signs everywhere." Like many other pastors, this led him to instruct his scattered congregation to surrender any vain hopes that things could ever return to what they had been

[5] They had been "permitted to undertake a journey, which from a spatial perspective was certainly distant, yet with a destination so near to our hearts." Georg Ludwig, "Liegnitz in Lichtbildern," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 5, no. 11 (November 1953), 231-232; Kurt Anders, "Liegnitz in Lichtbildern," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 5, no. 11 (November 1953), 232.

before.[6] As an Upper Silesian expellee observed in 1960, "memory is the only paradise that we can't be expelled from."[7]

Even the highest expellee leaders unwittingly disillusioned their constituents (and at times themselves) into realizing that the old *Heimat* could never become what they remembered when they regularly pontificated their view that Polish "mismanagement" had turned Silesia into a destroyed and alien world. As a leader of the Silesian *Landsmannschaft*, Otto Graf von Pückler ceaselessly demanded the return of the lost territories in both political circles and at expellee meetings.[8] For all this, by the time he spoke at the 1959 federal convention of expellees, he had read enough travel reports from expellees who had visited the old *Heimat* to describe "a dismal picture" of contemporary Silesia. Despite his protest that Silesia's capital Breslau [Wrocław] was still legally part of Germany, he expressed his chagrin that "the old German Breslau no longer exists, and Wrocław, having become Polish, will be abandoned by the last Germans who don't want to live in bondage under a foreign people." Looking to the faces of those gathered, he saw for himself that "naturally the most strongly shaken are those who knew Breslau as it was before."[9] Conveying his impressions of Polish Silesia, he despaired that the *Heimat* as they had known it was gone forever and as a consequence damaged his own political stance that it was somehow still a part of Germany.

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[6] Piekorz, *Rundbrief*, December 6, 1945, BAK Z [Bundesarchiv Koblenz Zonen Archiv] 18/219, 1.
[7] Hilde Riegel-Kallabis, "Meine Eltern, Ein Erinnerungsblatt," in *Vermächtnis der Lebenden: Oberschlesier erzählen*, ed. Oberschlesischen Studienhilfe, 2:113-115 (Augsburg: Oberschlesischer Heimatverlag, 1959-1962), 2:113.
[8] Herbert Hupka, "Ein Mann der ersten Stunde. 30. Todestag von Dr. Otto Graf von Pückler," *Schlesische Nachrichten* (Jan. 15, 2004), 9. For an example of his speeches, see EhoRe (editor), "Unvergeßliche Festtage in Diez," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 13 (July 10, 1957), 207-209. Officially secure in the conviction that their constituents were prepared to return, they protested the changes in Silesia hoping that alleged "proofs" of Polish "mismanagement" would convince the Western powers to support a revision of the border.
[9] Dr. Otto Graf Pückler, "Breslau-Wroclaw," in "Freiheit für Schlesien. Deutschlandtreffen der Schlesier. Köln 26.-28. Juni 1959," ed. Landsmannschaft Schlesien (Groß-Denkte über Wolfenbttel: Grenzland-Druckerei Rock & Co, 1959), 45-46, 47.

Through such episodes, I have traced a widespread phenomenon that dominated the reflections of expellees whenever they thought back on the world they had lost. It creates a picture which contrasts starkly with the general findings from six decades of scholarship and popular discussion. Overly dependent on the politicized viewpoint heavily published by expellee leaders, as well as questions of postwar economic integration, the common theory has been that West Germany's expellees either forgot about their lost *Heimat* because of newfound prosperity in the economic miracle of the 1950s, or they clung to a genuine desire for physical return, as their spokespeople claimed, and so were foiled when Bonn confirmed the border in 1970. Neither of these views gets to the heart of how expellees actually dealt with their traumatic past; indeed taken by themselves they can serve to occlude how expellees saw themselves, their exile, and their lost *Heimat*.[10]

Deploying a wide range of neglected archival holdings, *Heimat* periodicals, circular letters, *Heimat* books and diaries, travel reports, and unpublished manuscripts, the coming chapters seek to get at what expellees actually wrote and thought about themselves after their historic migration from the East. Moving beyond what a few expellee leaders proclaimed, my analysis reveals that, as the years passed, millions of uprooted people were progressing through a steady process of coping with loss. At the same time that they drew solace from the ***Heimat of memory***, the frail, idealized vision of their past world, they imagined the ***Heimat transformed***, the contemporary Silesia that they perceived in their minds as destroyed, decaying, and part of a foreign land. For the rest of their lives, they continued to confront the ever-widening bifurcation of *Heimat* into these two contrasting and irreconcilable images and came to prefer residing in

[10] As Juliane Haubold-Stolle observes, due to extreme emphasis in scholarship on political debates, "the memory of Silesians on their old *Heimat* hasn't yet been sufficiently examined. Great holes exist here in research," which she was also unable to address due to her necessary emphasis on political controversies that fostered national myth-making in Upper Silesia. See *Mythos Oberschlesien. Der Kampf um die Erinnerung in Deutschland und in Polen* (Osnabrück: Fibre Verlag, 2008), 32-33.

memory because of the painful realization that they could never reside in the real Silesia again. It was beyond their reach, separated by space and time, lost forever because of the tremendous changes that had occurred since the expulsion.

This is not to say that they forgave what had happened to them, much less that they gave up on the idea that they had some abstract right to the homeland that now only lived in their memories. For many, dealing with the loss of *Heimat* meant nourishing a sense of injustice in its loss. Some rushed to join political advocacy groups, attended their rallies, and voiced a "*Recht auf die Heimat*" (right to the homeland) as a way to protest what had happened to them. But all the while, this abstract "right" coexisted with the painful knowledge that the *Heimat* they remembered no longer existed as a space to be reclaimed in the changed world of reality. They first reached this realization in the months after the expulsion, as reports came through of Silesia's transformation; they continued to ponder it through the 1950s and 1960s, when the political narrative of expellee spokespeople established itself as the most visible expression of the expellee worldview; and ultimately their healing process outlived the political narrative, which lost all real relevance for West German society by the 1970s. This changes the general understanding of how Germans emerged from the ruins and ignominy of Nazism. At the same time that West Germany rapidly integrated into the West, millions of exiled Germans were critically grappling with their relationship to the East. Each expellee's process of dealing with loss offers a decisive explanation for how and why stability took root in West Germany's fledgling democracy, and how peace became possible along what had so recently been Europe's most violent border.

1. Scholarly Debates about the Role of West German Expellees

There is a widespread misconception that, to successfully integrate into the West, expellees either embraced the economic miracle of the 1950s and forgot the former *Heimat*, or, by clinging to memories of *Heimat*, persisted as a menace to peace, unable to move on with life in postwar Germany and demanding a return home. In his grand narrative of the modern European tragedy, Mark Mazower argues convincingly that Germans shunned radicalism and yearned for normalcy in the wake of World War II, but he errs in presuming that any looking backward to the world they had lost "in nostalgic photo albums of pre-war Silesia or East Prussia" meant indulging in reactionary "dreams of empire."[11] At the other extreme, Heinz Bude is correct that expellees tried to rebuild in the foreign spaces of the West, but he oversimplifies in claiming that the average expellee was not looking toward yesterday but instead strove to be an innovative social climber; in seeking to rehabilitate expellees as progressive elements in society (forgetting the East), he infers what would be a regressive behavior (remembering to the East).[12] In this manner, previous scholarship has generally missed seeing the possibility that, in the charged political and economic context of early postwar West Germany, many expellees were neither revisionists nor distracted materialists: they found normalcy *through the process of looking backward* to former homeland spaces, and this steadily led them to accept the impossibility of physical return.

The prevalent, polarized misreading of expellee behavior arises in part because previous interpretations have granted primary agency to impersonal political and economic forces, both important factors in explaining the integration of twelve million expellees, but inadequate in and of themselves. Excellent monographs have explored the expellee political movements in great detail and demonstrated how, for example, they lost support due to their own internal divisions,

[11] Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 400.
[12] Heinz Bude, *Bilanz der Nachfolge: Die Bundesrepublik und der Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992), 78.

external political factors amid the Cold War's tensions, and their inability, by the 1960s, to appeal to a new generation.[13] Unfortunately such works usually end up conflating the interest of expellees with the rise and decline of their self-proclaimed advocates' territorial revisionist movements. As a result, these narratives tend to become confounded when seeking explanations for expellee behavior. If the millions expelled as adults are presumed to have been revanchist, how did all of these people (still capable of voting and protest) suddenly become so powerless by the 1960s?

While it is not the intention of such scholarship, this approach even has potential to inadvertently back up the age-old boast of expellee spokespeople that they represented expellees as a whole. Eduard Mühle's examination of continuities in postwar, often expellee-led research into the East is timely, but it only offers speculation about the extent to which territorial revisionist scholarship influenced mainstream perception of the former eastern territories.[14] Though Brenda Melendy promises to differentiate between Sudeten German official commemorations of the *Heimat* and those conducted in private, she mistakenly concludes that all expellees wanted to return to the East, because she generally conflates the demands of the expellee population with those of Sudeten leaders.[15] Most distressing of all is Michael Müller's claim that, because NATO supported German territorial claims east of the Oder and Neisse rivers, the "silent majority" of West Germans, most notably expellees, stood behind the Western alliance. For Müller, a mindless expellee adherence to the expellee leadership's political platform

[13] Pertti Ahonen, *After the Expulsion: West Germany and Eastern Europe, 1945-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Matthias Stickler, *"Ostdeutsch heißt Gesamtdeutsch". Organisation, Selbstverständnis und heimatpolitische Zielsetzung der deutschen Vertriebenenverbände, 1949-1972* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2004).
[14] Eduard Mühle, *Für Volk und deutschen Osten*, Marburg University Habilitation-Schrift 2004 (Düsseldorf, 2005).
[15] Brenda Melendy, "In Search of *Heimat*: Crafting Expellee Identity in the West German Context, 1949-1960," (Ph.D. Diss., University of California Santa Cruz, 1998), 12. Melendy poses the idea of a *Wahlheimat*, a cross between the new West German community and old *Heimat* traditions; private and "connected to both the present and to childhood, rather than to politics," it was also somehow "accidental," since she claims that expellees as a group backed the Sudeten *Landsmannschaft*'s platform for return to the East (23, 81).

fostered the strength of conservative West German politics. By the logic of this progression, it was unthinkable that an expellee could ever lean to the political left, much less hold a nonconformist view of the lost *Heimat*, until, Müller asserts, "the 'critical' generation of 1968 fundamentally challenged the *Bundesrepublik*'s political identity."[16] This caricature of millions of expellees simply does not make sense.[17] Had they truly been the reflection of their revisionist leaders' desires, they would have behaved as American historian Franz Neumann had feared in July 1950 and sought to mass behind "Germany's new demagogues" to overthrow stability in Central Europe (indeed, if Cold War tensions had compelled the Allies and West German leaders to quash this conjectural mass movement – a likely prospect – then at the very least this would have heightened resentment among the revanchist millions and so further strained East-West relations).[18] It is only by disarming the expellee spokespeople from the hegemonic influence they claimed for themselves over a "silent majority" that one manages to find the steady decline of the expellee movement explicable. If indeed the movement was toppled by a frontal assault in the 1960s, this was only because it had been undermined from within from the very beginning.

Contributing significantly to this trend was the fact that expellee leaders were usually aloof to the real sentiments of their constituents. For purposes of their political agenda, they forged an official narrative in which a German return to Silesia was justified, desirable, and imperative.[19] However, as the coming analysis will show, in the first postwar years when

[16] Michael G. Müller, "Poland and Germany from Interwar Period through to Time of Detente," in *Germany and the European East in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Eduard Mühle, 91-106 (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 103.
[17] The most effective effort at overcoming this common misinterpretation is Christian Lotz's systematic analysis of the "politics of memory" within government and religious leadership in the BRD and DDR. See *Die Deutung des Verlustes. Erinnerungspolitische Kontroversen im geteilten Deutschland um Flucht, Vertreibung und die Ostgebiete (1948-1972)* (Köln: Böhlau, 2007).
[18] Franz L. Neumann, *Germany: Promise and Perils* (New York: Foreign Policy Association Headline Series, July 20, 1950), 9.
[19] For example, a prominent expellee research council contended in 1961 (without reference to German wrongdoing in the recent past) that "the legal status of eastern Germany and its native population cannot be separated from its historical background" as a purely German space. Silesia was allegedly incompatible with its new inhabitants, because Poles preferred primitive methods to "acquiring a new way of life and a better means of making their

expellee political groups were banned (thus before such claims were ever made), expellees were already coping with loss and producing conclusions at odds with the political objectives. And when political groups were legalized in 1949, the pervasive expellee concern about memory seldom overlapped with the leadership's campaign for territorial "restitution". While a minority of expellees did favor revisionist platforms, and while most felt that their fate was an injustice, a look at the discussions of the time reveals that in general expellees simply failed to care about the ongoing propaganda fight between German and Polish leaders staking territorial claims. As the editors from the popular monthly magazine *Revue* observed in 1952, though the fight went

> back and forth, for each expellee this is all only of interest on the margins. He wants to know how it looks in his community, on his street. The man that looks homewards closes his eyes. The louder the fight around him becomes, the more firmly he clings to the eternal, unchanging, always friendly image of the *Heimat*: to memory![20]

Likewise, when in 1955 the West German Brentano publishing firm received twelve thousand submissions from a "literary competition" meant to assess the grassroots experience of expellees from all age groups, they were "consoled" to find "hardly a word of hate, hardly a call for retaliation," leading them to conclude that "the expellees, who suffered inhumane treatment, recognize the prerequisites of humaneness."[21] Likewise, expellees who attended the leadership's rallies were most interested in finding old friends to discuss their shared past in a distant land. Taking as a fact expellee unwillingness to carry out their leaders' political schemes, it suddenly becomes clear why the expellee political party (the BHE) survived a mere eleven years, losing support precipitously after the most crucial expellee social demands were met during the early 1950s, forcing expellee leaders to ally with the SPD and CDU (the two largest West German

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living" which could make the land productive. Göttingen Research Committee, *Eastern Germany: A Handbook* (Würzburg: Holzner, 1961), 1:vi, 3:216.

[20] Stefan Eich, "Schau heimwärts Vertriebener! Schauprozeß der Frauen," *Revue* 33 (August 14, 1952), 14. The editors distanced themselves from the official view in their reporting and even incurred disapproval from some favorable to the official view, though they were supported by such official organs as the union of *Landsmannschaften* (VOL), the Berlin league of expellees, and the Göttinger Arbeitskreis.

[21] Der Verlag, "Nachwort," in *Aber das Herz hängt Daran. Ein Gemeinschaftswerk der Heimatvertriebenen*, ed. Marianne Aktardieff, 349-351 (Stuttgart: Bretanoverlag, 1955), 351.

parties) to pursue their demands.

A wide range of studies has also given valuable proof that rising prosperity helped expellees to achieve some modicum of integration;[22] however this factor is overemphasized to explain a corresponding drop in interest in political movements (often conflated as interest in the old *Heimat*).[23] A further presumption – that economic integration proceeded at the expense of memory – threatens to overlook that this integration proved difficult, and expellees continued to feel like outsiders in the native communities.[24] Both views belie evidence provided in the sources. On the basis of collected postwar letters between Breslau schoolgirls, Juliane Braun argues that her subjects suppressed the recent past in order to muster the energy to move on and be economically productive; though their childhood social network brought stability in an uncertain time, they "spoke about the past" only in the 1980s.[25] Yet her own evidence proves

[22] See the many entries in Walter Kiefl, *Bibliographie zur Integration von Aussiedlern in Deutschland* (Wiesbaden: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, 1996); just five years after the expulsion a plethora of studies were listed in Ellen Simon and Werner Möhrung, *Millionen ohne Heimat* (Frankfurt/Main: Wolfgang Metzner Verlag, 1950).
[23] Johannes-Dieter Steinert credits the postwar stability to Allied pressure on German leaders in their zones to economically and socially assimilate expellees and Allied repression of organized political grievances before 1950. "Organisierte Flüchtlingsinteressen und parlamentarische Demokratie: Westdeutschland 1945-1949," in *Neue Heimat im Westen: Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge, Aussiedler*, ed. Klaus J. Bade, 61-80 (Münster: Westfälischer Heimatbund, 1990). Frank Buscher proves that church organizations misunderstood the postwar situation, since no massive radicalization ever occurred, but he attributes expellee political stability solely to economic integration, the skill of political elites, eagerness to return to normalcy, and reaction against political radicalism, which they held responsible for their plight. "The Great Fear: The Catholic Church and the Anticipated Radicalization of Expellees and Refugees in Postwar Germany," *German History* 21, no. 2 (2003): 204-224. Markus Mildeberger credits economic integration for helping expellees to reconcile with their exile. Though he recognizes the steady isolation of expellee leaders, he never identifies the role of *expellees* until addressing the post-1990 period, at which time he presumes that expellees started to play a role in reconciliation. "Brücke oder Barriere? Die Rolle der Vertriebenen in den deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen," *Deutschland Archiv* 33, no. 3 (2000): 416-424. These conclusions also appear in recent analyses of expellee political movements.
[24] The difficulty of integration has been well established. See the synopsis in Doris von der Brelie-Lewien, "Zur Rolle der Flüchtlinge und Vertriebenen in der westdeutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte," in *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in der westdeutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte*, ed. Idem., Helga Grebing, and Rainer Schulze, 24-45 (Hildesheim: August Lax Verlag, 1987). See also the works of Rainer Schulze, such as "Growing Discontent: Relations between Native and Refugee Populations in a Rural District in Western Germany after the Second World War," in *West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era*, ed. Robert Moeller, 53-72 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997). Andreas Kossert offers an excellent digest of twenty years of scholarly discussion, belying his own claim that he is "breaking new ground" and ending a "taboo" about discussing expellee victimhood and the lack of "success" in integration. See *Kalte Heimat. Die Geschichte der deutschen Vertriebenen nach 1945* (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 2008).
[25] Juliane Braun, ed., *Ein Teil Heimat seid Ihr für mich. Rundbriefe einer Mädchenklasse, 1944-2000* (Berlin:

that memories of destruction haunted the schoolgirls, and they were obsessed from the beginning with the need to cope with their loss by discussing prewar memories. When Eva-Maria Schlaak joined the mailing list with her classmates on August 15, 1958, she urged her classmates to preserve what they had known in their hearts,

> beautiful in your recollection, as it resides in your memory. I went through the streets of Breslau [in 1945] and must confess that I only cried, because everything that was beloved and valued has been annihilated. Our beautiful, beloved dormitory was totally burned out. From the marketplace to the southern park, only the town hall, the opera house, and the postal administration building still stand! Can you imagine that?! No, [you should] prefer to indulge in memories.[26]

Though she implored her friends not to forget the *Heimat*, Schlaak also warned them to select their memories carefully, to refrain from returning to the city again as she knew it had become, to preserve it in idealized memory instead. Thus, much as many Silesians strove to ensure their own economic survival (and in the process jumpstarted the economic recovery of the new republic), they also looked back to the lands of yesterday and, often without any real revanchist intentions, struggled to retain a sense of continuity.

The prevalence of this process of dealing with loss confronts the influential 1967 allegation of Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich that Germans failed to master their terrible collective past because they were incapable of mourning their responsibility for the Holocaust and instead diverted their attention to West Germany's material reconstruction. Expellees in particular were said to have proven their inability to mourn by a sense of "entitlement" to "their own 'just claims' to the lost territories beyond the Oder-Neisse line."[27] Without question, recognition of the Holocaust's central role remains essential for gaining an accurate picture of how subsequent collective traumas, such as the expulsion, became possible. And it is certainly the case that, while some expellees recognized that crimes perpetrated by Germans had prompted

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Aufbau-Verlag, 2002), 273-174.
[26] Eva-Maria Schlaak, August 15, 1958, in ibid., 108.
[27] Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of Collective Behavior*, trans. Beverly Placzek (New York: Grove Press, 1967, 1975), xvi, 4.

the revenge they experienced, others never gave up their monopolized victim status, never acknowledged the suffering Germans had also inflicted on Poles and Jews, and even felt resentment for "eastern" peoples and places. This has unfortunately encouraged the notion that only a sparse cast of famous, politically liberal expellees from the younger generation managed to "deal with their past" by coming to terms with the loss of *Heimat*, an idea especially common in literary scholarship.[28] On this basis, Eva Hahn and Hans Henning Hahn go so far as to create a partition: on the one hand, a minority of expellees allegedly rejected a concrete "politics of memory," wherein memory served revanchist politics (as when Horst Bienek wrote by the 1980s of how Upper Silesia had ceased to be *Heimat* from the time he was exiled as a child[29]); on the other hand, the great mass of expellees collectively mixed personal memories of the old *Heimat* with the larger idea of a lost "German East," thereby serving revanchist politics.[30] Often because some of their self-appointed leaders misused what they wrote for political ends, the expellees themselves are denigrated for their inability to cope with loss. Major scholars have reiterated this view. Citing the above study, David Blackbourn claims that *Landsmannschaften* "cultivated the collective identity of East Prussians, Silesians, and Sudeten Germans," that is an identity

[28] Horst Bienek, Günter Grass, and August Scholtis are among those who have received regular attention, notably in Louis Helbig's groundbreaking 1988 analysis of postwar expulsion literature. Helbig makes the valuable observation that these writers had achieved "memory work," a "poetic representation" of beloved homeland spaces not to be overshadowed by territorial claims or expressions of victimization; but the cast of those dealing with loss was far greater than what he could note in his sizeable bibliography. See *Das ungeheure Verlust: Flucht und Vertreibung in der deutschsprachigen Belletristik der Nachkriegszeit*, Studien der Forschungsstelle Ostmitteleuropa an der Universität Dortmund Band 3 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1988), 266. This is a common problem. On the basis of a few published accounts, Jürgen Röhling blames what he paints as a universally anti-Polish image in postwar *Schlesienliteratur* (especially in the travel genre) for contemporary disinterest in the region and only exculpates a few writers "like Horst Bienek and August Scholtis" from carrying any blame. See "'Unter polnischer Verwaltung.' Schlesien, ein Phantom," in *Verhandlungen der Identität. Literatur und Kultur in Schlesien seit 1945*, ed. Jürgen Joachimsthaler and Walter Schmitz, 39-48 (Dresden: Thelem, 2004), 48. This tendency holds among some contributions in Klaus Weigelt, ed., *Flucht und Vertreibung in der Nachkriegsliteratur: Formen ostdeutscher Kulturförderung* (Melle: Verlag Ernst Knoth, 1986) and Elke Mehnert, ed., *Landschaften der Erinnerung: Flucht und Vertreibung aus deutscher, polnischer und tschechischer Sicht* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), as well as in Jolanta Mazurkiewicz, *Zwischen deutsch-polnischem Grenzland und verlorener Heimat. Von literarischen Rückreisen in die Kindheitsparadiese* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998).

[29] See for instance Horst Bienek, *Reise in die Kindheit. Wiedersehen mit Schlesien* (Munich: Hanser, 1988).

[30] Eva Hahn and Hans Henning Hahn, "Flucht und Vertreibung," in *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte: Eine Auswahl*, ed. Etienne Francois and Hagen Schulze, 332-350 (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2005), 338.

inherently tied to political goals, while a "very different kind of memorializing of the German east [was] being done by writers outside the official organizations," such as Günter Grass, Horst Bienek, and Siegfried Lenz.[31] For Blackbourn, it was only around 1989 that expellees finally emerged from the "frozen memory" which they had imbibed from the "authorized narrative."[32]

So it is that, at the same time that the expellees majority, who tended not to publish regularly or gain wider recognition, have found little real treatment in scholarship, it has been extrapolated that they failed to "deal with their past" like the famous writers so extensively researched. The wish that historical subjects had pursued a preferred type of mourning threatens to obscure *what sort of mourning actually took place*, as well as how and why it contributed to subsequent developments and consequences. To quote the recent intervention of Alon Confino, "we may not like everything that Germans had to say about their experiences during National Socialism, but they were not silent about them." The Mitscherlich perspective of history thus "appears to be an imposition of our own moral values and expectations on a historical situation – and on an image of the past – that was significantly more complex." Rather than asking *whether* Germans remembered the Nazi period, Confino finds it better to ask "what in fact they did remember."[33]

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[31] David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 314, 318.

[32] Presuming that "static," uncritical, and inherently revanchist official narratives applied to all expellees, Jorunn Sem Fure also chooses to differentiate the majority of expellees' memories from "the search for alternative memories and political positions within the expulsion generation represented by people like Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, Christian Graf von Crockow, or Günther Grass," who were "not necessarily identifying themselves with a collective identity as expelled." See "'Gutes Zuhause aber keine Heimat'. War and Post-War Experience, Narrative Strategies and Memory of the German Expellees from the Eastern German Provinces after 1945," Ph.D. Dissertation (Bergen, 2001), 15. Her look at travel reports from two less-known expellees merely yields a summary of their contents, so that they have no role in the greater analysis (213-222).

[33] Alon Confino, "Dissonance, Normality, and the Historical Method: Why Did Some Germans Think of Tourism after May 8, 1945?" in *Life after Death. Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann, 323-348 (Cambridge and Washington D.C.: Cambridge University Press and the German Historical Institute, 2003), 330; idem., "Traveling as a Culture of Remembrance: Traces of National Socialism in West Germany, 1945-1960," *History and Memory* 12 (2000): 94-95. This new approach toward seeking out continuities in memory across the caesura of 1945 was featured in Robert Moeller, ed.,

Taking this view, the retrospective imposition of labels such as *revanchist* and *progressive* onto expellees imposes an unhelpful political categorization on what was usually a very personal and intimate attempt to cope with loss. Was it revanchist to retain a sense that one had suffered injustice through the experience of ethnic cleansing or to cherish a sense that Silesia was a spiritual *Heimat*? Was it progressive to loathe the idea of returning due to a bigoted notion that Polish inferiority was corrupting former *Heimat* spaces? As Robert Moeller has shown, after such destruction and personal suffering, expellees mourned the past by engaging in "selective remembering": while they seldom chose to remember atrocities committed by Germans, they took part in a lively postwar West German culture of commemoration which emphasized the idea of German victimhood.[34] This finding allows Moeller to effectively dismantle Günther Grass's recent attempt to pose himself as a pioneer, filling a gap in memories of flight and expulsion that were allegedly suppressed until he wrote the fiction novel *Im Krebsgang*.[35] Responding to Grass and also perhaps scholarship which has affirmed the idea that only an elite cast has overcome the great taboos, Moeller demonstrates that Grass was assuming "that in speaking for himself, he is speaking for all Germany" when he alleges that memories of expellee suffering had been

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West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

[34] Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 3. To take the example of a comparatively moderate expellee scholar (advocating expellee integration into West Germany as more important than a *Heimkehr* to the East), Sudeten sociologist Eugen Lemberg rarely mentioned the victimization of non-Germans in his 1949 examination of expellee social interaction and needs; granting the "Hitler regime" one paragraph and noting that the expulsion had resulted from the hate that Nazism had stirred against Germans, he used the rest of the book to review the suffering of German expellees in every detail. See *Die Ausweisung als Schicksal und Aufgabe: Zur Soziologie und Ideologie der Ostvertriebenen* (Gräfelfing: Edmund Gans Verlag, 1949), 13. For analysis of the early West German culture of victimhood through the lens of public commemoration of the dead, see Sabine Behrenbeck, "Between Pain and Silence: Remembering the Victims of Violence in Germany after 1949," in *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 37-64, especially 55-62.

[35] Günther Grass, *Im Krebsgang: eine Novelle*. Göttingen: Steidl, 2002.

silenced by an inability to speak about memories of German crimes.[36] In fact, as will be shown, expellees not only grappled with their expulsion, but what is more, sought to come to terms with memories of their old *Heimat*.[37] Mourning for their own losses (and usually discarding any imagery that might imperil their own victim status), they started accepting consequences, such as the loss of their former homes in the territories east of the Oder and Neisse rivers.

2. The Two Images of *Heimat*

The basis for each expellee's process of coping with loss came through recognition of the fundamental incompatibility between two images of *Heimat*. While in their minds they generated the *Heimat of memory*, an idealized vision of what they had lost, they also steadily confronted the *Heimat transformed*, their perception of Silesia as it now existed in Poland. Through their warm reminiscences of the *Heimat of memory*, expellees resided to their deaths in the bygone world of a clean, timeless German homeland that had never really existed. For those with a rural background, the *Heimat of memory* was intimately connected to the space of the village and the nearby mountain or forests, while city-dwellers fondly attached it to the old neighborhood and prominent architectural monuments, and Upper Silesians tied it to the smokestacks and Catholic

[36] Robert Moeller, "Sinking Ships, the Lost Heimat and Broken Taboos: Günter Grass and the Politics of Memory in Contemporary Germany." *Contemporary European History* 12, no. 2 (2003): 147-181, here 180.

[37] A progression of three *Volkskunde* studies, relatively isolated from mainstream scholarship, touch upon how expellees coped with loss through commemorating the old *Heimat*. Each work is written by an expellee scholar applying heavy use of contemporary interviews with expellees. Georg Schroubek (born in Prague, 1922) examines expellee religious pilgrimages as an attempt by communities to retain a sense of continuity with what they had lost in *Wallfahrt und Heimatverlust. Ein Beitrag zur religiösen Volkskunde der Gegenwart* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1968). Building on Schroubek, Albrecht Lehmann (born in Silesian Lauban, 1939) determines that, through travel back to Silesia after 1970, some expellees saw that the cherished *Heimat* no longer existed in the changed spaces it had become; but because he presupposes that he and his (younger) generation were responsible for dealing with loss, and due to his general neglect of source materials before 1970, he repeatedly makes the questionable assertion that virtually all discussion before 1970 (his parents' generation) was by nature political, closed-minded, and revanchist. See *Im Fremden ungewollt zuhaus: Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in Westdeutschland. 1945-1990* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1991), 79, 113. Dietmar Sauermann (born near Glatz in Silesia, 1937) takes inspiration from Lehmann to assess how in the 1990s expellees from the Glatz region still remained deeply influenced by the early years of integration in the West, when they had clung to their old cultural identity through commemoration as well as travel. See *"Fern doch Treu." Lebenserinnerungen als Quellen zur Vertreibung und ihrer kulturellen Bewältigung, am Beispiel der Grafschaft Glatz* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 2004).

steeples of an industrial-urban borderland culture. In its raw grassroots form, the *Heimat of memory* failed to produce a poignant political narrative; the expellee leadership could only harness it by superimposing their own meanings. The second image, the *Heimat transformed*, was just as constructed as the *Heimat of memory* and indeed developed in correspondence with it. Routinely kept up-to-date through reports from the dwindling population in the *Heimat*, through group discussion, and after 1956 through travel accounts, expellees were fully aware that the *Heimat* they had known had become far more distant in time than in space: how could they truly grasp their cherished homeland again when they heard that it had become a *Heimat transformed*, "destroyed" by Russian armies and made "foreign" through Polish settlement? The expanding divergence between these two images of *Heimat* became an obsession for many of Silesia's West German exiles; over the course of their lives, it strengthened their conviction that they could never return to inhabit a Silesia which bore so little resemblance to the land they would always inhabit in their memories.

The *Heimat of memory*

Broken by the rupture of an expulsion which cut them off from the past, and depressed by the harsh and alien everyday environment around them in the present, it should be little surprise that expellees retreated to their barracks and later the austere apartments that the government helped to build for them to reside again in memories of a Silesia far brighter, far more serene, far more colorful than it had ever truly been.[38] An old photo of the forested Oder river in the shadow of Breslau's elegant *Liebichshöhe* tower called to mind idyllic Sunday boat rides, memories of Upper Silesian factories highlighted the imposing size and power of German monuments to

[38] As Peter Fritzsche argues, nostalgia is a means through which individuals, often in social contexts, seek to recover a lost sense of wholeness in the present that they feel was enjoyed in the past. See "How Nostalgia Narrates Modernity," in *The Work of Memory*, ed. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche, 62-85 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 65-66.

modernity, pristine mountain forests of the *Riesengebirge* were enchanted by the "German" spirit Rübezahl. Through embracing such nostalgic imagery from concrete sites in the past, they clung to their Silesianness in a foreign environment where they felt their old identity slipping away; they coped with their loss of the real *Heimat* by residing in an idealized *Heimat of memory*, colored by an aesthetic of loss.

In laying the groundwork for this *Heimat of memory*, it is important to further explain what is meant by both "*Heimat*" and "memory." ***Heimat*** offered the ideal template for the Silesian aesthetic of loss, though its meaning transcends the "opposition to modernity" posed by theorists. Peter Blickle defines *Heimat* as a sheltered place (romantic, beautiful, innocent, nourishing, pre-national, and fundamentally regional), which, though constructed around bourgeois ideals, stands in contradiction to modern processes (mobility, urbanization, the nation-state, industry, and alienation).[39] Marion Gräfin von Dönhoff, an East Prussian expellee and later editor of *Die Zeit*, agreed with such imagery of *Heimat* in her 1984 reflections, claiming that for expellees *Heimat* was "a great, secluded landscape of endless forests, blue lakes, and broad river lowlands," which meant "much more than it does for those who grew up in an industrial area or in a major city."[40] It is small wonder that Dönhoff imagined *Heimat* as pastoral and anti-modern: her *Heimat* in East Prussia had been exceptionally rural, while in exile her environment in Hamburg was urban.

In fact, emblems of modernity also became icons of the lost *Heimat*. In the *Warthebruch* of eastern Brandenburg, the canals and farmland produced out of swampland through eighteenth-century Prussian enlightened engineering embodied the very substance of *Heimat* for expellees

[39] Peter Blickle, *Heimat. A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2002), ix, 20.
[40] Quoted in Jolanta Mazurkiewicz, *Zwischen deutsch-polnischem Grenzland und verlorener Heimat. Von literarischen Rückreisen in die Kindheitsparadiese* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998), 93.

from the region.[41] The same was true for Upper Silesians, who imagined forests of smokestacks and mountains of coal as often as they memorialized the iconic wooden chapels that predated Prussian industrialism in their *Heimat*. At the same time that natural landscapes and "ancient" traditions remained immortalized as part of *Heimat*, the *Heimat of memory* became tied just as easily to the idea of German cultural superiority, the "progress" that accompanied what was perceived as typically German efficiency and order.

So then, if *Heimat* need not oppose modernity, what precisely was its meaning for expellees? Some Protestant Silesian youth grappled with this very question in 1956, asking if it meant a specific space or time, whether it signified the natural environment or one's neighbors and friends.[42] These were common questions, and expellee correspondence and reflection demonstrated that *Heimat* could regularly signify any of these things. Most fundamentally, *Heimat* was the place of one's birth and childhood. As Paul Zwiener professed to his fellow exiled Silesians in 1951:

> it is the land where the dead slumber, where our history exists, where we first saw the light in the house of our father, learned our mother tongue, took the first steps in life, grew up in the company of our destined companions, formed our life and then cared for the old traditions, sites, and customs through our work. Here we won the strength in our soul for the struggle of life. Here we also wanted to rest when we finally closed our eyes forever in the shadows of the forests and mountains, in the holy soul of the *Heimat*.[43]

Though less concerned about ancestors or dialect, fifteen-year-old Uwe Ehrling offered a similar definition of *Heimat* in 1985 after digging through the attic of his deceased East Prussian grandmother: for himself as for his expellee parents and grandparents, *Heimat* was "the place

[41] In his study of the *Wartabruch*'s early-modern ecological transformation, David Blackbourn tries to reaffirm the *Heimat* ideal of meadows, woodlands, and streams in contrast to the "progress" when the cutting of canals and draining of wetlands for farming changed the landscape; for all this, he accepts that somehow the canals became bound up in the idea of *Heimat*. *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 6, 314. Max Naumann repeatedly identified the "winning" of the Warthe region by his ancestors as *the* fundamental feature of his *Heimat.* Max Naumann, "Christianburg 1975/76," Unpublished Manuscript. His sister, Joanna Naumann, further volunteered such descriptions repeatedly during her interviews with the author at the Herder Institut in September 2007.

[42] Joachim Engelmann, *Schlesien jenseits und diesseits der Neiße. Mitteilungsblatt der Evangelischen Jugend aus Schlesien* 3, no. 3/4 (March/April 1956): 9.

[43] Paul Zwiener, "Das Recht auf die Heimat," *Guda Obend, Ihr lieba Leute! Ein heimatliches Jahrbuch für Schlesier und Sudetendeutsche in der Fremde*, ed. idem. (Tauberbischofsheim: Fränkische Nachrichter, 1951), 36.

where one grows up, the surrounding natural environment, and good friends and acquaintances."[44] That *Heimat* implied both human and natural elements could imply tension. When Horst Matzke reflected on the drastic changes to the *Heimat transformed*, which prevented return, he defined *Heimat* as embodying more than just the landscapes of his childhood, but also "father and mother, siblings, relatives, Mrs. Schmidt from next door, the butcher who always gave us a piece of *Wurst* when we shopped." He even asserted that "if everything could be as it had been among the people, we would renounce these mountains, this river, and these forests."[45]

Though expellees could never replace the distant *Heimat* of origin, where they commonly imagined their ancestors resting in the soils, it was possible to fashion a new dwelling, perhaps even *Heimat*, in the land of settlement. Traces of the old *Heimat* could help, such as bits of furniture or clothing brought during the flight and expulsion or later by the *Spätaussiedler* [Germans that left the East after 1949]. *Heimat* could also be transplanted in the West through soil, trees, and rocks brought from the old *Heimat* in the East. Cooking was another means of preserving the *Heimat* in the West, as expellees continued to prepare the mushrooms, beef intestines, and eel that caused Westerners to deride them as "mushroom eaters."[46] The *Heimat* periodicals could become *Heimat* for expellees as well, as when Zwiener called his paper "a piece of *Heimat*" for all Silesians who read it.[47] The "human *Heimat*" that congregated at regular *Heimat* gatherings also conveyed the notion that *Heimat* lived on in the West, as shown in Ludwig's 1953 Liegnitz gathering in Munich. Chapter five will demonstrate that the

[44] Uwe Ehrling, "Wo ist Heimat?" in *Grenzerfahrungen. Jugendliche erforschen deutsch-polnische Geschichte*, ed. Alicja Wancerz-Gluza, 295-310 (Hamburg: Edition Körber-Stiftung, 2003), 308-309.
[45] Horst Matzke, "Ist der Begriff 'Heimat' Ausdruck der Vergangenheit? Gedanken aus dem Arbeitskreis 'Europa und der osten' der Heidelberger Studenten-Gemeinde," *Schlesien jenseits und diesseits der Neiße. Mitteilungsblatt der Evangelischen Jugend aus Schlesien* 3, no. 3/4 (March/April 1956): 8.
[46] Ulrich Tolksdorff, "Essen und Trinken in alter und neuer Heimat," *Jahrbuch für ostdeutsche Volkskunde* 21 (1978): 361-362.
[47] Zwiener, "Das Recht auf die Heimat," *Guda Obend, Ihr lieba Leute!* (1951), 36. For one of many other examples, see editor Karl Wiechmann's opening comments in the first issue of the *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 1, no. 1 (March 1952), 1.

concentration of these elements (old acquaintances, artifacts, cuisine, and regional symbols) into specific sites in West Germany had potential to result in surrogate *Heimat* spaces, where expellees sensed that, though the East was lost, here the *Heimat* lived on in the West.

To examine the second term, the ***memory*** in which *Heimat* existed was collective but also inherently evolving and individualized. This interpretation holds to the spirit of Maurice Halbwachs's influential interwar theory of collective memory, which postulated that "each memory is a viewpoint on the collective memory," a changing perspective participating in a social process.[48] The shared trauma of loss profoundly shaped the collective nostalgia of expellees. In keeping with recent theories, their nostalgia began when the world they so longed for was gone and could not be retrieved as they remembered it. Each of them felt compelled to collect and treasure "partial visibility of the once-present past in bits and pieces of debris" in order to cope with what had happened to them.[49] Only these artifacts, tied to memories, remained.

To apply the theories of Pierre Nora, for whom the modern age has already imperiled memory and tradition, the expulsion introduced a drastic acceleration of the ongoing forces of modernity and swept away the living spaces of traditional memory (*milieux de mémoire*) in an unstoppable tide of change. The churches where their ancestors had prayed, the fields which generations had plowed, the monuments tied to the community's past, and even urban icons like streetcars connected with a local tradition of "progress"– all of these were cut off by war, expulsion, and now change enacted by Polish settlers. Overwhelmed by the destruction and

[48] Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 48. Michael von Engelhardt's recent interviews with elderly expellees affirm these findings: while shared trauma yielded the construction of a social memory as the "victim generation," dealing with the past was dependent above all on the individual experience. "Generation und historisch-biographische Erfahrung. Die Bewältigung von Flucht und Vertreibung im Generationenvergleich," in *Vertriebene in Deutschland. Interdisziplinäre Ergebnisse und Forschungsperspektiven*, ed. Dierk Hoffmann, Marita Krauss, and Michael Schwartz, 331-358 (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2000).
[49] Fritzsche, "How Nostalgia Narrates Modernity," 64. See also David Lowenthal, "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory," *Geographical Review* 65, no. 1 (Jan. 1975): 1-36.

foreignness they perceived corrupting the *Heimat transformed* (the physical world which once hosted their *milieux de mémoire*), expellees frantically sought to commemorate and reconstruct intimate "spaces of memory" (*lieux de mémoire*) in the West – "illusions of eternity" such as landmarks, villages, cemeteries, costumes, festivals, anniversaries – lest forgetfulness and their own deaths cause all that they had known to cease to exist.[50] Fully aware that the "communicative memory" of Silesia which they shared through discussion would fade into forgetfulness and die with them, expellees sought to systematize and document the *Heimat of memory*, turning it into what Jan Assmann has called "cultural memory," a static residual memory in text that continues after the death of living, communicative memory.[51]

In sum, expellees knew that the *Heimat of memory* only existed in the tenuous spaces of their own minds, that it was fantasy to physically "restore" their *Heimat of memory* in the real Silesia, because the aesthetic of loss tied memories to looming awareness of a painful *Heimat transformed*, whose very existence endangered the purity of their nostalgia.[52] This is in keeping with Svetlana Boym's observation that "nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy"– though the case of the expellees demonstrates the difficulty of separating what Boym identifies as "reflective nostalgia" (individual savoring of details and memorial signs) and "restorative nostalgia" (the serious yearning to reconstruct what had been).[53] One could easily apply "reflective nostalgia" to Kristen Kopp's observation that,

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[50] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7-24, here 12.
[51] Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (Spring-Summer 1995): 125-133.
[52] This puts a new spin on Constance Lieber's assessment, based on her analysis of a selection of widely published postwar German and Polish poetry, that the German definition of *Heimat* was "territorial and unyielding, difficult to transfer to a new location," by contrast with a more "national" Polish definition of *Heimat*, which could be moved more easily. "Representations of Heimat and Trauma in Selected German and Polish Poetry and Prose in Silesia, 1939-1949," Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Utah, 2007. As this dissertation shows, German expellees tended to have an unyielding connection to *Heimat*, but they managed to carry the *Heimat* of their memories with them.
[53] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xiii, 41, 49.

when expellees mourned the East through *Heimat* films of the 1950s (such as the popular *Ich denke oft an Piroschka*), the idealized "dreamland" of the East became insubstantial, incapable of being physically engaged. Kopp adds that *Heimat* films failed to serve the expellee political project for a return to the lost *Heimat*, because *Heimat* became less rooted in a specific lost space and more aimed toward the retention of cultural traditions.[54] As will be shown, expellees also practiced reflective nostalgia through yearning for *extremely specific lost spaces*. Though in the *Heimat of memory* concrete sites such as the family farmhouse or a village town hall often lost temporal specificity (save that it was before 1945), the reflective nostalgia practiced by expellees never pushed for material restoration; this facilitated a coming to terms with the past that seldom served the self-appointed leadership's active goal of actual return to reconstruct what had been (restorative nostalgia). They showed reflective nostalgia through their longing to cherish minute aspects of a former life at a safe distance from the *Heimat transformed*, but at the same time they were often filled with the need, as Boym more generally observes, to "pretend to rebuild the mythical place called home" in word and writing. This they did, even though (indeed because) they knew that the home they had known could never be restored in physical space.[55]

At times, the expellee practice of restorative nostalgia even led to the physical creation of milieus in the West, where new traditions could form within the exiled community. As will be discussed in chapter five, this reveals that the line between *milieux* and *lieux de mémoire* can often blur. In an attempt to forge continuity in the West, the surrogate *Heimat* spaces of memory actually developed into real environments of tradition. New meanings were created in specific spaces of exile, tied to new traditions with a heritage in the East. For some neighborhood

[54] Kristin Kopp, "Ein östliches Traumland im westdeutschen Heimatfilm," in *Traumland Osten. Deutsche Bilder vom östlichen Europa im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gregor Thum, 138-156 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2006), 145-146.
[55] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 50.

residents from Breslau, a street renamed *Breslauer Straße* could in fact become a site where new traditions were made, which attempted to hearken back to the old. When these old Silesians from Breslau died, however, the street was disconnected from tradition (now new exilic traditions) and here too the name "Breslau" became an artifact that could only be accessed through an historicized glance, a *lieux de mémoire*.

With the *Heimat of memory* so threatened by forgetfulness and impending death, expellees commonly felt that the most pressing task was to "preserve" its fragile heritage by reconstructing its imagery in the minds of their descendants, lest it vanish completely. Time was of the essence: pages of obituaries filled *Heimat* papers in ever greater number as the first two decades after the expulsion progressed. Big political papers like *Schlesier* lamented the passing of the self-proclaimed spokespeople, while smaller papers noted the passing of the town mayor, the town clerk, the friendly lady everyone knew up the street. Countless projects arose to compile the lost *Heimat* for the expellee youth born in the West, to "restore" in the intangible space of souls what could never be restored along the Oder river. But time took its toll, the *Heimat of memory* dissipated with each obituary, and as the new generation came of age, the *Heimat* film and *Heimat* book simply went out of style.[56]The living traditions formed by expellees in exile are now artifacts just like the milieus in Silesia that they had once inhabited in their pasts; due in no small part to the expellees themselves, these exilic *lieux de mémoire* now live on in museums, monuments, anniversaries, and attics, where tradition has become history.[57]

Age, political and religious affiliation, the personal past, and personality all impacted the shape and importance of the *Heimat of memory*.[58] As already implied in the example of age, the

[56] For just one example of this perceived *duty* to pass on the *Heimat of memory*, see *Vermächtnis der Lebenden*, 1:9.
[57] Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," 7.
[58] While her analysis of literature about Silesia offers an admirable attempt to understand memories of a troubled past, Anna Maria Sawko von Massow fails to categorize her subjects according to politics, religion, personal past,

elderly tended to cling tenaciously to the *Heimat of memory* as the very substance of their identity. As Hilde Riegel-Kallabis observed, "the older we were when we had to experience expulsion from our *Heimat*, the more brightly the paradise of our childhood appears in our mind's eye."[59] Meanwhile, for the younger generation, *Heimat* was something experienced in the present as well as the past. As Uwe Ehrling reflected, "the younger generation, which only experienced flight and expulsion as children (such as my father and his siblings), could find a new *Heimat* without difficulty, because they were far less entangled with the *Heimat*."[60] They raised a family or entered a career and so became vested in the present-day West. Simultaneously, they retained Silesia as their first *Heimat* and identity to their deaths, like an "overexposed film" that still played back imagery from the past in their minds.[61] In contrast, expellee children born in the West tended to have little if any connection to the old *Heimat*.

Looking to the example of religion, some of Silesia's exiled Jewish holocaust survivors also looked back with fondness on the German cultural milieu in which they had lived. Robert Naumann, who had spent most of his life in Liegnitz before his traumatic flight to Maryland in 1938, still considered Germany his *Heimat* at age 65 in 1958: "*German culture* was my spiritual living space (*Lebensraum*), the German *Heimat*, especially *Silesia*, was very close to my heart," though he was quick to add that "this connectedness with *German culture*, and also sometimes the yearning for the *beloved mountains of Silesia*, don't stand in the way of my thankfulness and my unconditional faithfulness to the American state," which he thought to be "the hope of

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and other aspects of their background, and for this reason misses the fact that, for instance, the Jewish past of Walter Laqueur or the age of Horst Bienek may have affected the ways in which they looked back on their *Heimat of memory*. See *Breslau. Geschichte und Geschichten einer Stadt in der Flucht- und Vertreibungsliteratur nach 1945* (Berlin: Verlag Dr. Köster, 2001).

[59] Hilde Riegel-Kallabis, "Meine Eltern, Ein Erinnerungsblatt," in *Vermächtnis der Lebenden*, 2:113.

[60] Ehrling, "Wo ist Heimat?" 308-309.

[61] Even before completing the first book in his Gleiwitz tetralogy, Horst Bienek reflected back on his childhood in Gleiwitz and sought to make sense of the imagery of a lost Heimat and also the Nazi past. See *Was war, was ist* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1966), 47.

humanity" in the face of the German murder of six million Jews, "one of the most horrible crimes of world history."[62]

Whatever their background, when expellees imagined the *Heimat of memory*, they knew that it only existed now in the past and in their minds. In large part, this is because, even in cases where they avoided comparing it to the *Heimat transformed*, yearning for the *Heimat of memory* was accompanied by a lurking awareness of what it had become. When in 1950 Erich Hoinkis thought back on the brook near Brieg that he had known in his childhood, he indulged in warm memories, that "such a stream as our stream exists nowhere else in the world!" Here he had washed, fished, played with friends, and run in his bare feet; but he had also crossed over this stream on that day "when we left the village, *to which we can never return to again, because everything has become different*."[63] At this point, no further details of the *Heimat transformed* were needed for Hoinkis. It was enough to think that the stream "dreamed" of him, that its "soft, heavy, unforgettable melody" entreated him to "go and always think of me as I think of you! And be a tribute to me out there in the strange and foreign world!"[64] The *Heimat of memory* gave Hoinkis strength to live in the present through cherishing what he had known in the past. Other expellees went further and grappled with the graphic scenes of the *Heimat transformed*. This prompted a more painful but also thorough healing process.

The *Heimat transformed*

Expellees envisioned the *Heimat transformed* as the *Heimat of memory*'s negative opposite: no coziness or security remained in the village, Silesia's "German" order and progress had been replaced by "Polish" chaos and decay. This other half of the *Heimat*'s dual image

[62] Italics in original, Robert Naumann, "Blick auf Deutschland," 1958, LH 532, 3-4, 11. See also his retrospective on the integrated Jewish community's contributions to their *Vaterstadt* Liegnitz in "Die jüdische Gemeinde," circa 1950s, LH 253.
[63] Italics in original, Erich Hoinkis, "Die Welt am Paulauer Bach," *Brieger Heimatbuch*, ed. Arbeitsausschuß Brieg, vol. 1, 71-73 (Goslar am Harz, 1950), 71.
[64] Ibid., 72-73.

should be read as "reality" only insofar as it reflects how expellees construed the "reality" they perceived in Polish Silesia. Just as they idealized the *Heimat of memory*, they watched the *Heimat transformed* through a lens darkly, shaded by resentment and loss and usually divorced from the real circumstances in which Polish settlers encountered and interpreted their surroundings. If any familiar objects survived, the reports depicted them as ruined, decayed, or otherwise tainted; if any familiar people remained, they were oppressed, malnourished, sick, and anxious to leave. Sometimes natural landscapes remained as they had been, but usually the forests had been chopped, the rivers unregulated, the fields left fallow. At other times, the Poles rebuilt German landmarks, but they were imbued with new Polish meanings. Depressed by the *Heimat transformed*, expellees fled back into the safe *Heimat of memory*, stung by the painful realization that the physical Silesia could never be inhabited again.

As will be shown in chapter three, negative reports featuring the *Heimat transformed* spread widely through the correspondence from the hundreds of thousands who remained in Silesia in the first years after the war and became alienated from their own *Heimat*. Between the last large-scale expulsions in 1948 and the end of Stalinism before 1956, information from the tiny minority that remained in Lower Silesia and the hundreds of thousands still in Upper Silesia saturated major West German newspapers, *Heimat* periodicals, *Heimat* books, and private reflections. After 1956, depictions of Silesia came primarily from the very different genre of travel accounts, and these gave more substantial evidence of the reconstruction efforts that the Polish regime had renewed across the region.

If the *Heimat transformed* was so painful and the *Heimat of memory* so consoling, why were expellees so seldom able to simply live out the fantasy that the *Heimat* still looked as they imagined it in their memories? Why couldn't they resist exposing themselves to disturbing

imagery from the *Heimat transformed*? Strong curiosity usually compelled them to learn more: was the old homestead still standing; did the town hall really burn down; had the cherished neighborhood decayed into oblivion? Already in late 1949 the *Breslauer Nachrichten* reported that countless inquiries about the *Heimat* had already reached their office in the Bavarian Alps, all proving "how much the Silesians yearn for reports out of their old *Heimat*, for disclosures as to whether the economic, cultural, or religious institutions continue their activities or wither away."[65] An exiled Silesian's yearning to safeguard idealized memories clashed with his or her burning need to know precisely what had changed, even though this furthered the depression that the *Heimat of memory* had dissipated from the physical spaces that he or she had once known.

To feed their curiosity, expellees generally read slanted perspectives in which everything that was not in keeping with the impossibly wonderful *Heimat of memory* received a negative portrayal. Indeed, if reports before 1949 depicted Silesia as a destroyed and neglected land, where Germans were abused in a foreign environment, reports thereafter tended to convey that matters had only grown worse with time. In a typically grim picture, *Breslauer Nachrichten* reported in 1949 that, four years after "the apocalyptic rider sped through the streets and alleys of the metropolis on the shores of the Oder, destroying the cultural treasures of many centuries in a few hours," today's Breslau was a "dead city" dominated by "collapsing walls and bleak window holes of the once proud greatness of this city and the economic prosperity of its 625,000 residents."[66] Cities that had suffered less wartime destruction, such as the spa towns in the former Grafschaft Glatz [Kłodzko], appeared empty and decrepit. Based on letters from remaining Germans, a Hessian newspaper reported in 1952: "The cemetery has gone wild, the

[65] St., "Zum Geleit," *Breslauer Nachrichten. Das Heimatblatt für alle ehemaligen Bewohner von Breslau und Schlesien* 1, no. 1-2 (March 15, 1949), 2.
[66] W. Erich Spaethe, "Unvergängliches Breslau," *Breslauer Nachrichten. Das Heimatblatt für alle ehemaligen Bewohner von Breslau und Schlesien* 1, no. 1-2 (March 15, 1949), 3.

bakery and the inns are empty or are neglected." While a few Upper Silesians (that is, remaining "Germans") continued to visit the spas, in general "life has nearly died out, the rehabilitation clinics are plundered, the display windows broken, and the facilities and promenades neglected."[67] The two images of *Heimat* drew apart over time: while the *Heimat of memory* steadily became more idealized, the *Heimat transformed* became all the more wretched.

A great deal in the response of German expellees to the perceived "destruction" and "foreignness" relied upon preceding bigotry about a supposedly inherent Polish "backwardness," summed up in the ever-popular catchphrase *polnische Wirtschaft*, in which Poles were presented as lazy and chaotic, incapable of ordering their affairs without German guidance. It is disturbing how easily such racism, much of it drawing on pre-Nazi roots, persisted as a means of interpreting the transformation of the East. When German soldiers entered the Baltic countries during the First World War, they interpreted filth, disease, and dilapidation as inherent parts of the land, rather than as a heritage of Russian imperialism and tremendous damage inflicted by the retreating Russian army.[68] After the Nazi invasion of Poland, German women sent in to "order" the East deplored what they saw as disorder in Polish towns and sought to root out all Polish aspects so that the supposedly original German roots might prevail in a new context of ordered German modernity.[69] Now, in postwar photographs and descriptions of the transformed East, donkeys with carts and livestock grazing in former urban spaces were "corrupting" an orderly German world envisioned to have been there before. Added to this was an orientalized sense of the "Asian" peoples beyond, who were represented as bringing an exotic and destructive character to formerly cultured German lands. This racism was typically indifferent to the

[67] "Berichte aus dem Glatzer Bergland: Menschenleere Dörfer, Verfallene Häuser, Verkommenes Land," in *Oberhessische Zeitung*, 16 Feb. 1952, BHI-PAS P0385 (Glatz before 1978)
[68] Vejas Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity, and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[69] Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 127.

Holocaust and anti-Polish racial projects just over the border during the Second World War. A 1950 report from Liegnitz lamented that, though the town had survived the war intact, it had since been steadily "cannibalized" by a "chaotic" meld of Russian soldiers, Polish settlers, and "many Jews."[70] It was not important that a German-led war had destroyed these lands, nor that the invading populations had often lost their homes, their livelihood, and so many acquaintances because of Nazi cruelty. Nor did it matter that, in the case of Liegnitz, the Red Army was using the city as a western base of operations in the wake of a German invasion that had laid waste much of the Soviet Union. Failing to mourn (or even recognize) German crimes against populations in the East, narratives of the *Heimat transformed* gave Germans a monopoly on victimhood. There was however a crucial distinction between this and previous German imaginings of the East. Unlike German soldiers in Courland or settlers in "Warthegau" during the world wars, who had little emotional attachment to the "foreign" spaces they occupied, expellees were depressed by the perceived "ruin" of intimate *Heimat* spaces in the wake of their traumatic expulsion and preferred to live in memories rather than actually embark upon a new colonization effort.

Due to Polish reconstruction efforts, over time the *Heimat transformed* came to incorporate new imagery alongside "destruction," "decay," and "foreignness." In the first years after the war, the Polish authorities and settlers put significant effort into reconstructing specific German spaces of memory that could best serve the new Polish meanings they gave them. In addition to repairing Wrocław's town hall and reconstructing parts of the main square, they focused great energy on the capital's brick gothic churches, which were said to testify to its Polish foundations. Polish nationalists, communists, and clergy spared no effort inventing the land's "Polishness" as "proof" that it should remain inside Poland (much as expellees leaders in

[70] "Von Liegnitzer Straßen und Plätzen," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 2, no. 9 (End of July 1950): 2.

West Germany invented a past to bolster their own claims). Meanwhile, and at the same time that Germans imagined a usable past in the *Heimat of memory* to cope with loss, Polish settlers sought to fashion a usable, Polish past in the Silesian spaces they now inhabited. To cope with their suffering under Nazism and their own uprootedness due to the destruction of the Polish heartland and loss of the Polish eastern territories, Poles embraced the idea of a timeless Polish mythology for the German cities they inherited, pointing to twelfth-century *Piast* princes and "Polish-speaking" stones to identify a stable and usable history in surroundings that were so drastically changed and unstable.[71]

Though expellees had little patience for the new Polish mythology about lands they remembered as imbued in German language and culture, they often expressed relief that some physical sign of what they remembered lived on via Polish repair efforts. This being said, if the Poles were doing something "right" by rebuilding old monuments, the fact that non-Germans were rebuilding the *Heimat* to suit their own culture and preferences increased the sense among expellees that history was passing them by; with each building they restored, the Poles incorporated the old German *Heimat* into a part of Poland. On the anniversary of the Breslau cathedral's consecration in November 1953, Catholic expellee writers recollected the building's total destruction in 1945 and the dispersion of the diocese's flock. However, they added: "Today the cathedral is largely reconstructed by the Poles. Is this a sign of hope?" In West Germany, they could commemorate the church's consecration "only at great distance from the old *Heimat*,"

[71] See for example Stanisław Lorentz, "Reconstruction of the Old Town Centers of Poland," in *Historic Preservation Today. Essays presented to the Seminar on Preservation and Restoration, Williamsburg, Virginia, September 8-11, 1963*, 43-72 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1966); Marek Zybura, *Der Umgang mit dem deutschen Kulturerbe in Schlesien nach 1945* (Görlitz: Senfkorn Verlag Alfred Theisen, 2005); Zbigniew Mazur, *Wspólne dziedzictwo? Ze studiów nad stosunkiem do spuścizny kulturowej na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych* [Joint Heirs? A Study on the Relation to the Cultural Heritage in the Western and Northern Lands] (Poznań, 2000).

and they knew that in the *Heimat* itself, history was continuing without them.[72] The only hope in reconstruction was that history continued at all in the same building. In this spirit, Günther Grundmann, formerly the head of Silesia's provincial office for monument preservation, observed in 1950 that the Poles had already restored the capital's devastated university buildings in fall 1945 and granted doctorates to Polish candidates from the former Polish eastern universities at Vilnius [Wilno] and Lviv [Lwów]. Thus, he concluded, "a new page has turned in history," for whereas prewar professors of Slavic linguistics at Breslau's university had allegedly known that the German Silesian metropolis represented a most unfertile soil for Polish nationalist efforts, by 1950 the city was already an integral part of Poland.[73]

After a lull in reconstruction efforts during the height of postwar Stalinism, renewed building and increased stability appeared in the accounts of expellee travelers who started to visit western Poland after 1956. As will be shown in chapter six, the same curiosity that had compelled expellees to read about the *Heimat transformed* drove them to undertake a journey back. This experience forced the two images of *Heimat* back together: spaces of memory in the mind's eye overlapped with the changed reality they saw. At the same time that many travelers found a greater sense of closure with their loss, their accounts granted much more color and authenticity to the Polish achievements that were turning the inherited "western territories" into a vibrant *Heimat* for the new Polish residents.

3. Source Base and Parameters

Most prior work on expellees has restricted attention to heavily published tracts about the East distributed by politically motivated leaders; though usually unintentional, this overemphasis

[72] "Die Mahnung des Domes," *Der schlesische Katholik* 2, no. 23 (November 1953), 3.
[73] Quoted in Günther Grundmann, "Universität im Osten," *Merian* 3, no. 3 (1950): 25. This also illustrates that the line between "spokespeople" and everyday expellees was fluid, and many leaders also privately coped with loss.

on the most readily available materials has helped to inflate the supposed influence of the official narrative.[74] This is all the more regrettable because a vast array of source material testifies to the expellee process of coping with loss: extensive private correspondence, diaries, and small-run publications, *Heimatbücher* (homeland books), *Heimatzeitungen* (homeland papers) and *Rundbriefe* (pastoral circular letters), as well as documentation from surviving *Heimat* archives, all of which underpin this study. Many accounts appear in unpublished and self-published works, as well as through publishers that had originated in the former East. *Gräfe und Unzer*, a two-century-old Königsberg [Kaliningrad] publisher that had printed works professing East Prussia's Germanness in past decades, set itself up in Munich to feature books that memorialized the East. Readers were known to respond with a lack of political interest that irked the authors; when reading his fan mail, the politically active expellee author Magnus Freiherr von Braun warned an admirer to remember the political goal of border revision rather than merely use the book to enhance fond old memories.[75]

As a separate genre, edited by local *Heimat* communities and funded by West German *Patenschaften* (sponsor cities, to be discussed further in chapter five), "homeland books" constituted a chief source for town chronicles, nostalgic picture tours, poems, and stories, all of which offered insight into the collective *Heimat of memory*. Almost three-quarters of all *Heimatbücher* concerned small, rural locales (Upper Silesian industrial towns and Breslau tended to find greater coverage in other genres, such as picture books and histories).[76] Already popular

[74] This is especially true for English-language materials, which were almost exclusively published for polemical purposes by such organizations as Poland's Western Press Agency or West Germany's *Göttinger Arbeitskreis*. They presented the official narrative to win over outsiders to the cause for border revision (or in the case of Polish works, to prevent this). See the bibliography of English-language materials in Barbara Dotts Paul, ed., *The Polish-German Borderlands: An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, CN and London: Greenwood Press, 1994).
[75] Magnus Freiherr von Braun to Herr von Messling, January 1, 1956, BAK N 1085/60.
[76] Ulrike Frede, *"Unvergessene Heimat" Schlesien. Eine exemplarische Untersuchung des ostdeutschen Heimatbuches als Medium und Quelle spezifischer Erinnerungskultur* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert Verlag, 2004), 60.

in the decades before the expulsion as compendiums praising local history, monuments, cultural traditions, landscapes, personalities, and religious devotion, they spread rapidly with a new and urgent purpose in the first decades after the expulsion: as obituaries preserving communities that had ceased to exist outside of memory. Expellees who had been young or middle-aged at the time of expulsion were growing old (indeed, two chief contributors to the 1964 *Heimatbuch* for Bunzlau [Bołesławiec] died before its completion)[77] and wanted to convert their "communicative memory" into a "cultural memory" that might preserve the *Heimat of memory* for future generations.[78] As Wolfgang Kessler observes, "the positive memory of everything good and beautiful in the transfigured world of the old *Heimat* was to help with the new beginning" in the West; anything negative from the recent past was largely ignored, be it economic need, persecution of Jews, the exploitation of forced labors, or wartime destruction.[79] It is important to add Ulrike Frede's emphasis that most depictions of the idealized *Heimat of memory* ended with "the knowledge that time has passed, that much of what made up the *Heimat* is now destroyed or appears changed, that Silesia has in the meantime self-evidently become *Heimat* for a new Polish generation and will remain so."[80] Expellees bought *Heimatbücher* at gatherings and via *Heimat* periodicals, then used them to reinforce cherished memories of the past– ever aware, as will be shown, of the tremendous changes that made it impossible to return to reside in Polish Silesia.

This leading monograph on *Heimatbücher* explores the viability of these works as historical source material and offers a comparative analysis of contents, writers, and methodology.

[77] Karl Springer, "Warum Heimatbuch?" in *Der Bunzlauer Kreis an Bober und Queis. Ein Heimatbuch*, ed. Bundesheimatgruppe Bunzlau in Siegburg, second edition (Siegburg, 1964), 6-7.

[78] Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," 125-133. In her analysis of *Heimatbücher*, Jutta Faehndrich argues that "*Heimat* books of the prewar era were, one could say, *Festschriften* for what was still alive, while the expellee *Heimat* books were like obituaries." In this manner, she claims that *Heimatbücher* have little to say to the descendants of expellees, who are part of a very different, West German memory culture concerned with the Holocaust and other German crimes. "Papiere Erinnerungsorte: Die Heimatbücher schlesischer Vertriebener," in *Schlesische Erinnerungsorte: Gedächtnis und Identität einer mitteleuropäischen Region*, ed. Marek Czapliński and Tobias Weger, 323-342 (Görlitz: Neiße Verlag, 2005), 328.

[79] Wolfgang Kessler, "Orts- und Heimatgeschichte," in *Historische Schlesienforschung: Methoden, Themen und Perspektiven zwischen traditioneller Landesgeschichtsschreibung und moderner Kulturwissenschaft*, ed. Joachim Bahlke, 431-448 (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2005), 437.

[80] Frede, *"Unvergessene Heimat" Schlesien*, 11.

Heimat periodicals (*Heimatzeitungen*) constitute the most extensive source base for discussion of the former East. As successors to mainly religious circular letters in the pre-1949 period, *Heimatzeitungen* featured stories about the lost *Heimat*, short histories, pictures of "then and now," poetry, reports about *Heimat* events, deaths in the community, and political discussion. The political aspect varied widely from paper to paper. High-profile papers such as *Der Schlesier*, along with the dozens of *Heimat* papers distributed by right-leaning publishers, featured political, even racist materials, such as the mindless rumor in 1956 that "the Poles want to try to collect all gypsies and settle them above all in Lower Silesia."[81] However, though publishers dominated cover page content, intimate and largely apolitical reminiscences filled the interior, managed by smalltime editors from Silesia's towns and villages. Here, as well as in those *Heimat* papers that managed to remain under private control, a tight-knit communal feel arose, as when in 1952 Ferdinand Ludwig, formerly a book printer in Reichenbach [Dzierżoniów], started a *Heimat* paper for Reichenbach and the surrounding county subtitled an "unpolitical newspaper for the retention and deepening of union with the *Heimat*."[82] In a different case, a less "targeted" regional approach arose in a conservative Upper Silesian paper devoted to the big industrial cities of Beuthen [Bytom], Gleiwitz [Gliwice], and Tarnowitz [Tarnowskie Góry]; as early as the 1960s, the prevalence of obituaries, the tired recapitulation of old claims, and even the republication of old articles reveal that this paper was dying out even faster than the others.

Regardless of their editors' approaches, most *Heimat* papers proved conservative and even into the 1960s showed considerable nonchalance about the Nazi period. When the editor of

[81] "Von Grünberg bis Beuthen O/S 1956. Polen wollen Zigeuner in Niederschlesien ansiedeln. Beuthen soll zum Kulturzentrum werden. Bilder aus dem heutigen Schlesien," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 5, no. 20 (1956), 1.
[82] Ferdinand Ludwig, "Was wir wollen!" *Hohe Eule. Heimatblatt für Stadt und Kreis Reichenbach (Eulengebirge)* 1, no. 1 (August 1952): 1. Ludwig himself was strongly tied to revisionist political agendas.

the *Heimat* periodical for Lüben [Lubin] learned in 1957 that the town's county building had been disassembled so that its bricks could be used in construction projects, a prewar image of the fascist structure appeared beside the article; oblivious to a Nazi emblem dominating its severe tower, the nostalgic editor mourned for the modern, no-frills (fascist) design from 1936.[83] Far more often, the eternalized *Heimat of memory* in the papers conspicuously avoided the Nazi past. The November 1952 issue of the *Glogauer Heimatzeitung* concluded with ads selling old postcards of the undestroyed city and books about the *Heimat* by Paul Keller. It also asked whether, for the greater good of the whole community, anyone with specific histories or address books pertaining to Glogau would offer them as a donation for the *Heimat* archive.[84] Notwithstanding the blindness to the Nazi past and the political stance on many front pages, Albrecht Lehmann is inaccurate when he claims that "the political is always present" as each article's intended purpose, especially when covering the condition of the old *Heimat*.[85] Articles, especially those written by readers or contributors outside the leadership, often proved oblivious to political demands or even questioned them.

At this juncture, it is important to briefly explain three important strictures which help to determine the shape of my analysis: the geographic restriction to Silesia, the end date of 1970, and the exclusion of German refugees outside of the western zones, notably in the Soviet zone of occupation (later the DDR). All three decisions stem from the need to restrain what could otherwise become a diffuse tome of immense proportions. Silesia was selected for multiple reasons. First, it comprises a region which remained a coherent unit for analysis, because virtually all of it was transferred to Poland (by contrast Pomerania was divided between East Germany and Poland, and East Prussia was divided between Poland and the USSR). Second, it

[83] "Lüben: Kreishaus und Rathaus," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 10 (June 10, 1957), 176.
[84] *Glogauer Heimatzeitung* 1 (Nov. 1952).
[85] Lehmann, *Im Fremden ungewollt zuhaus*, 77.

was the most productive and heavily populated province lost from within the 1937 borders (though certain areas of Upper Silesia were already lost in 1921), making it the official narrative's highest priority for border revision. Third, Silesia's diverse heritage (Prussian, Austrian, Polish; a meld of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish; agricultural and industrial) and distinct regional identities (Upper versus Lower Silesia; Breslau; Upper Lusatia; the Duchy of Glatz) grant the opportunity to explore a rich medley of identities among expellees, further complicated when many Upper Silesians remained in the East longer than was possible elsewhere in Silesia.

Time parameters are explained by the very nature of this study: a cultural history seeking to answer the political question of why expellees consigned themselves to the loss of their *Heimat* in the politically charged years before Bonn had confirmed the border. For this reason, the year of the Treaty of Warsaw offers a logical end-point for focused study, even though expellees coped with loss for the rest of their lives, usually long after 1970. At the same time, though this early period involved a much larger population of expellees who had been adults during the traumas at the end of the war and who remembered this period more clearly, it has been neglected in scholarship, which has given more attention to expellee culture in more recent decades. The political question likewise compels the omission of how over one million Silesians in the DDR dealt with loss. Seldom did Silesians have a choice as to whether they ended up in the western or eastern zones, though the so-called *Umsiedler* (resettlers) in Saxony or Thuringia did demonstrate a much higher rate of migration to the West than the DDR natives did. Old kinship ties remained strong until circa the 1960s, as proven in *Heimat* paper reports wherein *Umsiedler* sought to learn of the fate of their neighbors and even managed to attend *Heimat* gatherings. A shared heritage of expulsion and mourning for the lost *Heimat* thus facilitated

inter-German ties.[86] Unfortunately, this study's emphasis on the West German context precludes an extended analysis of *Umsiedler* for the time being.

Broadly speaking, this study is divided into three parts. The first two chapters establish a contextual backdrop. Chapter one surveys German-Polish interchange in the province of Silesia before the expulsion took place. Despite the considerable scientific and cultural contributions that its Christian and Jewish inhabitants have given to Germany, Europe, and the world, Silesia remains a province practically unknown among European historians, let alone in wider circles. A borderland of extremes, Silesia shifted throughout its history between patterns of tolerance and conflict, culminating in Nazi racial violence and war which destroyed the province and scattered most of its population into destitute quarters throughout the four postwar German partition zones. The second chapter carries this narrative forward to survey the economic and political context after the founding of the West German Federal Republic in May 1949, by which time the expulsion was largely complete. The central players in this analysis are the self-proclaimed political leaders of the expellee movement, who received funding and support from the new state, and whose official narratives dominated publications about Silesia and the "German East" in general with the outspoken political objective of territorial restitution and German resettlement of the Lost East within the prewar borders of the *Reich*. However, though their claims exerted considerable political influence, they contrasted with the often apolitical perspectives of their constituents. Much as they sought to appropriate grassroots narratives about the Lost East for their own political uses, they despaired at general disinterest in return, and crippling disparities even arose within the leadership itself about how to interpret the meaning of core ideas such as a "right to the *Heimat*" and "return home."

[86] See for instance "Etwas dreißig Gebäude in Liebichau verschwunden. Mein erstes Wiedersehen mit meinem Heimatort," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 16, no. 11 (1967), 11.

Having painted a backdrop of Silesia's history and the postwar mainstream narratives about its loss, the stage will be set for the core of the analysis, the third through sixth chapters, which illustrate how and why West German Silesian expellees proceeded through the process of coping with their traumatic loss. As the third chapter reveals, this process started in 1945, when hundreds of thousands of Silesians remained for some months in Silesia immediately after the war, witnessed the dramatic transformation underway, and then upon migration to the West spread the word of how they had suffered in the *Heimat transformed*. These accounts compelled many expellees in the West to take the fundamental first step toward accepting that there was no going back to a place that had already changed beyond recognition.[87] Almost indifferent to the rancor from expellee leaders, the process of dealing with loss then progressed through private reflections on what the homeland had been (chapter 4), the discussion of such reflections at regular *Heimat* gatherings (chapter 5), and the experience of travel back across the Iron Curtain (chapter 6). Each of these venues brought expellees to higher thresholds in their awareness that the *Heimat* they remembered no longer existed in reality, making their professed "Right to the *Heimat*" ever more a right to the *Heimat* they held in their hearts. As they privately fashioned images of the lost homeland in their imaginations, expellees had to confront that they preferred residing there to returning to live in the changed world of Silesia. On the ground of "surrogate" *Heimat* spaces established in the West, expellees gathered together and engaged in more compressed memory-work: they formalized shared memories of lost spaces and, contrary to the wishes of political organizations, decided that it was better to find *Heimat* in their gatherings than to move back to a homeland that had lost its old "character" forever. Finally, though comparatively infrequent before 1970, "homesick tourism" through the former *Heimat* had the

[87] Andrew Demshuk, "'When you come back, the mountains will surely still be there!' How Silesian Expellees processed the loss of their Homeland in the early Postwar Years, 1945-1949," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropaforschung* 57, no. 2 (2008), 159-186.

greatest potential to accelerate the process of dealing with loss, both for the diverse travelers themselves and for their audiences back "home" in the West.[88] Reactions diverged according to a wide range of deeply personal histories and affiliations; but whether travelers empathized with Polish settlers or despised them, whether they praised Polish changes to the provinces or hated everything they saw, they left realizing that these regions had become part of Poland.

The last chapter and epilogue carry the story forward to show the long-term importance of the commemorative culture outlined in the dissertation's central chapters. Having followed the healing process of expellees over the preceding decades, it should be small wonder that, by the time that the Warsaw Treaty in 1970 recognized the Oder-Neisse border, expellees responded with profound resignation. Taking a new look at the treaty as an event in continuity with the previous, developing expectations of the expellees, it becomes clear that, far from an imposition on a stubborn population blinded by dreams of border revision, the treaty embodied the political expression of a profound division between the two images of *Heimat* which expellees had already come to recognize long before. Looking back in this manner over twenty-five years of expellee memory work, the behavior of one-fifth of West Germany's population finally makes sense.

[88] Exposure to physical spaces that had been *Heimat* awakened "indelible traces" of memory which, on a less drastic scale, Alon Confino already observes when West Germans traveled to Mediterranean vacation sites and interacted with memories from the Nazi past. See "Traveling as a Culture of Remembrance," 115.

CHAPTER 1

FROM COLONIZATION TO EXPULSION:

A HISTORY OF THE GERMANS IN SILESIA

Silesia has always been a strategic borderland. At the crossroads between Berlin, Prague, and Crakow, it was contested by the surrounding rulers and later claimed by German, Polish, and in some areas Czech nationalists. Because of this history, the German-speaking peoples who dominated most of Silesia from the high Middle Ages through the end of World War II often referred to the province as a "bridge," at times alluding to Silesia's role as a conveyer of German culture (too often read as superiority) and at times to Silesia's role as a bulwark against Slavic culture (too often read as inferior and threatening). In this manner, the region bore some similarity to the Polish eastern borderlands, or *kresy*, most especially the territory of Galicia with its capital Lwów [Ukrainian L'viv], which Polish leaders often interpreted as a bulwark against the East as well as a frontier civilized by Polish culture.[1]

This land of fertile fields, mountains, rivers, and smokestacks, by far the richest province which Germany lost after World War II, has historically been divided into two principal regions. By the advent of the twentieth century, **Upper Silesia** featured the second-largest industrial region in continental Europe after the *Ruhrgebiet* in western Germany. Further to the northwest, **Lower Silesia** was primarily agricultural, often referred to as the German bread basket. Though technically situated in Lower Silesia, the provincial capital Breslau [Wrocław] was an entity unto itself; far larger than any other city in the region, Prussia's second-greatest metropolis dominated the Silesian cultural, social, and political life and exerted significant influence in Berlin and

[1] For instance, the two regions' comparability has been noted in Norman Davies and Roger Moorhouse, *Microcosm: Portrait of a Central European City* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002), 74-75.

beyond. The Oder [Odra] river ran as an artery through the center of the province, connecting most of the major cities until it passed through Brandenburg and Pomerania to the Baltic Sea. While there were local particularities, the majority of the towns were laid out in a distinctive grid pattern that centered around a "ring" of gabled, multistory shops and residences, in the middle of which stood a town hall with its soaring octagonal tower and multi-tiered peak. Despite the massive shifts in population after World War II, which quickly transformed virtually all of Lower Silesia and much of Upper Silesia from German into Polish areas of settlement, the basic urban and geographic contours of Silesia remain much the same to this day.

Only recently have some of the leading German, Polish, and international scholars begun to find some consensus or at least conversation about the history of Silesia.[2] Reference will be made throughout the coming narrative to three very strong and competing national stories. The first two were established in the nineteenth century and then refined over time. German nationalists have portrayed Silesia as a threatened borderland, made prosperous through German settlement and efficiency. This was most famously depicted in the anti-Semitic and anti-Polish bestseller *Soll und Haben* (1855) by the nineteenth-century Breslau novelist Gustav Freytag.[3] In this vision of history, only Germans could "tame" the East: not only Silesia, but also Poland and beyond. Interwar German nationalist attention focused most heavily on Upper Silesia, which, by

[2] Recommended narratives about Silesian history include Joachim Bahlcke, ed., *Schlesien und Die Schlesier* (Munich: Langen Müller, 2000); Marek Czapliński and Tobias Weger, eds. *Schlesische Erinnerungsorte: Gedächtnis und Identität einer mitteleuropäischen Region* (Görlitz: Neiße Verlag, 2005); Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, ed., *Geschichte Schlesiens im 20. Jahrhundert in den Forschungen junger Nachwuchswissenschaftler aus Polen, Tschechen und Deutschland* (Wrocław: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1998); Gregor Thum, *Die Fremde Stadt: Breslau 1945* (Munich: Siedler, 2004); Wojciech Wrzesiński, ed., *Dolny Śląsk. Monografia Historzcyna* [Lower Silesia. An historical monograph] (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2006); Marek Zybura, *Niemcy w Polsce* [The Germans in Poland] (Wrocław Wydanictwo Dolnośląskie, 2001).

[3] For two excellent recent analyses of *Soll und Haben*'s influence as a "space of memory" in Silesian history, see Antje Johanning, "Schlesien als kolonisierte Landschaft in Gustav Freitags Roman 'Soll und Haben' (1855)," in *Schlesische Erinnerungsorte*, 94-121 and Hans-Joachim Hahn, "Antisemitismus und Antislawismus in Gustav Freytags 'Soll und Haben' (1855). Ein deutscher Erinnerungsort aus Schlesien," in ibid., 122-137. From 1855-1965, 1,222,000 copies of *Soll und Haben* were sold (126).

contrast with predominantly German Lower Silesia, was populated by Germans, Poles, and a large "Schlonzok" minority which tended to shift its national favor over time and spoke a Slavic dialect incorporating German elements. After 1945, German nationalists sought to emphasize the whole province's "eternal" Germanness, though it was now predominantly populated by Poles. Polish nationalist narratives about Silesia likewise focused on Upper Silesia before 1945, though they increasingly sought to portray the rest of the province as ancient Polish land as well. This "Piast" vision, tied to the region's rule by the medieval Polish Piast dynasty, first crystallized in the writings of the nineteenth-century Polish nationalist Roman Dmowski, and the rhetoric of Silesia as a "recovered territory" (*Ziemie Odzyskane*) became the dominant narrative in postwar Poland.

A more recent, third narrative is also problematic: Silesia as a chameleon whose national identity has changed every century or two. This idea, most prominent in an influential history of the Silesian capital by Norman Davies and Roger Moorhouse, downplays the fact that, for most of its history, the metropolis on the Oder enjoyed strong ties to the German cultural sphere, which were abruptly cut when the city's population was expelled and Breslau's name changed to Wrocław (this was its traditional Polish designation, much as Polish-speakers still refer to Leipzig as *Lipsk*, German-speakers call Warsaw *Warschau*, and English-speakers often spell Kraków as *Cracow*). Featuring each chapter in the city's history under a different name-heading, they portray Silesia's capital as a place where ethnicity changed on a regular basis (not to be confused with changing overlords).[4] In fact, as these authors reveal in the very evidence they cite, some variant of *Breslau* appeared in most of the city records after the Middle Ages. Similar to cities across western Germany, which also tended to experience variations in the spelling of

[4] Davies and Moorhouse, *Microcosm*.

their names over time, the city inhabitants also referred to their home as *Preßlau*, *Prassel*, and, even within the exile population today, as *Brassel*.

As an alternative to these approaches, this chapter builds on recent multinational scholarship to emphasize that, from the High Middle Ages until 1945, Silesia was most strongly tied to a German cultural milieu, built up by a population which possessed multivalent religious and ethnic identities: Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish; German, Polish, Czech, and additional regional orientations. Cultural mixing was a way of life: chief trade routes led through the province, most of the borders led toward Czech and Polish, rather than German-speaking regions, and while German-speaking populations dominated in Lower Silesia, the advent of modern nationalism made national identity a heavily contested and politicized question in Upper Silesia, where the industrial zone in particular was trilingual (German, Polish, Schlonzok). Taken from this perspective, Silesia appears as a dynamic province that experienced many different rulers but remained tied to the German-speaking world from the High Middle Ages onward. It was never "nationally German," though in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries most inhabitants outside of the Upper Silesian border areas had developed a German national identity, much as, after the events of 1945, the new inhabitants tended to have a Polish national identity. In this manner, the epochal shift in population during and after World War II simply cannot be compared to (much less equated with) the regime changes and steady movement of people (German, Jewish, and finally Polish migrants) during the previous centuries. In 1945, the former population was largely replaced by settlers with an entirely different cultural background.

This chapter will proceed through three historical phases: Silesia's history before the end of the First World War under Czech, Polish, Habsburg, and Prussian rule; Silesia's turbulent interwar and wartime history; and the story of flight, expulsion, and resettlement in the western

occupation zones of Germany before the founding of the Federal Republic in May 1949 (the chronological starting point for the next chapter). In order to keep this overview as brief as possible, many debates and details about Silesian history will be made available in the notes, which it is hoped will encourage further reading about the multifaceted history of this province, famously described by Goethe during his 1790 Silesian tour as a "tenfold interesting land."

1. Silesia before 1918

The "origins" of the Silesian population have been contested to such an extent that, in their obsessive drive to "prove" the region's national heritage, scholars have produced "German" and "Polish" histories that have seldom borne any resemblance to one another. Traditionally, both sides have pointed to the Zobten [Sobótka] mountain as the ancestral birthplace of the Silesian "tribe". On this lone rise amid the Lower Silesian plains, Silesia's Nazi *Gauleiter* and provincial administrator Josef Wagner encouraged young backpackers to make sure to visit the holy site where "the German Vandal, Burgundian, and Silesian [*Silingen*] tribes already settled centuries ago."[5] By contrast, Polish scholar Antoni Wrzosek encouraged visitors to Silesia in 1948 to visit Mount Sobótka, which was "in old times a centre of religious worship of heathen Slavs and many historical remains have been preserved in its vicinity."[6] Meanwhile, a scholar favoring the multicultural approach has decided that the region was a cultural melting pot of corded Warers, Jordanovians, Uneticians, Lusatians, Bylians, various unspecified Celts,

[5] Josef Wagner, Introduction, *Von Jugendherberge zu Jugendherberge durch Schlesien*, ed. Reichsverband für Deutsche Jugendherbergen, DJH Wanderführer Band 3 (Berlin: Wilhelm Limpert Verlag, 1936), 6. For examples of how this permeated postwar narratives, see the photo of Zobten with a caption about ancient Germanic Silingen in Harald Busch, *Schlesien* (Frankfurt am Main: Umschau Verlag, 1956), 50; see comparable discussions in Edmund Glaeser, *Heimat Schlesien, 63 Fotos*, third ed. (Munich: Gräfe und Unzer Verlag, 1951), 7. For a recent discussion of national debates about Silesia's name, see Stanisław Rosik, "Najdawniejsze dzieje Dolnego Śląska (do roku 1138)" [The earliest history of Lower Silesia (to 1138)], in *Dolny Śląsk*, 15-54, here 16.

[6] Antoni Wrzosek, "Tourism and health resorts in Lower Silesia," in *Lower Silesia and the City of Wrocław*, ed. Silesian Institute Branch in Wrocław (Wrocław: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu i Politechniki we Wrocławiu, 1948), 34.

Venedians, Przeworskers, Scythians, Sarmatians, Marcomanni, Silingae and Asdingi (Vandals), Goths, Huns, Gepids, Heruli and various Slavs.[7] All bickering about national origins aside, the mountain retained great significance. On a clear day, it can be seen from the capital Wratislavia (the Latin root for both *Breslau* and *Wrocław*), which was founded as a Bohemian outpost by the Czech king Vratislav I in the early tenth century. His son Boleslav I founded the town of Bolezslawcz (the root for both *Bunzlau* and *Bołesławiec*), and by the end of the century entered into conflict with the Piast dukes of Poland, Mieszko I and his son Bołesław I. After over a century of war, the Polish dukes annexed most of Silesia.[8]

The Mongol invasion of 1241 signaled a turning point in Silesia's history. In a pitched battle at Wahlstatt [Legnickie Pole] near Liegnitz [Legnica], the Mongols annihilated a German- and Polish-speaking army, then withdrew back to the East. Duke Henry II, traditionally claimed by German scholars to have been largely Germanized (having married St. Hedwig from Bavaria) and by Poles to have been Polish (as a Piast prince), perished in the battle, leaving no adult heir. From this time onward, the Piast dynasty was weakened by the continual division of the land among heirs, a phenomenon that also splintered Silesia into many petty duchies, which started to ally with the nearby Holy Roman Empire. Ironically, long after the dynasty had died out in Poland proper and Polish influence in Silesia had waned, the province remained home to the last surviving, by then Germanized Piast dukes, who ruled from several duchies (in Liegnitz as late as 1675).[9]

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[7] Davies and Moorhouse, *Microcosm*, 49.
[8] Joachim Bahlcke, "Die Geschichte der schlesischen Territorien von den Anfängen bis zum Ausbruch des Zweiten Weltkrieges, " in *Schlesien und die Schlesier*, 13-155, here 22.
[9] Józef Nyka, *Kleiner Touristenführer durch Südpolen und Szczecin*, trans. Anna Jankowska (Warszawa: Verlag 'Sport i Turystyka,' 1967), 31.

At the same time that Polish rule grew weak and divided, German settlers started to shape the culture and appearance of the region. As Joachim Bahlcke notes, "nationalist viewpoints or ethnic belonging generally played no recognizable role among the settlers; around the year 1200, [forest] clearing, the development of the land and settlement were goals aimed at improving the economic bases throughout Europe."[10] The founding of Europe's largest Cistercian monastery Leubus [Lubiąż] on the Oder river in 1175, at the behest of the Piast duke Bołesław I, provided the first center for coming colonization efforts, which followed over the coming decades when the rulers of Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary invited Germans from Thuringia, Saxony, Bavaria, Swabia, and the Upper Palatinate to establish farming areas, mining, and cities on their lands.[11] This process was hastened after the Mongol attacks devastated most of the region. At the request of local Piast lords, German settlers founded over 130 cities between 1210 and 1300, and they brought with them the Magdeburg code of law, which facilitated municipal privileges across Central Europe and established a unified legal apparatus in a time of great division. German knights migrated to Silesia and founded dynasties which influenced the region until 1945, German settlers dominated the cities, and the earlier Polish population melded with the settlers on the land. As a result, though early fourteenth-century records mention "Germans and Poles" in Lower Silesia, the German language came to dominate the region in a relatively short time.

[10] Bahlcke, "Die Geschichte der schlesischen Territorien. . .," 29.
[11] Klaus Zernack, "The Middle Ages," in *Germans and the East*, ed. Charles Ingrao and Franz Szabo, 9-16 (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008), 10. Zernack rightly differentiates the "racist delusions of National Socialism" with the more peaceful, "developmental process" of medieval settlement. Unfortunately, by ignoring the medieval cultural achievements in Eastern Europe (not least through such centers as Byzantium and Kiev), he argues that all countries outside of the West "were in need of colonization. Their historical need to catch up brought them into the dynamic of a universal spreading of culture. What the Western European countries in the land of the former Roman Empire had gained through cultural continuity, the eastern regions of Europe attained through the process of colonization and development. Thus European history after antiquity is characterized by a colonization process from west to east" (10). In fact, Eastern peoples were not so "backward" that they could not develop their lands on their own. For a useful corrective, see Maria Todorova, "The Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality, and the Study of Eastern European Nationalism," *Slavic Review* 64, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 140-164.

The eastward settlement drive only halted by the fifteenth century, when the Black Death devastated previously overpopulated regions in the West.[12] Meanwhile, the Bohemian claim to Silesia, already recognized by Polish rulers in 1138, was ratified in the Treaty of Trentschin in 1335, when the Polish King Casimir III surrendered all claims Silesia, establishing a border which remained stable until after World War I.[13]

Bohemia, along with Silesia, became a crown possession of the German Habsburgs in 1526. This roughly coincided with the onset of the Reformation in Central Europe, and much of Silesia became Protestant before the Counterreformation swung the pendulum back again with great vigor at the end of the century. Religious conflict heightened during the Thirty Years' War and resulted in the decimation of the province and much of its population. Some measure of tolerance appeared in the aftermath of so much destruction– though the Habsburgs decreed that most of the province was to be Catholic, Protestant communities in Schweidnitz [Świdnica], Jauer [Jawor], and Glogau [Głogów] were permitted to construct the so-called "peace churches" (*Friedenskirchen*), so long as they were outside the city walls and not built from stone. Though the church in Glogau sank into ashes with the rest of the city in 1945, the churches in Schweidnitz and Jauer remain to this day as half-timbered architectural marvels; their Renaissance-style interiors are dominated with many levels of galleries, where Protestants from distant regions once gathered together to celebrate services (the Schweidnitz *Friedenskirche* could accommodate 7,500 worshipers). The late Habsburg period also witnessed Silesia's ascent to become the most economically important part of the crown lands (due to the weaving

[12] Marek L. Wójcik, "Dolny Śląsk w latach 1138-1326" [Lower Silesia in the years 1138-1326], in *Dolny Śląsk*, 55-104, here 75-77, 82-84; Bahlcke, "Die Geschichte der schlesischen Territorien. . .," 29; Franz Szabo and Charles Ingrao, "Introduction," in *Germans and the East*, 4.
[13] In return, the Bohemian king renounced claims to the Polish throne. Casimir's successors reaffirmed the Trentschin agreement. Bahlcke, "Die Geschichte der schlesischen Territorien. . .," 26.

industry) as well as an important center of culture and commerce. As a crossroad on two major early-modern trade routes, Breslau reached its peak of pre-modern prosperity in the sixteenth century, and even before its economic fortunes started to improve again during the nineteenth century, it remained the largest city in Prussia east of Berlin.

Prussia's entry into Silesia marked the rise of the Hohenzollern dynasty to the rank of European power and the entry of the province into the orbit of Berlin until 1945. Disregarding his father's faithfulness to the Holy Roman Empire and ignoring the Pragmatic Sanction which identified Maria Theresa as the new Habsburg monarch, Frederick the Great invaded Silesia on the basis of flimsy dynastic claims shortly after taking the throne. This set off the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) and later the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). Peace conferences in 1742, 1745, and 1763 confirmed Prussian possession of most of Silesia, and after terrible devastation (which resulted in a 20% decline in the Silesian population), Silesia entered into a period of relative peace punctuated by what has been referred to as "Frederick's tolerance". Even before 1756, Protestants constructed over two hundred simple wood-frame churches across parts of Lower Silesia, leaving most Catholic centers of worship intact; indeed, the new Catholic cathedral in Berlin was consecrated for St. Hedwig, Silesia's patron saint, and Catholic theologians in Breslau themselves spoke of the new regime's "tolerance" to their religious beliefs.[14] Frederick the Great himself kept aloof from the demands of both sides, so that over the next two centuries, Silesia as a whole became bi-confessional, generally more Protestant in the direction of Berlin and more Catholic in the direction of Kraków. Most towns had at least two steeples, Protestant and Catholic, while Breslau, in the middle, became a city of Protestant and Catholic religious life, a meld of both cultures.

[14] Norbert Conrads, "Silesiographia oder Landesbeschreibung," in *Schlesien*, ed. Idem., 13-36 (Berlin: Siedler, 1994), 26.

A third culture in Silesia also benefited greatly from the increase in tolerance: the province's historic and extremely influential Jewish population. The first Jewish communities in Silesia formed at the same time as those of their German neighbors, from the early 12th through the mid-14th centuries, after which time the Jewish population in nearly every Silesian city was expelled and persecuted until the mid-17th century. Only in Glogau and Zülz [Biała] did local princes allow the Jewish communities to remain, such that by the 18th century Jews made up half of Zülz's population.[15] An influx of Jews in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from further east, notably from Prussia's Posen [Poznań] province, significantly increased Silesia's Jewish component, which started to acculturate after Jewish emancipation in 1812. To illustrate the general trend: in 1803 there were 11,500 Jews in Silesia, 28,606 in 1843, and 52,682 in 1880).[16] As Till van Rahden demonstrates, by the time Silesia was incorporated into the new German Empire (1871-1918), Jews were able to involve themselves extensively in Breslau's bourgeois society, exercising significant political influence on the liberal policies of the city government. Contrasting the classic view that anti-Semitism was endemic in German society, he illustrates that only a minority (albeit a rising minority) of Germans in Breslau viewed Jews as an undesirable force.[17] Anti-Semitism (alongside nationalist hatreds) became particularly severe with the end of the First World War, steadily worsening amid rising economic, social, and political tensions throughout the Weimar period until the Nazi seizure of power and the unparalleled disaster which followed.

An economic draw also spurred on migration into Silesia in the eighteenth century. While Europe's growing demand for textiles made the traditional weaving industry even more

[15] Leszek Ziątkowski, "Erinnerungsorte der Juden in Schlesien," in *Schlesische Erinnerungsorte*, 78-93. Due to Nazi persecution, the Jewish population in Silesia had dropped to 15,840 in 1939.
[16] Bahlcke, "Die Geschichte der schlesischen Territorien. . .," 93.
[17] Till van Rahden, *Juden und andere Breslauer*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2000), 16, 32.

important than before, the exploitation of Upper Silesia's significant deposits of black coal initiated the first stages in a transformation of what had previously been the most remote, depopulated part of the province. Between 1770 and 1774, Frederick the Great established thirty-three colonies of German workmen to extract the valuable raw materials in Upper Silesia; as the nineteenth century drew on, villages and forests morphed into an interconnected belt of industrial cities. [18] German industrialists came to dominate most of the Upper Silesian firms, while Poles migrated especially from the Prussian partition areas and came to constitute a significant portion of the worker population. As a result, the emerging nationalist movements in Upper Silesia became tangled up in class and economic questions.

As already noted, Silesia left the orbit of the Polish state in the High Middle Ages; it was not part of the Partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, 1795). By 1795, Prussia's ill-gotten gains included most of present-day Poland, including Warsaw itself, though much of the booty was lost to Russia at the Congress of Vienna (1815), leaving Prussia with the ethnically mixed areas of West Prussia (lost by the Teutonic Knights in the 15th century to the Polish crown, known after 1919 as the Polish Corridor) and Posen. Nineteenth-century Upper Silesia touched the point where the three partitioning empires of Russia, Austria, and Prussia met. During the Napoleonic Wars, Breslau itself took on "national" importance when King Frederick William III fled there to summon his *Volk* in 1813 to rise against the French invaders.[19] Patriotism steadily turned to nationalism, culminating in the cultural struggle (*Kulturkampf*) directed by the Bismarck regime against Catholicism and the Polish minority, both of which were strong in Upper Silesia. For all

[18] Elizabeth Wiskemann, *Germany's Eastern Neighbors: Problems Relating to the Oder-Neisse Line and the Czech Frontier Regions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 24.
[19] See the opening text of the March 20, 1813 address "to my people" in the *Schlesische privilegierte Zeitung* in Teresa Kulak, "Dolny Śląsk w Rzeszy Niemieckiej (1871-1918)" [Lower Silesia in the German Reich (1871-1918)], in *Dolny Śląsk*, 425-506, here 479.

of this nationalist foment, the age-old West-to-East flow of German migration started to shift direction after 1871. As a general rule, most of Europe experienced a rural-to-urban population migration in the late nineteenth century. In Silesia this coincided with a move to the West, often due to the lure of higher wages, at the same time that fresh workers, many of them Polish, moved in from Posen. By 1910, Polish-speakers only formed 2.8% of Breslau's population,[20] but in Upper Silesia they were becoming a force to be reckoned with.

While Lower Silesia and Upper Silesia to the right of the Oder remained largely German, the rise of nationalism provoked increasing German-Polish strife in the Upper Silesian industrial zone (and West Prussia/Posen as well). By 1914, the Polish national movement in Upper Silesia, heavily supported from Posen, had 120 core activists as well as 500 organizations with 45,000 members, while Polish-language reading rooms attracted over 85,000 patrons between 1911 and 1912.[21] It must be borne in mind that Polish nationalism was not as popular as the socialist or Catholic movements. Even when Upper Silesians elected nationalist Wojciech Korfanty to the *Reichstag* on the Polish Party ticket in 1903, he was forced to open dialogue with the Catholic Center Party and prepare a socialist program; what is more, in the following 1907 election, the SPD won many more seats (the Poles retained only five of the twelve they had won), and Korfanty could only keep power by taking a seat for Posen. As the international observer Sarah Wambaugh later noted, votes cast for the Polish Party were "only 30 per cent of the total vote, a figure far below that which the language statistics would lead one to expect on the assumption

[20] Kulak, "Dolny Śląsk w Rzeszy Niemieckiej (1871-1918)," 439-444.
[21] Tomasz Kamusella, "Language and the Construction of Identity in Upper Silesia during the Long Nineteenth Century," in *Die Grenzen der Nationen: Identitätenwandel in Oberschlesien in der Neuzeit*, ed. Kai Struve and Philipp Ther, 45-70 (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2002), 61.

that language and political feeling must coincide."[22] Such findings recently prompted James Bjork to pose that identity in the region was "neither German nor Pole," but rather Catholic and regional, centered around the local Schlonzok dialect.[23] Some Upper Silesians had recently migrated from Poland; others retained strong ties to Germany; but in general most Upper Silesians just weren't sure of their national identity.

2. Silesia from 1918 to January 1945

Class strife in Upper Silesia intensified during World War I as working conditions, already the worst in Germany, declined, and industrialists threatened to send troublesome workers to the Front. As the privations of war increased in 1917, the region experienced fifty-one stoppages involving over 34,000 workers.[24] Because the region produced 23% of the *Reich*'s coal, 57% of its lead ore, and 72% of its zinc, any disruption proved detrimental to the German war effort. This was just a foretaste, however, of the turmoil Upper Silesia experienced after the war, when nationalist agendas trumped even the question of class. After 1918, Silesia's historic tolerance fell far into the background. Conflict bred by nationalist hatred came to dominate the region; it worsened over time, then climaxed with the catastrophe of Nazism and its aftermath.

Silesia's future was closely bound to the restoration of an independent Poland. By the late nineteenth century, two visions had emerged for the borders of a Polish state. Backed by

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[22] Sarah Wambaugh, *Plebiscites since the World War, with a Collection of Official Documents* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1933), I:212. Bernard Linek more recently observes that "the political successes of the Polish movement should not hide the fact that culturally the German political nation continued to play a crucial role." See "Recent Debates on the Fate of the German Population in Upper Silesia, 1945-1950" *German History* 22, no. 3 (2004): 382.

[23] The booming scholarly field devoted to Upper Silesian national identity has yielded a trove of studies. A good place to start is the edited volume by Struve and Ther, *Die Grenzen der Nationen* (2002), as well as James Bjork's new monograph on Catholicism's role as a non-national alternative for identity in Upper Silesia, *Neither German nor Pole. Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

[24] Terry Hunt Tooley, "Fighting without arms: the defense of German interests in Schleswig, East and West Prussia and Upper Silesia, 1918-1921," Ph.D. diss. (University of Virginia, 1986), 33.

prominent Poles in the Russian and Austrian partitions, Józef Piłsudski advocated the creation of a multiethnic Poland with sweeping eastern domains on the model of the early-modern Jagełłonian Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Drawing on anti-German sentiment especially in the Prussian partition, Roman Dmowski demanded the creation of an ethnic Polish nation-state within what he imagined to have been the bounds of the medieval Piast kingdom, including all of East Prussia and most of Silesia (regions that had been almost entirely outside of the Commonwealth). Already in 1912, Wacław Nałkowski went so far as to recommend a border on the Oder and Neisse rivers, the border drawn after World War II.[25] As president of the exiled Polish National Committee Dmowski found an ear for his cause in Washington, where President Wilson naively believed his assertion that Upper Silesia was an ancient Polish province with a tiny German minority.[26] Armed with this support at the Paris Peace Conference, Dmowski, Korfanty, and other Polish nationalists placed the strategic industrial region at the center of their extensive territorial demands, going so far as to claim that Upper Silesia was 90% Polish (though as will be shown many felt closer ties to a regional, Schlonzok or a German identity). Ignorance and political interest prevailed among the Allied victors. As a British observer reflected after one of Korfanty's speeches, "very few of those concerned with the arrangement of the Treaty and with its ratification in the British Parliament, possessed any idea even as to the geographical

[25] Grzegorz Strauchold, "Die Wiedergegewonnen Gebiete und das 'Piastische Schlesien'," in *Schlesische Erinnerungsorte*, 306-322, here 306.

[26] Dmowski argued to Wilson that: "There are approximately four million Poles in the United States. If our German frontiers are not established according to our wishes; if we fail to obtain not only Posnania but also Silesia, our Eastern provinces and Danzig, none of these Poles will understand how this came to be– and they are people who place much trust in you." Quoted in René Martel, *The Eastern Frontier of Germany* (London: Williams and Norgate Ltd., 1930), 16. Headlam Morley in the British Foreign Office reflected after 1921 that Wilson had persisted in believing that the population was Polish, while Lloyd George's impartiality on the matter appeared inconsistent, because he too favored Polish claims. Memorandum by Mr. Headlam-Morley respecting Upper Silesia at the Peace Conference, Foreign Office, April 6, 1921, in *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, ed. W.N. Medlicott et. al., 1st series, vol. 16 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 27.

position of this territory, apart from its supreme economic significance in the European polity."[27] Meanwhile, German representatives in Paris argued that there were "no national Polish traditions or memories in Upper Silesia," nor was the region "inhabited by an indisputably Polish population." The local dialect was not said to contradict "the consciousness of German nationality," and in their view German social legislation had given Upper Silesians higher living conditions and greater protection.[28]

Political, legal, historical, and above all economic arguments continued unabated throughout the months leading up to the Upper Silesian plebiscite, which the British, French, and Italians administered on March 20, 1921. Ballots allowed a voter to select either *German* or *Polish* for a nationality. Each voter had to be at least twenty years old and must either have been born in the area or lived there since January 1904.[29] The results tallied 707,605 (59.6%) for Germany, and 479,359 (40.3%) for Poland.[30] Polish votes prevailed in the southeast, while German votes prevailed in the northwest; the industrial region itself was an inextricable meld of both German and Polish votes. Naturally, each side blamed the other of foul play, and the calm that prevailed on voting day was short-lived. With French help, thousands of armed Polish patriots flooded over the border to instigate the Third Uprising in Upper Silesia, which was alleged for years after to have been an indigenous movement (two smaller, Polish-led

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[27] Graham Seton Hutchison, *Silesia Revisited, 1929: an Examination of the Problems arising from the Plebiscite and the Partition and the Relation between the British Coal Problem and Silesia* (London: Simpkin Marshall, 1929), 11.
[28] Quoted in David Hunter Miller, *Opinion on the question of Upper Silesia written at the request of the government of Germany, and transmitted by the German government to the League of Nations, to the governments of Great Britain, France and Italy and to the Vatican* (New York: Appeal Printing Company, 1921), 6-7.
[29] Peace Treaty of Paris, Part III, Section VIII, Annex III, Article 1, in Charles T. Firich, *Polish Character of Upper Silesia According to official Prussian Sources and the Results of the Plebiscite*, trans. Waldemar A. Przedpelski, forward W. Trampczynski, (Warsaw: Central Polish Plebiscite Committee, May 1921), 33.
[30] 81% had been born and were resident in the plebiscite area, 16% had been born in Upper Silesia and come to vote from their residences in western Germany, and 3.5% qualified by having been resident since 1904. Sarah Wambaugh, *Plebiscites since the World War, with a Collection of Official Documents* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1933), I:250. A *London Times* correspondent in Oppeln witnessed an extremely good turnout at the polls (close to 100% in many communities), proving "that the true feelings of the province have been fearlessly expressed." See "A German Success: Silesia Vote Results," in *London Times* (March 22, 1921): 10.

disturbances had already transpired before the vote). German *Freikorps*, most of them war veterans, sped down to fight them, supposedly in the name of the native German population. Death and destruction reigned over everyone in the region, regardless of how they had voted– indeed, as already mentioned, most Upper Silesians sustained a nationally indifferent attitude and were swayed above all by economic rationale. This explains why many who had identified themselves as "Polish-speaking" in a 1910 census voted to remain "German" in 1921.[31] The violence of the Third Rising culminated in a pitched battle at St. Anne's Mountain, an historic holy site in Upper Silesia, where the Polish "insurgents" were defeated, but not after significant gains. The League of Nations responded by partitioning Upper Silesia directly through the heart of the industrial region, splitting families and communities, and separating refineries from their corresponding mines. Both sides protested the results.

The events of 1921 loomed large in postwar Germany and Poland. Rhetoric about Upper Silesia during the plebiscite fostered myths in the new German *Ostforschung* (scholarship about the East), which predominated in eastern universities such as Breslau and Königsberg [Kaliningrad]. Right after the plebiscite, the Breslau geographer Wilhelm Volz composed historic German "settlement maps" and alleged that in fact the whole Upper Silesian population was really German: "1/3 of the people of Upper Silesia are German and speak German, 1/3 are German and speak Polish, 1/3 are *not yet German* and speak Polish."[32] Similar claims about the eastern borderlands saturated interwar *Ostforschung* scholarship, continued during the Nazi era, and persisted even in postwar scholarship: Silesia was alleged to be a "German bulwark" in the

[31] As noted by Philipp Ther and Tomasz Kamusella, when Polish or German nationalists "were confronted with people whose collective consciousness was not monistic but multiple, and as such contradicted the shibboleths of primordial nationalism, small wonder that they failed to understand the situation, and came to regard Upper Silesians with a degree of hostility and suspicion." See "Silesia and the Dawning of the Modern Era," in *The Politics of Ethnicity in Central Europe*, ed. Karl Cordell, 66-91 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 88.

[32] Italics added, Wilhelm Volz, *The National Structure of the Population of Upper Silesia in Three Maps* (Breslau: M. and H. Marcus, 1921), 10.

East, forced to reinforce its German character against encirclement by Slavic neighbors.[33] The German *Freikorps* also sought to sustain and mold memories of German victimhood and Polish aggression from 1921, while a sense of national powerlessness after the events in Upper Silesia contributed to the above-average support which Silesians gave to the Nazi party at the polls.[34] Unfortunately, aggressive anti-German actions in interwar Poland did little to disarm this trend.

Interwar Poland in general had a terrible record with the German, Jewish, Ukrainian, and other minorities which made up roughly one-third of its population. Parallel to German East-research, Polish West-research at institutes such as the Silesian Institute in Katowice [formerly Kattowitz] and the Baltic Institute in Toruń [formerly Thorn] spared no opportunity to use 1921 as a reference point in asserting Polish claims to the new territories. Meanwhile, the Polish government committed itself to the creation a homogenous nation-state, which demanded that Upper Silesians identified as German be given every incentive to leave.[35] Rightwing groups often tied to Dmowski's National Democrat movement, organizations that identified themselves with the Upper Silesian "insurgent" tradition, and even government ministers did what they could to harass the remaining German minority. In violation of the Geneva Convention, Polish became mandatory, German businesses were nationalized, German property seized, Germans who held political or economic roles were removed and replaced with Poles, and a 1925 Polish

[33] Conrads, "Silesiographia oder Landesbeschreibung," in *Schlesien*, 27-28. For more on Nazi continuities, see discussions in chapter two. For a postwar example, Ernst Birke's anti-Communism maps depicting German medieval settlement patterns strongly emulate those drawn by Volz thirty-five years before. "Der deutsche Osten und Ostmitteleuropa im Geschichtsunterricht," in *Ostdeutschland im Unterricht: Vorträge Gehalten auf der ersten Ostdeutschen Unterrichtstagung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen im St. Georgsheim in Süsseldorf-Hassels Juli 1955*, ed. Arbeits- und Sozialminister des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 6-30, *Der Wegweiser*: Zeitschrift für das Vertriebenenwesen 10 (Troisdorf/Rheinland: Wegweiserverlag, 1956), 20-21.

[34] Silesians also supported Hitler due to economic factors– unemployment sank from 484,000 in 1933 to 154,000 in 1935. Joachim Bahlcke, "Die Geschichte der schlesischen Territorien. . .," 140.

[35] Peter Chmiel, "Neue Forschungen zur Geschichte Oberschlesiens im 20. Jahrhundert," in *Silesiographia: Stand und Perspektiven der historischen Schlesienforschung*, ed. Carsten Rabe and Matthias Weber, 313-328 (Würzburg: Verein für Geschichte Schlesiens, 1998), 321-2.

land reform expropriated many Germans in favor of Poles. The former Plebiscite Commission officer Graham Seton Hutchison observed in 1929 that "the object of this systematic terrorism is, naturally, to exterminate the German Minority as far as possible, whether by means of emigration or by means of absorption."[36] Fearing that the region would lose its skilled workers, Korfanty himself tried to intervene in a January 1929 session of the Upper Silesian parliament to oppose a move to dismiss German engineers on the grounds that it would hurt the region economically.[37] The persecution only increased. In October/November 1930 alone, several hundred cases of mistreatment transpired; during a specially designated "Anti-German Week," posters portrayed a fat, helmeted, beer-bottle-toting Prussian held back by a slim young Polish defender, who was encouraged to "repeat the scenes at Grunwald!"[38]

One result of this persecution was the emigration of Upper Silesians from Poland into the part of Upper Silesia that remained in Germany. In 1921, 70.1% of Polish Upper Silesia's 1,125,528 residents had voted Polish, while 29.9% had voted German; roughly one hundred thousand of them (about one quarter) fled to Germany over the months that followed.[39] This process was temporarily ameliorated by the local influence of the Catholic church, which sought to provide an ideological framework and social space that allowed for national ambiguity. As James Bjork has shown, this meant that German emigration from Upper Silesia was less severe than in Poznania and West Prussia, where roughly seventy percent of the German population left.

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[36] Hutchison, *Silesia Revisited, 1929*, 42-3. A long list of German grievances about violations of the Geneva Convention can be found in Deutscher Volksbund für Polnisch-Schlesien, *Petition of the "Deutsche Volksbund" for Polish Silesia to the Council of the League of Nations concerning Infringements of Articles 75 and 83 of the Geneva Convention* (Katowice, 1931); see also J.P. Warderholt, *Das Minderheitenrecht in Oberschlesien. Die Stellungnahmen des Präsidenten der gemischten Kommission in der Zeit von Juni 1922 bis Juni 1929*, Gemischte Kommission für Oberschlesien. (Berlin: Brückenverlag, 1930).

[37] H. Staehler, *The Dismemberment of Upper Silesia* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1929), 14.

[38] Grunwald was the site of a fifteenth-century battle in which Poland defeated the Teutonic Knights. Zybura, *Niemcy w Polsce*, 154-158.

[39] Bahlcke, "Die Geschichte der schlesischen Territorien. . .," 149.

Despite the movement of one hundred priests from each side, most remained at their posts, so that at least one hundred priests in each partition retained uncertain national inclinations, while fifty in Polish Silesia considered themselves German. Unfortunately, Polish patriotic groups eventually forced many of them to leave anyway.[40] The small Jewish minority in Polish Upper Silesia, largely German in orientation even during the plebiscite, also fled persecution by emigrating to Germany (which was less prone to anti-Semitic attacks until the rise of Nazism).[41] Persecution also prompted efforts to find outside help in the international community and Germany: some Germans in Polish Silesia sent their grievances to the League of Nations, while many eventually became avid supporters of the Nazi movement. Signs of German enthusiasm for Hitler became a self-fulfilling prophecy for many Poles, who had long presumed that the German minority posed a security threat, and they responded by burning German newspapers, boycotting German shops, attacking Germans, and scrawling the word *Jew* on many German businesses.[42] The police seldom intervened, and perpetrators were generally let off with light sentences, if they were punished at all.[43] This worsened in 1938, when in the midst of anti-German campaigns the Polish army also took part in the partition of Czechoslovakia, annexing the old Austrian-Silesian Teschen/Cieszyn/Těšín region; in 1939, on the eve of the Nazi invasion itself, attacks on Germans continued to intensify.

With little difficulty, Nazi propaganda latched onto Polish attacks against Upper Silesian Germans as "proof" that Poland was itself a threat to *all* Germans. After months of inflating the

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[40] James Bjork, "The National State and the Territorial Parish in Interwar Poland," in *Germans and the East*, 241-256, here 243-245. Official German figures recorded that 592,000 people had left Posen and West Prussia by the end of 1921. Richard Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles. The Germans in Western Poland, 1918-1939* (Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 32.
[41] Ibid., 34.
[42] In part, this was a legacy of Roman Dmowski's xenophobia and particular hatred for Jews. He had regularly used Jews as scapegoats, denounced enemies as *Jews*, and claimed that Polish interests suffered due to a Jewish-German conspiracy. His movement's anti-Semitism translated into slurs against non-Jews as well, including Germans.
[43] Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles*, 183.

evidence, the Nazis staged atrocities against German targets in the border regions, most notably in an attack by SS agents in Polish uniforms on the Gleiwitz [Gliwice] radio station, and then used this as justification for the September 1, 1939 invasion as a "defensive" action. With the brutal German assault on Poland still underway, Nazi propaganda graphically exaggerated Polish attacks on Germans, notably the massacre in Bromberg/Bydgoszcz,[44] Nazi film twisted these stories with virulent racist imagery, as in the 1941 film *Heimkehr*, and the People's Union for Germandom Abroad (*Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland*) justified German aggression on the basis of the German minority's past victimhood in Polish Upper Silesia:

> With pride we look on our comrades, who have defended, built up, and strengthened the front of the nation [*Volkstum*] against each Polish terror. In October [1939], Poles fought a war of annihilation against Germandom, and many *Freikorps* members gave their lives. . . . Comrades in Silesia are now to build up the industry and towns of the realm as a sturdy pillar in the East of the Great German *Reich*.[45]

In the name of past German suffering, the Nazis sought to justify the creation of a racial hierarchy which dehumanized the Polish population and sought the elimination of Jews. But before the German minority in Poland had experienced the persecution of the mid- and late-1930s, Nazi racial aggression was already underway in the German portions of Silesia.

Before the Nazi seizure of power, German Upper Silesia was far less prone to violence against minorities than its eastern neighbor. Matters started to change soon after. Already in 1933, the SS established Silesia's first concentration camp in a southern suburb of Breslau, followed by the infamous Groß Rosen camp (established in 1940 near Schweidnitz), where the Nazis murdered an estimated 100,000 Jews, Poles, and political prisoners. The Nazi president of Lower Silesia, Josef Wagner, sought to Germanize all local names with Slavic origins, cleared

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[44] Doris Bergen argues that Nazi propaganda exaggerated German "victims" in ways that emulated the manner in which German invaders treated Poles and Jews. "Instrumentalization of *Volksdeutschen* in German Propaganda in 1939: Replacing/Erasing Poles, Jews, and Other Victims," *German Studies Review* 31, no. 3 (2008): 447-470.
[45] Georg Bartosch, *OS wird frei! Tatsachenbericht aus den August- und Septembertagen 1939* (Berlin: Verlag Grenze und Ausland, 1940), 7.

Polish inscriptions from shops, monuments, and institutions, and even removed any appearance of the word *Piast*. Only in the plebiscite region of Upper Silesia were the Nazis barred from action; until the lapse of the Geneva Convention in 1937, the Jewish and Polish populations were at least moderately protected. However, by the time of *Kristallnacht* on the night of November 9/10, 1938, the Nazis demolished the synagogues whose majestic domes had so defined the Upper and Lower Silesian skyline since the nineteenth century, seven thousand Jewish shops were wrecked, Jewish apartments were plundered, Jewish schools razed, and countless Jews were murdered.[46] In Lower Silesia, a reporter from the *Schlesische Zeitung* took the only surviving picture of the monumental New Synagogue's collapsing cupola, under which one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe had once prayed.[47] As a Jewish survivor from Breslau, Günther Anders, reflected while walking the streets of Wrocław in 1966, "The fire that consumed Breslau in 1945 was kindled in 1938 on *Kristallnacht*."[48] During the war, a few Silesians actively opposed Nazism, most notably the circle surrounding Helmuth James von Moltke, which met in Kreisau [Krzyżowa] and plotted the 1944 attempt on Hitler's life; however most sought to ignore the atrocities around them. Christopher Browning records that, in January 1943, the "Ordinary Men" of German police battalion 101 crossed from Upper Silesia to the nearby Polish village of Niezdów, murdered the twelve to fifteen Polish old people who had not been able to flee, and then burned the village to the ground, all because a German policeman had been wounded by a local Pole. After this "reprisal," they returned to the movie theater in Oppeln

[46] Bahlcke, "Die Geschichte der schlesischen Territorien. . .," 139, 142.
[47] Erwin Hirschberg, *Unser Schlesien heute: eine Reise in die Heimat* (Aachen: E. Hirschberg, 1955), 15.
[48] Günther Anders, "Breslau 1966," in *Besuch im Hades: Auschwitz und Breslau 1966*, 3rd ed., 49-178 (Munich: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1996), 81.

[Opole].[49] In no time at all, one could enter into Poland, either commit or witness the ongoing German atrocities, and be back in time for the nightly movies. But Silesians generally chose not to notice. Attention was focused instead on German victimhood, which was especially evident as western Germans took refuge from bombed-out cities in Silesia, now known as the "*Reich*'s air raid shelter."

The flight and expulsion of Germans from Silesia, discussed in the next section, must be placed in context with the Nazi racial policies instituted immediately beforehand in Poland. Adolph Hitler initiated the movement of Germans when, after his secret agreement with the Soviet Union to divide East-Central Europe, he called Germans in the Baltic countries to return "home." By the end of 1939, over 60,000 Baltic Germans from Latvia and Estonia and 132,950 ethnic Germans from eastern Poland had been resettled, often in areas conquered from Poland and annexed to the *Reich*; the program to move Germans thus contributed to the Nazi expulsion and murder of the Poles and Jews they were meant to replace.[50] Meanwhile, every Upper Silesian town got back its German name, Polish inscriptions were removed, and Polish was forbidden in schools. In Upper Silesia, as in all of occupied Poland, the Nazis instituted a four-tiered racial classification system called the *Volksliste*. Ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) were placed at the top, while Poles ended up at the bottom, either expelled to Nazi-administrated rump Poland or murdered. Most Upper Silesians fell between into two middle tiers, in part because of their "confused" ethnic status, and in part because the occupiers were motivated to keep as many workers laboring in the factories as possible. Jews did not register in this system, as they were to be removed from society and exterminated. About one million Jews died in a part of Poland that

[49] Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 150.
[50] Valdis Lumans, *Hitler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 164-165.

the Nazis had annexed to Silesia: the concentration camp Auschwitz. In all, approximately six million people died in Poland under Nazi rule, about half of them Jews and half of them Poles; after years of plundering and destruction, most Poles found themselves uprooted and impoverished. As the German Society for Cultural and Economic Exchange with Poland reflected in 1970: "Poland suffered more than any other land during the Second World War. It lost nearly a fifth of its population and thirty-eight percent of its national property. The national metropolis Warsaw and many other cities laid in ashes and rubble by the end of the war."[51] Small wonder that so few of them had any love for Germans when the war turned and they started to cross into Silesia.

3. Silesia and the Silesians from January 1945 through May 1949

In January 1945, the Russian army made a rapid breakthrough across central Poland into regions like Silesia that had been part of the *Reich* before 1937. After months of propaganda that the threat was far off, a significant portion of the population fled from their homes with whatever they could pull or carry through the snows toward the West.[52] After this first phase of *Wild Flight*, hundreds of thousands of Germans returned home the following spring and summer. Trudging through the devastation wrought by war, beleaguered remnants of the "master race" experienced life under Russian and Polish occupation. In the summer of 1945, the victorious Allies agreed at the Potsdam Conference to cede one-quarter of Germany's pre-1937 territory to

[51] The society was founded in the early 1950s to foster understanding between West Germany and Poland. It conveyed information about the new Poland and the activities of its citizens. Olgierd Czerner, *Aufbau und Architektur polnischer Städte*, Museum für Architektur und Aufbau Wrocław (Düsseldorf: Rochus Verlag, 1970), 3.
[52] Flight and expulsion have been the subject of dozens of scholarly works, as well as hundreds of unprofessional tracts and accounts. For an excellent synthesis of previous trends, as well as the best comparative treatment of both Polish and German population movements, see Philipp Ther, *Deutsche und Polnische Vertriebene: Gesellschaft und Vertriebenenpolitik in der SBZ/DDR und in Polen, 1945-1956* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1998).

Polish administration (including virtually all of Silesia) and to expel the remaining Germans. This second phase of migration proceeded in earnest until 1949.

Due to the chaos of the time, in which millions of people were migrating back and forth over an unstable border, it has been exceedingly difficult to verify how many eastern Germans fled or were forced from the East, as well as how many more perished along the way.[53] The most common statistic given is that around twelve million Germans, over one quarter of them from Silesia, fled or were expelled in the aftermath of the Second World War. Regardless of the precise numbers, the scale is certain. In Lower Silesia, virtually the entire population was gone by 1949, and much of the architectural and artistic heritage of the region had been damaged. An entirely new, Polish population entered Lower Silesia, migrated about, and ultimately settled there to create new meanings and a new history. Though in Upper Silesia the destruction was less severe and much of the indigenous population remained (at least at first), German culture was repressed and the arrival of settlers from central Poland transformed the onetime borderland into Poland's largest population center and industrial heartland. The mass exodus from 1945-1949 thus represents the dramatic caesura in Silesia's history.

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[53] Hans Henning Hahn and Eva Hahn have demonstrated the extreme disparity in past estimates of how many left the East (from five million to as high as "over 20 million"), disparities that are often politically motivated. See their "Vertreibung," in *Politische Mythen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, ed. Heidi Hein-Kircher and Hans Henning Hahn, 167-188 (Marburg: Herder Institut, 2006), 167, 170. Philipp Ther's statistic of twelve million appears most regularly in recent scholarly literature. "A Century of Forced Migration: The Origins and Consequences of Ethnic Cleansing," in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, ed. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, 43-74 (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 62. Synthesizing the results of recently uncovered archival materials from Germany and Eastern Europe, Mark Kramer estimates that only 1.4 million died through flight and expulsion from 1945-1948. See his introduction in ibid., 27. Karl Dietrich Erdmann had estimated over 2.2 million dead in "Die Zeit der Weltkriege," in *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*, ed. Herbert Grundmann, vol. 4, ninth edition (Stuttgart: Klett, 1978), 807, and according to Hahn, other studies have claimed as many as five million. A.F. Noskova estimates that about four million Germans fled from the East before the Potsdam Conference. "Migration of the Germans after the Second World War: Political and Psychological Aspects" in *Forced Migration in Central and Eastern Europe*, *1939-1950,* ed. Alfred Rieber, 96-114 (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000), 104.

As the Red Army advanced, the Nazis appealed to entrenched rhetoric about Silesia as a bulwark against the East and declared historic centers such as Breslau and Glogau to be "fortress cities." In the midst of Russian shelling and block-by-block street fighting, the Nazis forced any remaining Germans to labor alongside prisoners to execute such mad projects as the demolition of a part of Breslau's old town in order to construct an airfield that was never used. By the time the eighty-two-day siege ended and the Russians took the Silesian capital (May 6, 1945), over two-thirds of the city had been destroyed, including almost every building in the southern and western regions.[54] In the meantime, Soviet garrisons were being established across Silesia, and the Northern Group of the Red Army established its headquarters in Liegnitz. As they proceeded to occupy the region, Soviet soldiers plundered and set fire to most of the towns and stripped equipment and machinery from the industrial centers for shipment to the USSR.

The postwar borders of Germany and Poland dominated the concerns of the Soviet, British, and American leadership at the Teheran Conference (November 1943), the Yalta Conference (February 1945), and the Potsdam Conference (July-August 1945). While Yalta demanded the Polish cession of eastern lands to the USSR and sketched out possible territorial compensation from Germany, Potsdam explicitly placed all lands east of the Oder and Lusatian Neisse rivers under "Polish administration" and ordered the expulsion of the remaining Germans in an "orderly and humane" manner.[55] However confusion remained: the final status of these lands was explicitly left open, pending a general peace conference which never took place, and on June 5, 1945 the victorious Allies proclaimed that Germany was to be divided into zones of

[54] For the statistics of destruction across Lower Silesia, see Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, "Dolny Śląsk w latach 1945-1948" [Lower Silesia, 1945-1948], in *Dolny Śląsk*, 625-674, here 626-627.
[55] "Potsdam Agreement, Article XIII," *Germany under Occupation, Illustrative Materials and Documents*, ed. James K. Pollock and James H. Meisel (Ann Arbor: George Wahr, 1947), 19-20. Northern East Prussia became the Kaliningrad Oblast of the Soviet Union.

occupation within its *1937* borders. Poland was to administrate an area which from a legal standpoint could still be claimed as a part of Germany. Pressures brought on by the expulsions in the West, as well as increasing tensions between the Allies themselves, heated the debate. In a September 1946 speech in Stuttgart, U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes argued that, though "Silesia and the other eastern German areas" had been placed under Polish administration,

> the heads of government did not agree to support at the peace settlement the cession of this particular area. . . . The United States cannot relieve Germany from the hardships inflicted upon her by the war her leaders started. But the United States has no desire to increase those hardships or to deny the German people an opportunity to work their way out of those hardships so long as they respect human freedom and follow the paths of peace.[56]

To this, Soviet foreign minister Viacheslav Molotov retorted that the decisions at Potsdam had already made the final border delineation at a future peace conference a mere "formal enactment":

> The three governments pronounced their opinion concerning the future western frontier by placing Silesia and the afore-mentioned territories under the administration of the Polish Government and, in addition, by accepting the plan to remove the Germans from these territories. Who would ever conceive the idea that the removal of the Germans was undertaken only as a temporary experiment? Those who adopted the decision to remove the Germans from these territories in order that Poles from other areas of Poland might at once settle there cannot propose some time after to reverse these measures. The very thought of such experiments with millions of people is incredible, not to speak of its cruelty both to the Poles and to the Germans themselves.[57]

Thus, with no small cynicism about the fate of Silesia's Germans, the Soviet government sought the moral high-ground; any future reverse-migration would be an act of cruelty, not just to Poles, but to Germans as well.

The wartime Polish exile governments in London and in Moscow agreed upon the need for significant territorial gains at German expense;[58] in continuity with Dmowski's anti-German,

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[56] James Byrnes, The Stuttgart Address, September 6, 1946, *Germany under Occupation*, 250-256.
[57] "Statement made by Molotov to a Correspondent of the Polish Press Agency concerning Poland's Western Frontiers, September 16, 1946, *Documents on Germany under Occupation: 1945-1954*, ed. Beate Ruhm von Oppen, Royal Institute of International Affairs (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 161-163.
[58] Excellent studies have examined the organization and implementation of Polish administrative practices in postwar Silesia. See T. David Curp, *A Clean Sweep?: The Politics of Ethnic Cleansing in Western Poland, 1945-1960* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006); Michael Esch, *"Gesunde Verhältnisse". Deutsche und*

nationalist *Piast* vision, Poland was to become ethnically homogenous within supposed "medieval" borders far to the West.[59] The Soviet-backed government, aware of the tenuous nature of its legitimacy, obtained some measure of popularity for embracing the old nationalist agenda and championing the new border.[60] Danzig symbolized victory over Germany, while Stettin [Szczecin] and Breslau were framed as compensation for Lwów [L'viv] and Wilno [Vilnius].[61] By coming into possession of one-third of the property in the new territories, the state was also able to redistribute six million hectares in land reforms, 4.8 million of which had been German-owned. Since so few settlers received legal deeds to their land, it was that much easier for the state to nationalize it in 1948.[62]

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polnische Bevölkerungspolitik in Ostmitteleuropa 1939-1950 (Marburg: Herder Institut, 1998); Andreas Hofmann, *Die Nachkriegszeit in Schlesien: Gesellschafts- und Bevölkerungspolitik in den polnischen Siedlungsgebieten, 1945-1948* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2000); Elżbieta Kaszuba, "Dzieje Śląska po 1945 roku" [The story of Silesia after 1945], in *Historia Śląska* [The History of Silesia], ed. Marek Czapliński (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2002), 468-541; Padraic Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland: Workers and Communists, 1945-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Krystyna Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943-1948*, trans. John MicGiel and Michael H. Bernhard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Beata Ociepka, *Niemcy na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1970* [Germans In Lower Silesia, 1945-1970] (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1992); Małgorzata Ruchniewicz and Jakub Tyszkiewicz, "Dolny Śląsk w latach 1945-1955" [Lower Silesia, 1945-1955], in *Dolny Śląsk*, 625-714; Sebastian Siebel-Achenbach, *Lower Silesia from Nazi Germany to Communist Poland, 1942-49* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); Grzegorz Strauchold, *Myśl zachodnia i jej realizacja w Polsce ludowej w latach 1945-1957* [The Western Idea and its Realization in the Polish people, 1945-1957] (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2003); Ther, *Deutsche und Polnische Vertriebene*; Thum, *Die Fremde Stadt*; Jakub Tyszkiewicz, "Communist Propaganda in the German Provinces Ceded to Poland," in *1945 A Break with the Past. A History of Central European Countries at the End of World War Two*, ed. Zdenko Čepič, 91-100 (Ljubljana: Institute of Contemporary History, 2008).

[59] See for instance Marian Seyda, *Poland and Germany and the Post-War Reconstruction of Europe* (London: Published for Private Circulation, September 1942) and S. Kudlicki, *Upper Silesia*, ed. Polish Research Center, 2nd ed. (London: Munro Press, 1944). In 1944, the Communists demanded Upper Silesia, and in the early Cold War they insinuated that the London Poles were the agents of the Anglo-American defenders of German revisionists. Andreas Hofmann, *Die Nachkriegszeit in Schlesien: Gesellschafts- und Bevölkerungspolitik in den polnischen Siedlungsgebieten, 1945-1948* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2000), 57.

[60] Krystyana Kersten, "Forced Migration and the Transformation of Polish Society in the Postwar Period," in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, ed. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, 75-86 (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 80.

[61] Gregor Thum, *Die fremde Stadt: Breslau 1945* (Munich: Siedler, 2003), 38.

[62] Philipp Ther, "A Century of Forced Migration: The Origins and Consequences of Ethnic Cleansing," in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, ed. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, 43-74 (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 59.

Meanwhile, Polonization proceeded at a rapid pace. On June 18, 1945, the Upper Silesian governor issued Ordinance 88, which ordered the erasure of all German inscriptions (including in cemeteries) and the Polonization of all names; in August 1947 government circulars prohibited the use of the German language; in October 1947 civilian control committees formed to intensify the destruction of German writing (even in private dwellings); and in spring 1948 committees organized to purge the region of all German books.[63] As a matter of course, German monuments were destroyed, and surviving "Prussian" buildings in Breslau and Liegnitz were disassembled so that their bricks could be shipped for the reconstruction of Warsaw. In the meantime, the Polish occupiers had already inverted the Nazi *Volksliste* in their favor by February 1945; Silesians who had been part of the *Herrenvolk* were disenfranchised, expropriated, placed in labor camps, and ultimately expelled, while any Poles who had survived Nazi occupation received privileged status. Once more, most Upper Silesians fell between the first and fourth tiers of the *Volksliste* hierarchy and were classified as an *autochthonous* population. The Polish regime tried to retain as many of them as possible to sustain uninterrupted productivity in the relatively intact industrial region and prove that a "Polish" element had lived in these "ancient Polish" lands. For all this, of the circa 1.8 million people who lived in Upper Silesia when the Red Army invaded, 200-300,000 fled or were expelled before the Potsdam conference, and another 300-350,000 were expelled before 1949.[64] Polish settlers in Upper Silesia were allured by work prospects and better living conditions in the intact industrial region and so further diluted the remaining German element. By contrast, the prominence of Germans in Lower Silesia

[63] Bernard Linek, "'De-Germanization' and 'Re-Polonization' in Upper Silesia, 1945-1950," in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, ed. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, 121-134. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 129.
[64] Juliane Haubold-Stolle, *Mythos Oberschlesien. Der Kampf um die Erinnerung in Deutschland und in Polen* (Osnabrück: Fibre Verlag, 2008), 307, 311.

meant that almost the entire population was expelled to the West.[65] A look at the exodus of Protestant ministers is illustrative: in 1939, there were 990 Protestant ministers in Silesia; by 1945 there were 160; in 1947 there were six; and in 1948 there was only one.[66] Amid the departure of the Germans, the Polish settlers in Lower Silesia continued to feel extreme alienation from what they saw as their "German" surroundings and only put down roots with great difficulty.[67]

Further discussion of the German experience in immediate postwar Silesia will form the backdrop for analysis in chapter three. What happened is best summed up in the words of Upper Silesia's acting provisional governor at a meeting of superintendents on February 10, 1945:

> We will deal with the German population inhabiting these lands, which have been Polish since before the beginning of time, just as the Germans taught us. [They will get] 20 kilograms of baggage and 5 minutes [to leave]. In any case, we have work for them to do, and forests to clear– the most appropriate tasks for the *Herrenvolk*.[68]

Germans in Poland's "Wild West" were subjected to physical and political terror, quickly robbed of their property, and often identified with white armbands or a swastika on their clothing. Nazi concentration camps were taken over as holding areas for ethnic Germans, where many died of disease, hunger, and "intentional torment, rape, and mistreatment" before their deportation; most infamous in Silesia was the camp at Lamsdorf [Łambinowice].[69] At the same time that the Germans left, 4.5 million Poles had come to live in the former German territories by 1951: 2.5

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[65] Ociepka, *Niemcy na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1970*, 5-14.
[66] Wolfgang Meißler, "Kirchen und kirchliches Leben in Liegnitz," in *Liegnitz. Bilder aus der Geschichte einer schlesischen Stadt von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Historische Gesellschaft Liegnitz, 67-76 (Lorch/Württemberg: Gerhard Weber Verlag, 1979), 76.
[67] See for instance the contemporary observations of Joanna Konopińska, *Tamten Wrocławski rok, 1945-1946. Dziennik* [That Year In Wrocław, 1945-1946. A Diary] (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 1987).
[68] Quoted in Bernard Linek, "'De-Germanization' and 'Re-Polonization' in Upper Silesia, 1945-1950," in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, ed. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, 121-134 (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 126.
[69] Zybura, *Niemcy w Polsce*, 208, 205; Ingo Eser, "Einleitung," in *Unser Heimat ist uns ein fremdes Land geworden*, ed. Wlodzimierz Borodziej and Hans Lemberg, Band 2: Zentralpolen, Wojewodschaft Schlesien (Oberschlesien), 355-399 (Marburg: Verlag Herder-Institut, 2003), 377-378. Between 1000 and 1500 Germans died in the camp after the war, though significantly more Allied war prisoners had perished there during the war itself. A marker has recently been erected in Łambinowice in memory of all who died there.

million had come from the devastated stretches of central Poland, while the rest came from Poland's lost eastern territories (the *kresy*), displaced person camps in Germany, and as far away as Yugoslavia.[70]

When they arrived in the American and British partition zones, Silesian exiles found themselves in a destroyed and overpopulated land, quickly detested by most western Germans and left with the barest provisions. It was a shift of epochal significance, the biggest change to the German demographic balance since the Thirty Years' War. There were 3,181,200 Silesian expellees in the four occupation zones as of 1950: 2,091,200 in the Western Zones and 1,090,000 in the Soviet Zone, so that they formed roughly one quarter of the expellee population.[71] In the diocese of Hildesheim, two-thirds of the Catholics were expellees, and the ruin of urban spaces meant that they tended to demographically overwhelm rural areas traditionally closed to outsiders, where the natives already had an established status.[72] In 1939 the largely rural and Catholic county of Vechta had 52,176 people; this rose to 75,623 in 1946 and 79,125 in 1950, primarily due to the arrival of Protestant Lower Silesians and East Prussians.[73] Those without relatives in the West either had to lodge with strangers or dwell in overpopulated camps.

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[70] This included 200,000 Ukrainians transplanted through the *Akcja Wisła* campaign in 1947 and 200,000 Polish Jews who tried to restart their lives in Lower Silesia, only to flee state-sponsored Polish anti-Semitism over the decade that followed. Of the 250,000 Poles in Wroclaw by 1948, 20-30% originated in the *kresy*. Stanisław Ciesielski, Introduction, *Umsiedlung der Polen aus den ehemaligen polnischen Ostgebieten nach Polen in den Jahren 1944-1947*, 1-75 (Marburg and Wrocław: Herder Institut, 2006).

[71] Joachim Rogall, "Krieg, Vertreibung und Neuanfang. Die Entwicklung Schlesiens und das Schicksal seiner Bewohner von 1939-1995," in *Schlesien und Die Schlesier*, 156-225, here 170; Hans Schoenberg, *Germans from the East* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 37.

[72] Dietmar Sauermann, *"Fern doch Treu." Lebenserinnerungen als Quellen zur Vertreibung und ihrer kulturellen Bewältigung, am Beispiel der Grafschaft Glatz* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 2004), 302.

[73] Joachim Kuropka, "Die Heimat im Rahmen des Möglichen ersetzen. Vertriebene im Landkreis Vechta," in *"Fern vom Paradies – aber voller Hoffnung. Vertriebene werden neue Bürger im Oldenburger Land*, 155-174 (Oldenburg: Isensee Verlag, 2009), 155.

The camps were hastily and poorly constructed by the state governments, at times within former concentration camps.[74] As she toured the camps, the expellee sociologist Elisabeth Pfeil found little to suggest that refugees were content with their lot.

> Here are the millions of homeless, bending down in foreign spaces, here they dwell in camps, in windowless bunkers, overfilled rooms and attics, in the cellars of destroyed houses, a millionfold yearning, many thousandfold embitterment. Doesn't it lay like a cloud of pain over Germany at night? Doesn't anyone hear the lament?[75]

Everywhere she heard the song of uprootedness: "We travel here, we travel there, we have no *Heimat* anymore." She watched expellees huddle together and wonder nervously whether "our homes are dilapidated, the paths we forged are turning wild? Are our fields and gardens overgrown with weeds? Are forests filling the meadows?"[76] Stranded in disintegrating camps in the West, expellees dreamed of the lost East and feared what it was becoming in their absence.

For their part, Western natives first tended to greet Eastern refugees with pity and hospitality. But when it became clear that the expellees would stay much longer than expected, the natives became hostile and, as Rainer Schulze observes, berated them in racist terms previously reserved for Slavs: "Rumors circulated that most newcomers were prone to stealing and other dishonest activities. . . that the people from the East were dirty and slovenly; some also felt the newcomers had no 'culture.'"[77] Kranke Dettmer likewise finds that "refugee status could be given negative connotations such as 'uprooted,' 'fled,' 'cowardly,' 'homeless journeymen,'

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[74] For statistics in Bavaria, see Brenda Melendy, "Expellees on Strike: Competing Victimization Discourses and the Dachau Refugee Camp Protest Movement, 1948-1949," *German Studies Review* 28, no. 1 (Feb. 2005), 109-110.
[75] Elisabeth Pfeil, *Der Flüchtling: Gestalt einer Zeitenwende* (Hamburg: Hans von Hugo, 1948), 71-72. In *Bevölkerung und Raum* (Berlin: Kurt Vowinckel Verlag, 1939), Pfeil had favored Nazi theories which connected race and *Raum* and argued that a population forged the character of its space. This evolved into her postwar interest in expellee uprootedness and led her to conclude that another population could forge the spaces they had lost.
[76] Pfeil, *Der Flüchtling*, 47, 75-74.
[77] Rainer Schulze, "The German Refugees and Expellees from the East and the Creation of a Western German Identity after World War II," in *Redrawing Nations*, 311.

'not-settled,' 'gypsied-around,' 'asocial,' and other such references."[78] An estate owner noted in 1947: "Every farm is completely undermined by the ferment of refugees, this foreign element actually undermines every enterprise. They are hostile to family and to work, and. . . permanently shatter the uniform character of our villages and farms."[79] For all the Nazi emphasis on a united "German community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*), it is small wonder that expellees increasingly felt like outsiders. An American survey carried out by the military government compared responses in 1946 and 1947:

> A comparatively high degree of optimism was found among the expellees in March, 1946, when as few as 7 out of 100 said they were dissatisfied with the treatment they had received from the local population since their arrival. However, in September, 1947, almost half (45%) of the expellees interviewed said they were not satisfied with the way they had been treated.

By June 1947 "almost two-thirds of the expellees (64%) said that they did not expect to get along with the native Germans."[80]

Even before all the survey results were in, the Allied occupiers observed in May 1946 that food and housing shortages were compounded by the discord between expellees and the native population, to the point that sometimes the police had to be called in to force the natives to be hospitable to newcomers and allow them to reside in their homes.[81] Nonetheless, at first they distanced themselves by declaring expellees an internal German matter, while the new International Refugee Organization explicitly refused aid to any "persons of German ethnic origin" in its constitution.[82] However, fear that the enormous and impoverished expellee

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[78] Kranke Dettmer, "Konflikte zwischen Flüchtlingen und Einheimischen nach Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs," *Jahrbuch für ostdeutsche Volkskunde* 26 (1983): 316.
[79] Quoted in Schulze, "The German Refugees and Expellees from the East, 311-312.
[80] Correspondence regarding Displaced Persons; the Public Health and Public Welfare Branches; Subject Files of the Medical Affairs Section 1945-49; OMGUS (Office of Military Government, United States) RG 260, NACP, 2.
[81] Joseph B. Schechtman, "Resettlement of transferred Volksdeutsche in Germany," *Journal of Central European Affairs* 7 (1947): 269-271.
[82] "Constitution of the International Refugee Organization," annex 1, part II: 4, *Germany 1947-49: the Story in Documents*, ed. United States Department of State, Dept. Of State Pub. 3556 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, March 1950), 131.

population might politically radicalize finally led the occupying powers to intervene. After months of urging the German state governments to take action, on January 24, 1947 the military government approved a state "Law Concerning the Reception and Integration of German Expellees," which guaranteed equal political rights and access to public welfare assistance and employment. Unfortunately, the currency reform of June 1948 further damaged the expellees' position; while in the long term it made possible the construction of expellee housing, as well as employment opportunities, in the short term it robbed them of the last cash reserves with which they had been sustaining their meager existence. In response, 35,000 expellees took part in demonstrations in October 1948, and from 1948-1949 the Bavarian government received more than 500 protest resolutions from expellees.[83]

Events were most tense in the former concentration camp at Dachau. On August 18, 1948, after cataloguing problems (including leaks in the barracks, shorts in the electrical wiring, and starvation rations), the Sudeten-German ringleader Egon Herrmann demanded increased food rations and a monthly allowance of ten DM per person for himself and all of his fellow expellees.[84] When the Bavarian government refused to meet these demands, 72,000 expellees in Dachau and nearby camps began a hunger strike until, six days later, the government made concessions. While Herrmann himself sought to hijack the Holocaust victim narrative for himself and the expellees at Dachau,[85] the American military journalist Ernest Leister perceived parallels between Herrmann and Hitler.

> As [expellees] crossed to the wide square opposite the gray buildings which had housed the gas chamber their faces were intent and angry. They pushed together, squeezing and shoving as close as possible to the platform on which a burning-eyed man of fifty was exhorting them with the controlled rage of a practiced orator. 'Let them remember,' he shouted in a German which had the thick accent of the Sudetenland, 'that

[83] Ian Conner, *Refugees and expellees in post-war Germany* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 178-179.
[84] Melendy, "Expellees on Strike," 112-113.
[85] See Melendy's useful analysis of his rhetoric in Ibid., 117-118.

> we are German too, that German blood runs fiercely in our veins. Let them not dare any longer to treat us as aliens in an alien land. When the might of the Fatherland was marching in triumph, we marched along. Let them care for us now in defeat.'

Witnessing how the former Nazi's oratory worked the crowd up into a mob, Leister concluded that Herrmann aspired to become "the '*Führer*' of Germany's expellees and, through them, perhaps of all Germany."[86] The trouble at Dachau peaked in November when a mob of about 150 expellees attacked a car carrying Bavarian officials who had come to inspect construction work at the camp. They lifted the car by the back bumper, tore open the passenger-side door, and Herrmann tried to drag one of the officials out of the car until the crowd responded that there was to be "no violence." As a result of this altercation, Herrmann was put on trial and served a year in prison.[87]

After the founding of the Federal Republic in May 1949, some of the economic hardship was alleviated through the Immediate Aid Law (*Soforthilfegesetz*) and Refugee Settlement Law (*Flüchtlingssiedlungsgesetz*), which provided all expellees with seventy DM per month by August (replacing earlier welfare payments of a comparable amount). Church groups and family networks also continued to help expellees through their hard times.[88] Nonetheless, for a long time, many expellees continued to face great economic hardship, to feel themselves separated from the surrounding West German community, to sense that the loss of the East had been an injustice, and to nurse resentment against the Slavic populations which had displaced them.

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[86] Ernest Leister, "Germany's Stepchildren," in Manfred Malzahn, *Germany, 1945-1949: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 143-145.
[87] Melendy, "Expellees on Strike," 118-119.
[88] Fear of radicalization was also strong within the church leadership. When discussing the feared political radicalization at a November 1945 meeting, a Catholic *Caritas* leader went so far as to recommend shipping expellees out of the country. His idea was not an uncommon one. "Besuch bei Herrn Direktor Baumgärtner in Stuttgart," Aktennotiz November 10, 1945, BAK Z 18/19. In a proclamation on January 30, 1946, the Catholic bishops of the western zones warned that, unless the expellees were sent home, "seeds of hatred [will be] sown which will only cause more evil." "Proclamation by the Bishops of Western Germany. Cologne, January 30th, 1946," in *The Tragedy of Silesia, 1945-1946. A Documentary Account with Special Survey of the Archdiocese of Breslau*, ed. Johannes Kaps, trans. Gladys H. Hartinger (Munich: Christ Unterwegs, 1952/53), 6.

In light of this survey of Silesia's history, especially the cycle of racial violence throughout the first half of the twentieth century, how is it possible that millions of expellees, about one-fifth of the West German population, did not rise up to demand their immediate return, and so destabilize the new Republic and its eastern neighbors? Why were Herrmann's disturbances at Dachau an exception rather than the rule? How is it that Silesia's history has steadily returned to earlier patterns of tolerance rather than conflict? The next chapter will outline the West German expellee political movement's expectation that millions of expellees wanted the restoration of Germany's prewar borders so that they could migrate back and seize their lost property in the East. The following chapters will show why the expellee leadership was mistaken in its expectation, and how, as a result of expellee behavior, peace prevailed in Silesia.

CHAPTER 2

THE QUEST FOR THE BORDERS OF 1937:

EXPELLEE LEADERS AND THE "RIGHT TO THE HOMELAND"

In 1956, future Silesian *Landsmannschaft* chairman Herbert Hupka declared: "the claim to the Silesian capital Breslau by its citizens has not diminished since the expulsion. It will be raised, not only by all Breslauer and Silesians, but also by the entire German *Volk*."[1] After the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany in May 1949, self-proclaimed expellee spokespeople regularly expressed their conviction that all expellees, indeed all *Germans*, were united in their struggle for the *Recht auf die Heimat*. Ostensibly, this "right to the homeland" demanded nothing less than the reestablishment of a united Germany inside of its 1937 borders and the physical *Heimkehr* (return home) of eastern Germans to former *Heimat* spaces.[2] All through the politically tense decades before Bonn's recognition of the Polish western border in 1970 (and indeed well after), expellee *Landsmannschaften* (regional associations devoted to specific lost territories) and *Ostforscher* (scholars researching the alleged and real German heritage in the East) reiterated time and again that their official narrative of *Heimkehr* embodied the exclusive take on *Recht auf die Heimat*, presuming all the while that this was what the millions expelled from the East actually desired. Most contemporary onlookers (and scholarship written since) believed such boasting and imagined the silent millions united behind their

[1] Herbert Hupka, ed., *Breslau: Hauptstadt Schlesiens in 71 Bildern* (München: Gräfe und Unzer Verlag, 1956), 9.
[2] The 1937 borders appeared the most realistic legal demand, since they preceded Hitler's occupation of other countries. But as Matthias Stickler rightly observes, this "minimal goal" was seldom enough for many leaders, especially those like the Sudeten Germans, whose *Heimat* had been outside the 1937 borders. Thus, "also on the political *Heimat* wish list were the Memel region, Danzig, and West Prussia," territorial objectives distinctly "rooted in the revisionist thoughts of the 1920s." *"Ostdeutsch heißt Gesamtdeutsch": Organisation, Selbstverständnis und heimatpolitische Zielsetzungen der deutschen Vertriebenenverbände, 1949-1972* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2004), 433. For just one example in which official narrators clearly set out their interpretation of *Recht auf die Heimat*, see Erich Schönfelder's 1956 speech at the annual expellee rally, the *Tag der Heimat*: "Unverrückbares Ziel: Die Heimkehr!" *Der Schlesier*. *Breslauer Nachrichten* 6, no 36 (September 1956 issue 2), 2.

leaders. In reality, the leadership's rigid territorial-revisionist interpretation of *Recht auf die Heimat* was inconsistent with the desires and expectations of most expellees, not to mention native West Germans. Already by the 1950s, if expellees had actually been offered "self-determination" to settle where they willed, few would have chosen to return to the *Heimat* as it had developed in Western Poland.

It is not the place of this chapter to explain *how* and *why* expellees came to desire an alternate vision of *Recht auf die Heimat* from that which their supposed leaders espoused and demanded of them. Rather, by reproducing and dissecting the myopic perspective of the leadership, it sets the stage for the explanations that are to come. Shutting ourselves off for the moment from the genuine wishes of millions of expellees, we will seek to enter into the heads of their supposed leaders, investigating how they found official support for *Heimkehr*, how this demand drew on past ideas, how they sought to propagate their claims, where indeed there was internal dissent among them about the meaning of "returning home," and finally how they became aware that their calls for *Heimkehr* had failed to inspire the resonance they desired. The expellee movement outlined in this chapter could potentially have destabilized the Bonn Republic like Weimar before it; had the expectations inherent in its claims found total resonance, it might have continued the cycle of unrest and violence. Such stakes make it all the more important to understand the official narrative about 1937 borders and to appreciate *Heimkehr* as a goal that was open to many interpretations.

For decades, scholars have mined the vast literature put out by the expellee political leadership to produce detailed and often excellent narratives about the expellee movement's formation, its social and political objectives, its many colorful personalities, factions, research organizations, and assemblies. Already in 1970, Hans Schoenberg produced a definitive

examination after a decade of consulting archives in the local offices of expellee organizations, attending expellee gatherings, and speaking with many leaders– in essence participating in the world inhabited by expellee spokespeople in their heyday.[3] For all this, his work seldom addressed the world outside higher circles and so, for example, attributed the failure of the chief expellee political party to infighting in the leadership, similar appeals from mainstream parties, and the progression of "economic and social integration" among expellees.[4] This is not to say that these reasons lack validity– quite the contrary. But they are predicated on the idea that expellees either surrendered attachment to the spaces they remembered (integrated) or that their political potential depended upon the actions of their leaders, rather than their own decisions.

Such has also been the weak point in the studies which have followed; usually admirable in their detail of the expellee political movement's inner workings, they give way to conjecture when analyzing the interests of the expellees themselves.[5] Of all the recent literature, Christian Lotz's systematic analysis of the "politics of memory" within government and religious leadership in West and East Germany (the BRD and DDR) offers the best effort to break down the notion that the official narrative meant the same thing to all expellees. It gives compelling evidence that expellee organizations "occupied" concepts like *Silesia* and the *German eastern territories* to produce an official narrative, and successfully differentiates between expellee

[3] Hans Schoenberg, *Germans from the East: A Study of Their Migration, Resettlement, and Subsequent Group History Since 1945* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 4.
[4] Ibid., 138.
[5] To name two of the most important studies, Pertti Ahonen's intricate political narrative presents a useful update of Schoenberg, and Mathias Stickler offers both a thorough analysis of leadership's claims as well as a very useful analysis of its interchange with the larger West German political infrastructure. He also accurately defines the expellee leadership's interpretation of the *Recht auf die Heimat* as "the return and integration of the *Heimat* areas into Germany" through the migration of expellees back to the East. However why the movement lost support remains elusive. Ahonen makes vague allusions to "successful" economic and social integration into West German society and the growing generational divide, while Stickler gives the accurate but insufficient observation that, in a mobile world, people would stay in the West where there were jobs. Neither of these views give real credit to the fact that expellees still cared about the spaces they had left behind. Pertti Ahonen, *After the Expulsion: West Germany and Eastern Europe, 1945-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 224-226. Stickler, *"Ostdeutsch heißt Gesamtdeutsch,"* 433.

political groups, showing how larger organizations did not represent commemoration objectives of smaller groups. Unfortunately, Lotz claims that "a large proportion of the population" agreed with the official demands, because they wanted Silesia returned to Germany.[6] This will be problematized after this chapter sets out the viewpoint of the expellee leaders on the basis of earlier studies and original research.

To begin, we will follow the establishment, state support, and tenets of the official narrative about *Heimkehr* to the Lost East. Through numerous histories, schoolbooks, and polemical tracts, this narrative featured expellees as common sufferers and the lost East as an eternalized, culturally sophisticated, well-ordered, German utopia which had to be recovered through physical return. The next section will illustrate the three kinds of *Recht auf die Heimat* (economic, commemorative, and the idea of *Heimkehr*) and show that, whereas the first two forms were relatively straightforward and generated significant support, the third form was open to interpretation even within the leadership itself, especially when the question arose of how a "return home" could be practically accomplished in light of the extensive Polish settlement that had already taken place in the old *Heimat*. At the same time that they tried to suppress dissent in their own ranks about what *Heimkehr* itself should entail, expellee leaders feared that their work was seldom inspiring Germans to desire *Heimkehr* at all. The third section will show how the leadership responded by seeking to drum up support in meetings, in the classroom, and by manufacturing statistical "evidence" contorted to match the wishful thinking of the leadership. The conclusion will offer a first glimpse of the reason *why* expellees turned away from their leaders' expectations. Sketching the basis for the next four chapters, it previews how most

[6] Christian Lotz, *Die Deutung des Verlustes. Erinnerungspolitische Kontroversen im geteilten Deutschland um Flucht, Vertreibung und die Ostgebiete (1948-1972)* (Köln: Böhlau, 2007); idem., "The Interpretation of Loss. Political Controversies in Divided Germany about the Memory of Escape, Expulsion and the Eastern Territories

expellees developed a nonviolent image of *Recht auf die Heimat* in which *Heimkehr* became a figurative "return" to lands that existed in their idealized memories, rather than real return to live again in Silesia.

1. The Formation and Guidelines of the Expellee Political Project

As discussed at the end of the previous chapter, the roots of the expellee political project were formed and nourished in the ruins of the immediate postwar western partition zones, where fear and hardship in the aftermath of flight and expulsion stimulated a common feeling among expellees that they were unheeded and without advocates. Already crowded into small apartments alongside West German natives with longstanding ties to the region, who felt their traditional status and values threatened, expellees suffered regular abuse and stigmatization.[7] With racism reminiscent of recent Nazi slurs against non-Germans, those indigenous to West Germany derided what they saw as the eastern foreignness and impoverishment of "cowardly" or "antisocial" expellee "Gypsies" and "Polacks", driving them to cluster among themselves "to protect their interests and native ways."[8] Church leaders and the family sheltered expellees as best they could in the early years, but frustration and social instability was common.

With the failure of Weimar ever in mind, the new federal government had strong incentive to back the expellee political project as a means, it hoped, to contain and dissipate radicalization and unrest among these millions when they became politically enfranchised through the 1949 Basic Law.[9] It signaled a profound turning point when expellee political

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(1948-1972)," Paper presented at Polish-German Post/Memory: Esthetics, Ethics, Politics Conference (Bloomington, Indiana, April 21, 2007).

[7] Kranke Dettmer, "Konflikte zwischen Flüchtlingen und Einheimischen nach Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs," *Jahrbuch für ostdeutsche Volkskunde* 26 (1983): 316.

[8] Jane Perry Clark Carey, "Political Organization of the Refugees and Expellees in West Germany," *Political Science Quarterly* 66 (1951): 193.

[9] Section XI, article 116 of the BRD *Grundgesetz* (May 23, 1949) confirmed complete legal equality between all Germans "in the territory of the German Reich as at December 31, 1937," along with "refugees or expellees of

organizations, banned by the occupying Allied authorities before 1949, suddenly found significant legitimacy and support for their programs in the Bonn Republic's early legal apparatus. In effect as of May 19, 1953, paragraph 96 of the Federal Expellee Law declared federal and state support for the transmission of "cultural materials about the regions of expulsion into the consciousness of the expellees and refugees, the whole German people, and foreign lands." In their program to "support science and research" about expellees and their *Heimat*, authorities were to "secure, expand, and utilize archives, museums, and libraries, as well as support and guarantee the creation of art and education."[10] The federal government further stipulated that cartographic representations of Germany must include the regions from the borders of 1937, and that the children of expellees inherited their parents' right to the *Heimat*. Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and the regime repeated these claims in regular speeches and statements, as when on January 31, 1957 the government formally declared on behalf of the German people that the Oder-Neisse border could not be recognized as the current or future border of Germany, because by the standards of human rights the country still existed within the 1937 borders.[11]

The financial and political backing implied in the 1953 expellee law (40-45 million West German Marks per year) opened the floodgates to expellee leaders anxious to make up for lost

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German stock." "The Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany," 23 May 1949, *Germany 1947-49: the Story in Documents*. Dept. Of State Pub. 3556. European and British Commonwealth Series 9. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, March 1950, 301.

[10] The arrangements required by the Federal Expellee Law [*Bundesvertriebenengesetz*, or *Gesetz über die Angelegenheiten der Vertriebenen und Flüchtlinge*] were to be reviewed annually in the *Bundestag*. Bundesvertriebenengesetz, Section 96, May 19, 1953, http://bundesrecht.juris.de/bvfg/index.html.

[11] "Regierungserklärung zur Oder-Neiße-Grenze," *Heimat und Glaube* 9, no. 9 (September 1957), 5. Despite each party's public stance in the 1950s that the borders would only be decided in a future peace conference, Adenauer expressed in private discussions in late 1961 that "every rational human being" understood that the "existing realities" in the East "cannot be rolled back." In time, Ludwig Erhard also privately expressed these ideas, as did members of the SPD and FDP. Ahonen, *After the Expulsion*, 170.

time in asserting claims to the East.[12] In the early years after their efforts had been legalized, leaders looked back with frustration at the "enforced German fallow period" (*erzwungene deutsche Brachzeit*) when they had been unable to dominate public discussion about the trauma of displacement.[13] Seizing the memories and experiential accounts that expellees had already written about the *Heimat*, they converted what was useful to fashion historical, legal, and economic rationale that affirmed a German "right" to the eastern territories. This trend was already underway in late 1949, when many preexisting religious groups and clubs such as the Bavarian *Vereinigung der Schlesier* (founded 1947) formed into explicitly political organizations.[14] Most prominent among these were the twenty *Landsmannschaften*, each of which used its own press, lobbies, and publications to pursue the interests of one of the lost eastern lands.

Well over one thousand West German expellee newsletters, papers, and periodicals had entered circulation to propagate the official view by December 1952, with runs ranging up to hundreds of thousands of copies per issue.[15] From 1952-1954, the weekly *Der Schlesier*, the

[12] Corinna R. Unger, *Ostforschung in Westdeutschland. Die Erforschung des europäischen Ostens und die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, 1945-1975* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007), 96.
[13] Emil Brzoska, *Die geistige Gestalt Oberschlesiens und ihre Stellung innerhalb der deutschen Kulturlandschaften* (Frankfurt/Main: Unser Oberschlesien, 1953), 10.
[14] Though some religious groups tied themselves to the expellee political platform, many pushed against it. Not long after the founding of the BRD, leaders in the German Protestant Church (EKD) encouraged integration "in the new *Heimat*" among congregations in the West and distanced themselves from the reactionary press. "Die Verantwortung der Evangelischen Kirche von Schlesien für die von ihr getrennten Glieder," circa 1950, EZA 47/445. When Ernst Hörnig, the administrator of the remaining Silesian Protestants, told his flock that "God waits for our *Rückkehr*," *return* explicitly meant a spiritual return to God, rather than a physical return to the *Heimat*. Hornig, "Gott wartet auf unserer Rückkehr," *Kirchenblatt für Evangelische aus Schlesien* 9/10, Oktober/November 1949, 1. When it was founded, the Catholic expellee paper, *Heimat und Glaube* sought to keep politics and church apart while bringing together homeland and faith. Expellees were to keep the *Heimat* alive within and live as "people deeply domiciled [*beheimatet*] in God." Archbishop Lorenz, "Bischofswort," *Heimat und Glaube* 1, no. 2 (1949): 2. By 1965, a series of letters between Polish and German church leaders in both denominations made strides at finding new understanding and mutual forgiveness, though contention remained. *German-Polish Dialogue: Letters of the Polish and German Bishops and International Statements* (Bonn-Brussels-New York: Edition Atlantic Forum, 1966); Erwin Wilkens, ed. *Vertreibung und Versöhnung. Die Synode der EKD zur Denkschrift 'Die Lage der Vertriebenen und das Verhältnis des deutschen Volkes zu seinen östlichen Nachbarn* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1966).
[15] A 1953 Göttinger Arbeitskreis study catalogued a sampling of 320 publications which appeared, at minimum, quadannually. It claimed that over 1300 periodicals with less regular circulation had also appeared. Of these, 70

official mouthpiece for the Silesian *Landsmannschaft*, boasted a circulation of 37,000.[16] In the very first issue, Silesian *Landsmannschaft* chairman Walter Rinke (CDU) promised that, because the West was so much stronger than the East, ultimately Soviet forces would have to withdraw so that expellees could attain their "distant goal, to reach the *old Heimat* with God's help."[17] Due to early financial difficulties, many of the other papers came under the control of *Goldammer Verlag* (formerly in Lauban/Silesia), which printed an official narrative comparable to *Schlesier* on each cover page.

With the political objectives ever in view, expellee teachers and scholars from new research institutions like the Herder Institut in Marburg and Göttinger *Arbeitskreis* produced a wide assortment of tracts, schoolbooks, histories, picture books, and *Heimat* books.[18] These invented the lost *Heimat*'s chief traits: its pure Germanness (with the corresponding assumptions of advanced culture, order, cleanliness, productivity, and efficiency) and its timelessness (in stasis as a pristine, early twentieth-century landscape of progress and peace without Nazis, Jews, or Slavs).[19] In a picture book thick with idyllic mountain scenes, Herder-Institut scholar and schoolbook advisor Ernst Birke reflected that, with exception of one Czech village on the western side, Silesia's *Riesengebirge* and *Isergebirge* ranges had been "ringed by a thick garland

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expellee presses were devoted to Silesia, while 359 Silesian *Heimat* newspapers had been in circulation (by far more than any other expellee group). See Karl O. Kurth, *Handbuch der Presse der Heimatvertriebenen*, Göttinger Arbeitskreis publication 76 (Kitzingen-Main: Holzner Verlag, 1953), 12-14. This conflicts with a 1955 claim by the Liegnitz *Heimat* paper that there were only 27 *Heimat* periodicals in print for Silesia. "Tagung der schlesischen Heimatpresse in Hannover," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 7, no. 1 (January 10, 1955), 10. The *Stiftung ostdeutsche Kulturrat* charted 1130 expellee papers in circulation from 1949-1980 in *Bestandsverzeichnis der deutschen Heimatvertriebenenpresse*, ed. Horst von Chmielewski and Gert Hagelweide (München: K.G. Saur, 1982).

[16] Schoenberg, *Germans from the East*, 317-320.

[17] Italics in original, Walter Rinke, "Nicht die Nerven verlieren. Neujahresworte des schlesischen Sprechers Dr. Walter Rinke," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 3, no. 1 (January 5, 1951), 2.

[18] Both were established in the early 1950s to replace *Ostforschung* institutes in Königsberg and Breslau. For the rationale and practical steps that led to their formation, see BAK B 137/1838.

[19] While competing top-down narratives about the same spaces arose among Polish and East German scholars, also noteworthy were post-Holocaust depictions in over five hundred memorial books, even models and maps, produced by apolitical Jewish "*Landsmanschaftn*" around the world, all bearing witness to the lost communities across Europe

of German settlements for ages."[20] Günther Grundmann, who before the war had been Silesia's last state preservationist (*Provinzialdenkmalpfleger*) and afterward promoted school instruction about the East,[21] used images of Gothic art and architecture as "evidence" that the Silesian artistic impulse had always come from the western German "mother earth", always "noteworthy as a self-contained whole in the surrounding world of its Slavic neighbors."[22] In his study of Silesian traditions and festivals, the teacher Walther Steller emphasized that "it would be wrong to label certain peculiarities of Eastern Germany as Slavic," and urged expellees to value the few Silesian costumes spared from destruction amid flight and expulsion as "documents, which aside from history, folk tradition, and culture, represent in themselves expressions of the life of Silesian people, proving our German *Recht auf die Heimat Schlesien*."[23] Cultural achievements by men such as Josef Freiherr von Eichendorff, Gustav Freytag, Karl and Gerhart Hauptmann, and Hermann Stehr became "contributions to general German intellectual and literary history," contrasting sharply with contemporary Silesia, a culturally "fallow" land, unable "to produce a single figure of comparable stature" now that nearly all of the Germans who had apparently made the land great were expelled.[24] *Heimat* books reminded exiled townspeople that they had come from ancient and "pure" German settlements,[25] while schoolchildren were instructed that their medieval forbears in Silesia had understood their Germanness in distinctly modern,

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which the Nazis had sought to destroy. Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin, *From a Ruined Garden; The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1983, 1998).

[20] Ernst Birke, *Das Riesengebirge und Isergebirge in 144 Bildern*, 1st ed. 1958 (Würzburg: Rautenberg im Verlaghaus Würzburg, 2002), 8-9. Originally published 1958, reprinted without major change 1961, even 2002.

[21] Norbert Conrads has rated Grundmann one of the four most important contributors to preserving Silesia's spiritual legacy. *Schlesien* (Berlin: Siedler, 1994), 697.

[22] Günther Grundmann, "Architektur, Kunst und Kunstgewerbe in Schlesien," in *Unser Schlesien*, ed. Karl Hausdorff, 321-252 (Stuttgart: Karl Mayer Verlag, 1954), 248.

[23] Walther Steller, "Schlesische Volkstrachten," in Ibid., 109-141, here 114-115.

[24] Ernst Birke, *Silesia, a German Region* (München: Delp, 1968), 25. Many works used thinkers, artists, and writers to "confirm" Silesia's "innately German" qualities. Traud Gravenhorst, *Schlesien. Erlebnisse eines Landes* (Munich: W.G. Korn, 1952); Wilhelm Menzel, "Die schlesische Mundart (mit 1 Karte im Text)," in *Unser Schlesien*, ed. Karl Hausdorff, 142-154 (Stuttgart: Karl Mayer Verlag, 1954).

nationalist terms.[26] It little mattered in the official narrative that the oldest Silesian towns were built around Polish castles, or that the Gothic style was not "German" but had flourished throughout Western Medieval Christendom.

The official narrative documented a cyclical rendition of Silesian history, in which repeated waves of destruction were always followed by German reclamation and improvement, in this manner questioning the finality of the postwar tragedy and implying that the expulsion would soon to be followed by restoration through "characteristically" German hard work.[27] While varying in the extent of their claims, *Ostforscher* relied on the age-old myth of Silesia as a land bridge (*Brückenland*) in which Germans had carried civilization to the East. This was said to have been disrupted first by the 1241 Mongolian invasion, supposedly held back solely by the German character of the land.[28] The cycle continued through repeated threats from the Eastern "other," always repelled through seven centuries of German tireless achievement.

Either ignoring or glossing over Nazism and its atrocities,[29] the official narrative gave graphic detail to the "most recent" disruption of German development,[30] alleging that the most critical damage had taken place, not in war, but after, when had Poles satiated a "wild lust for revenge" in a frenzy of plundering and wanton destruction, bringing down "800 years of loyalty

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[25] Erwin Bergmann, "Die Entwicklung unserer Heimatstadt Jauer," in *Heimatbuch des schlesischen Kreises Jauer-Bolkenhaim*, by Alfred Tost (Velen: Schlesische Burgenlanddruckerei P. Neumann, 1955), 72.
[26] Hartmut Boockmann, "Historische, politische und kulturelle Traditionen der Herkunftsgebiete— Bemerkungen zur Einführung in den Forschungsgegenstand," in *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in der westdeutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte*, ed. Doris von der Brelie-Lewien, Helga Grebing, and Rainer Schulze, 81-88 (Hildesheim: August Lax Verlag, 1987), 83.
[27] Joachim Borngräber, *Schlesien: ein Überblick über seine Geschichte* (Bad Reichenhall: Verlag neue Schule, 1950s); Gravenhorst, *Schlesien*; Lutz Mackensen, ed., *Deutsche Heimat ohne Deutsche, ein ostdeutsches Heimatbuch* (Braunschweig: Georg Westermann, 1958); Peter-Heinz Seraphim, *Ostdeutschland und das Heutige Polen* (Braunschweig: Georg Westermann Verlag, 1953).
[28] Friedrich Stumpe, *Schlesien: ein Gang durch seine Geschichte* (Kitzingen/Main: Holzner Verlag, 1951), 9; Borngräber, *Schlesien*, 4.
[29] Rather than recall Nazi parades on Breslau's main square, art historian Neils von Holst went so far as to praise "1930s"-era's "care for the image of the old town through that really marvelous restoration of the town hall." See *Breslau: ein Buch der Erinnerung* (Hameln: F. Seifert, 1950), 94.

and cleanliness in the soils of the *Oderland*."[31] The narrative tapped into the old slur of *polnische Wirtschaft* to depict Polish settlers as incapable of managing what they had conquered, in part because they were conscious of the "injustice of their position" and expected that in time the Germans would be given back their lands.[32] Seldom did texts discuss what would happen to the Poles now living in the German East if the Germans returned, though it was expected that they would leave. Until that time, when the cycle resumed, Silesia's history was on hold.

An expanding literature has explored the racist pedigrees of *Ostforscher* such as Hermann Aubin and Erich Keyser, who with little difficulty entered the postwar academic scene and adapted their interwar and wartime advocacy for settling ethnic Germans into Slavic regions to rhetoric more fitting for a post-Nazi, Cold War environment.[33] Seldom facing real responsibility for their complicity with Nazism nor acknowledging the suffering that Germans had caused in the East, they turned the German master race into victims who had suffered at the hands of their eastern neighbors.[34] In the name of the anti-Communist goal of spreading "freedom" and

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[30] Bolko Freiherr von Richthofen, "Den Gräbern in der Heimat," in *Heimat im Herzen: Schlesische Gedichte* (Herne: Grabski Verlag, 1956), 23; Birke, *Silesia*, 25.

[31] Borngräber, *Schlesien*, 114.

[32] On mismanagement, see Jänicke, *Right and Freedom for Silesia*, 14. On Polish settlers' feeling that their stay was temporary, see forward by Georg Grad Henckel von Donnersmarck in *Das Heutige Schlesien*, ed. Johannes Seipolt, vol 1 (Munich: Aufstieg-Verlag, 1957), 4. Gregor Thum has shown that Poles in Wrocław did at first struggle to feel at home. *Die fremde Stadt. Breslau 1945* (Munich: Siedler, 2004).

[33] Discussions in this chapter can only sketch what was a widespread and important phenomenon. For more on this booming field of productive inquiry, see Michael Burleigh, *Germany turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Götz Aly, *Final Solution: Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews*, trans. Belinda Cooper and Allison Brown (London: Arnold, 1999); James van Horn Melton and Harmut Lehmann, eds, *Paths of Continuity: Central European Historiography from the 1930s to the 1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch, eds., *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing, 1919-1945* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005); Mathias Beer, "Die Landesstelle Schlesien für Nachkriegsgeschichte 1934 bis 1945. Geschichtswissenschaft und Politik im Lichte neuer Aktenfunde," in *Silesiographia: Stand und Perspektiven der historischen Schlesienforschung*, ed. Carsten Rabe and Matthias Weber, 119-144 (Würzburg: Verein für Geschichte Schlesiens, 1998); Eduard Mühle, *Für volk und deutschen Osten. Der Historiker Hermann Aubin und die deutsche Ostforschung*, Marburg University Habilitation-Schrift 2004 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2005).

[34] The *Ostforscher* Ansgar Grzimek rejected Nazi scholarship, not because it was racist, but because, in their "expedience," scholars had used "secondhand" source material and so failed to contribute to "serious scholarly progress." See "Die Dringlichkeit der wissenschaftlichen Erforschung und Darstellung Oberschlesien-Geleitwort," in *Die geistige Gestalt Oberschlesiens und ihre Stellung innerhalb der deutschen Kulturlandschaften*, by Emil Brzoska, 5-8 (Frankfurt/Main: Unser Oberschlesien, 1953), 7.

"Western civilization" back into the East through *Heimkehr*, they made use of any Cold War event that placed the border's permanence in question. To take just one example, Walter Kuhn, from Bielitz [Bielsko] near Auschwitz, ventured to German enclaves in Volhynia in the 1930s to help German minorities recognize their "biological superiority"; he returned during World War II to manage their transfer to regions annexed in western Poland. In 1939, shortly after the invasion of Poland, he wrote to fellow *Ostforscher* Theodor Schieder (who had the ear of the Nazi leadership and was prominent in postwar *Ostforschung*) to convince him that, due to "healthy colonial peasant strengths and a strong surplus of births" among Germans in villages beyond the 1918 border in Central Poland, the *Reich* should also annex regions which had never been part of Germany after its 1871 unification.[35] His Nazi-era research praised eternalized German achievements in the East as a means to produce "new German *Lebensraum*," bringing "new German cultural forms to culturally less mature eastern peoples."[36] Nine years after Nazism, Kuhn framed himself as unjustly victimized, bemoaning that all of his wartime research in Nazi-conquered archives had been lost during his flight.[37] He never took note that he had simply experienced the reverse-force of the very processes he had advocated before. As professor for *Siedlungsgeschichte* (history of settlement) at the university of Hamburg, he now

[35] Burleigh, *Germany turns Eastward*, 91-93, 156-157. Schieder was himself an emblem of *Ostforschung*'s postwar respectability. As president of the historical commissions for the Bavarian and Rhineland-Westphalian Academies of Scholars and awarded the order of *Pour le Mérite* for scholarship and art, he was symbolic of a new, democratic, and enlightened West Germany.
[36] Walter Kuhn, *Die deutschen Siedlungswellen im Osten*, Sonderdruck aus *Deutsche Monatshefte* 7, no. 1/2 (Posen: Karl Jakob, Kom.-Ges., 1940), 3.
[37] Kuhn had been writing a history of German settlement of the regions around Bielitz and Auschwitz. See *Siedlungsgeschichte Oberschlesiens* (Würzburg: Oberschlesischer Heimatverlag, 1954), 11. Elizabeth Harvey has also shown that the wartime experience similarly bred great pride in the "German achievements" in the East among colonists the Nazis had sent, as when a woman who had served as a schoolteacher near Danzig lamented how "everything that German willpower and German industriousness has created in the East has been destroyed." Quoted in Elisabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 292.

dedicated his work to all who remained "faithful" to *Heimat* (rather than Hitler), and wrote tales of German suffering under Slavic oppression through the ages.[38]

Of course, care should be taken to nuance the continuities between research during and after Nazism. Despite their Nazi past, some *Ostforscher* managed to recover respectability. Likely because of his work as head of the art history program at the *Institut für deutsche Ostarbeit* (Institute for German work in the East) in Krakow during the Nazi occupation, Ewald Behrens was denied federal funding for his work after the war,[39] but in time the Polish government allowed him to lead travel groups throughout the country and even to pursue further study in Krakow.[40] Likewise, Elisabeth Pfeil, as an expert on *Bevölkerungswissenschaft* and aide to the infamous *Ostforscher* Albert Brackmann during the Third Reich,[41] had once boasted how "the whole National Socialist will to form (*Gestaltungswille*) now stands behind efforts for a new equilibration in a unified German space (*Raum*)."[42] But her 1948 study of expellee settlement patterns reversed these former allegiances, in fact blaming the expulsion of Germans from the East on the very wartime Nazi population shifts of Germans and "East European peoples" she had formerly supported and, what is more, explicitly avoiding any look at the possibility of a

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[38] Kuhn, *Siedlungsgeschichte Oberschlesiens*, 273, 278.

[39] An SA member, Behrens featured a strongly Germanized approach in his 1942 art exhibition: "Altdeutsche Kunst aus Krakau und dem Karpathenland." Corinna Unger has shown that the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*'s generous funding for *Ostforschung* in the 1950s was highly selective about supporting former Nazi scholars, rejecting three of the four projects put forth by the infamous anti-Semite Peter-Heinz Seraphim, as well as the proposal from Behrens. *Ostforschung in Westdeutschland*, 17.

[40] Ewald Behrens, "Lebenslauf," DSHI 100 Behrens 1. Amid a great deal of further scholarly work as head of an art program in Marburg, Behrens also studied the destruction and reconstruction of Architectural Monuments in Germany and art history in Russia. In 1957, 1959, and 1962 he undertook study excursions to the Soviet Union, and he led group trips to Moscow, Leningrad, Novgorod, Vladimir-Suzdal, and Kiev from the "Gesellschaft für akademische Studienreisen" in Heidelberg (which he helped to found in 1963) in 1964 and 1965, developing a working relationship with many Soviet scholars.

[41] "Internationales Soziologenlexikon," 1st ed. 1959 and 2nd ed., vol. 2 1984, in *Deutscher Biographischer Archiv*, ed. Victor Herrero Mediavilla, Microfiche ed.: III/700, 253-255. Pfeil's Nazi-era *Bevölkerung und Raum* (Heidelberg, Berlin, Magdeburg: Kurt Vowinckel Verlag, 1939) was an exploration of how race formed *Raum*, positing that through Nazism Germans were finding a unified racial means to forge their space. This evolved into her postwar interest in expellee community social dynamic amid uprootedness in *Der Flüchtling: Gestalt einer Zeitenwende* (Hamburg: Hans von Hugo, 1948).

[42] Pfeil, *Bevölkerung und Raum*, 23.

mass resettlement to the East.[43] It is also the case that scholars seldom associated with Nazism (and important in the construction of a denazified West German identity) advocated the tenets of *Ostforschung*. In his influential postwar assessment *The German Catastrophe* (1946), the celebrated liberal historian Friedrich Meinecke blamed Hitler's war for the expulsion but contrasted peaceful "Western" national aspiration from violent "Balkanization, the hardening, and the perpetuation of national hatreds, until one side succeeds in completely annihilating its opponents– as threatens us Germans in the East."[44]

The case of Meinecke points toward another continuity that the recent history of expulsion and territorial loss had sustained in postwar West Germany: the idea of a greater German *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community). Recently harnessed as a symbol of unity by Nazi ideology, it was now applied to mean a common destiny for all Germans (expellee and native alike) in the BRD, the DDR, and the Polish-administrated eastern territories. [45] Former Breslau journalist (later chairman of the political *Eichendorffgilde*) Rudolf Jokiel likewise decreed in 1948 that the "preservation" and "nourishment" of the German "biological ability to achieve" (*biologische Leistungsfähigkeit*), its "mental and spiritual intensity," and its "cultural power to create" (*Gestaltungskraft*)" demanded that the entirety of the German *Volk* preserve eastern German culture.[46] Though he had been persecuted by the Nazis, the first postwar

[43] Pfeil, *Der Flüchtling*, 5, 11-12.
[44] Friedrich Meinecke, *The German Catastrophe*, trans. Sidney B. Fay (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 75. There was some continuity in Meinecke's ambitions for the East. As Fritz Epstein has shown, Meinecke was in favor of German expansionist aims in the East as late as Summer 1917 during the First World War. See "Friedrich Meinecke on Eastern Europe," in *Germany and the East*, ed. Robert Byrnes, 21-50 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 41. Originally published in the *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands* 3 (1954): 119-144.
[45] It is no accident that a chief federal ministry for dealing with Germans from the East was called the *Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen*, the Federal Ministry for all-German problems. *Patenschaft* charters strongly intoned the idea that the expulsion had forged a common German destiny. *Heimatbuch des Kreises Löwenberg in Schlesien*, 3rd ed. (Bückeburg: Grimmesche Hofbuchdruckerei, 1959), 217. For more on the success Nazis found in the motivating power of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, see Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MS and London: Belknap Press, 2008).
[46] Rudolf Jokiel, "Vorwort zur 'Schlesischen Reihe," in *Was der Osten dem deutschen Volke gab*, by Ludwig Böer, Schlesische Reihe Werkhefte der Eichendorffgilde Heft 1 (Aschaffenburg: Paul Pattloch Verlag, 1948), 6.

president of Minden-Lippe in Lower Saxony (the West German native Heinrich Drake) expressed his hopes that awareness of a German past in the lost territories would "strengthen the will of the *Volksgemeinschaft*"; though he admitted that recovery of the East was uncertain, he warned West Germans that whoever failed to assist in the preservation of eastern German culture was "a traitor to his own people."[47] Even in 1963, expellee leaders were still emphasizing the unity of all German lands in talks and excursions under such headings as a "study trip through the lower and upper Franconian realm with special attention to the connections between Franconia and Silesia."[48] The whole of the German *Volksgemeinschaft* was to be united in its right to the imagined *Heimat* of 1937.

2. The Three Kinds of *Recht auf die Heimat*

By all appearances, the discussions so far would make it seem as though, through the first years of the Federal Republic, the expellee movement was not only headstrong but enjoying significant support from the state and population. After all, in 1950, roughly a quarter of all Silesian exiles were members of either the Silesian or Upper Silesian *Landsmannschaft*.[49] In that same year, a new expellee political party, the *Block der Heimatvertriebenen* (BHE), captured 23.4% of the vote in expellee-saturated Schleswig-Holstein; this was followed by 5.9% at the federal level in 1953. That was the high point, however: by 1954 support in Schleswig-Holstein had dropped to 14%, and this trend repeated itself across the republic, such that by 1961 the BHE had to combine with another party and faded from view. Less ephemeral was the League of Expellees (BdV), established in 1957 through the union of earlier coalitions among regional and *Landsmannschaft* organizations, giving it 2.5 million members at its founding. While on the

[47] Heinrich Drake, "Geleitworte," in *Guda Obend, Ihr lieba Leute!: Ein heimatliches Jahrbuch für die Schlesier in der Fremde*, ed. Paul Zwiener (Bad Neustadt/Saale: Carl Goldammer, 1949), v.
[48] *Schlesischer Studentenbund* (SSB) *Rundbrief* 4 (July 1963), BAK B 290/2, 20.

surface it called for friendly relations with Poland, in reality it lobbied for border revision and cessation of any form of cross-border aid.[50]

If, as the coming chapters argue, fewer and fewer expellees actually planned to return to the lost East through the late 1940s and 1950s (to say nothing of the 1960s), why did so many join expellee organizations, read their papers, attend their rallies, and even vote for their politicians? In fact, even if an expellee was offended by the official rhetoric about border revision and mass resettlement, there remained two principal reasons to grant at least mild support to the expellee movement, especially during the first fifteen years when it was at its strongest: economic questions and the commemoration of *Heimat*. Not only were both of these questions often perceived as separate from the idea of *Heimkehr*– contrary to the intentions of the leadership, they also competed with and weakened it.

The leadership's calls for a *Recht auf die Heimat* embodied two principles: the right to the lost *Heimat* in the East *and* the right to a home in the West. The former must be divided into two distinct approaches: the right to *commemorate* the lost *Heimat* and the right to *return* to it. These will be dealt with in turn, after we explore the right to a *Heimat* in the West, that is the right of expellees to a roof and sustenance (later economic means on par with the West German natives) wherever they landed.

It should be expected that, after losing virtually all of their property in the East and living for years in poverty in the West, expellees were extremely interested in any efforts that could improve their economic standing. By 1952, over seven million expellees had entered into the Federal Republic of Germany, and their leaders advocated constantly for expellee economic improvement. To this end, they played an important role in the parliamentary debates about the

[49] Schoenberg, *Germans from the East*, 317-320.

most sweeping social legislation in West German history: the Equalization of Burdens Law (*Lastenausgleichgesetz*). Passed on September 1, 1952, the law ordered a drastic redistribution of wealth: those who had lost less during the war were compelled to contribute resources, which the government then redistributed primarily for the benefit of the refugees. Over the first thirty years of the law's existence, more than one hundred billion German marks were generated to help millions of destitute West Germans start forming a new existence in the West.[51] Though they took credit for this achievement, the expellee leaders' typically unyielding rhetoric actually tended to impede rather than assist in the debates. At the same time that leaders critiqued the snail's tempo of the law's passage, they delayed it through their impossible demands that somehow the *Lastenausgleich* must reimburse expellees "proportionally" for what they had lost.[52] The expellee leader Linus Kather threatened that, due to his frustration that expellees would not recover significantly more wealth than was offered, he would muster millions of expellees into a political force by leaving the CDU for the BHE, the Block of Expellees; he carried out his threat in 1954, though relatively few expellees followed the example of his political conversion.

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[50] Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Bonn-Warschau 1945-1991: Die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen, Analyse und Dokumentation* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1992), 32-33.

[51] No real "equalization" was really possible after the war, only a mitigation of the damages already suffered by war, expulsion, and currency reform. This being said, by December 2001 143,337,000,000 DM had been distributed in response to 60 million applications for aid. For analyses of the many debates surrounding the conception and passage of this and other crucial social and economic legislation in the western zones through first decade after the war, see Paul Erker, *Rechnung für Hitlers Krieg: Aspekte und Probleme des Lastenausgleichs* (Heidelberg, Verlag Regionalkultur, 2004); Michael Hughes, *Shouldering the Burdens of Defeat: West Germany and the Reconstruction of Social Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Carl-Jochen Müller, *Praxis und Probleme des Lastenausgleichs in Mannheim, 1949-1959* (Mannheim: Institut für Landeskunde und Regionalforschung der Universität Mannheim, 1997); Kersten Oldenhage, ed., *Lastenausgleich (1948-1990)* (Koblenz: Bundesarchiv, 2002); Reinhold Schillinger, *Der Entscheidungsprozess beim Lastenausgleich, 1945-1952* (St. Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae, 1985); Arne Weick, "Homburger Plan und Währungsreform: Kritische Analyse des Währungsreformplans der Sonderstelle Geld und Kredit und seiner Bedeutung für die westdeutsche Währungsreform von 1948," Ph.D. Dissertation: Frankfurt/Main, 1998; Rüdiger Wenzel, *Die große Verschiebung? Das Ringen um den Lastenausgleich im Nachkriegsdeutschland von den ersten Vorarbeiten bis zur Verabschiedung des Gesetzes 1952* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008).

[52] Wenzel, *Die große Verschiebung*, 106, 131, 137.

Widespread expellee enthusiasm for economic aid explains, not only the comparatively high membership in political organizations early on, but also the decline which followed as material needs were met. It was not only the case that, for most expellees, the economic right to a home in the West trumped the political right for *Heimkehr* in the East. As Hans-Adolf Jacobsen has observed, the two *Heimat* rights were in fact "contradictory politics."[53] If expellees found their right to a Western *Heimat* satisfied, did they really need to return to the East? The leadership knew about this contradiction, but in general either ignored or downplayed it. When Federal Expellee Minister Hans Lukaschek reviewed with pride the work achieved toward economic integration on the eve of the *Lastenausgleich* legislation in 1952, he lost no time in adding that return of the lost territories to Germany remained a matter of economic and historical necessity.[54] He did not want to acknowledge reality: while every expellee agreed about the right to employment, housing, and other life necessities in the new *Heimat*, this had potential to diminish their desire to return to the old one.

As noted above, two distinct objectives were embedded in the idea of a right to the lost *Heimat* in the East: commemoration and the actual intention to return there. Until now, these two very different approaches to *Recht auf die Heimat* have been collapsed into the same meaning: by commemorating the old *Heimat*, expellees wanted to return. Once they are disentangled, it becomes clear that, even if the latter objective was constantly on the wane, expellees still supported their movement and its leaders as a way to keep alive memory of the old *Heimat*.

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[53] Jacobsen, *Bonn-Warschau 1945-1991*, 32-33.

[54] Hans Lukaschek, *The German Expellees: A German Focal Problem*, 2nd ed. (Bonn: Federal Ministry for Expellees, July 1952). On other occasions, Lukaschek was less focused on physical return; at the first federal meeting of Silesians in September 1950 he professed that "we will never forget our Silesian *Heimat*; we will always hold it faithfully in our hearts. But in this way we will stand firm with both feet on the ground of reality and muster all of our strength for the construction of our new West German *Heimat*. Only when we have succeeded in this are we justified in expecting our united German fate to turn for the better." Hans Lukaschek, Greeting, September 1950, in "1. Bundestreffen der Schlesier der Landsmannschaft Schlesien für das Gebiet der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin" (Landsmannschaft Schlesien, 1950), 4.

Fearful lest they lose their sense of identity in the face of integration in the West, they participated in a widespread culture of commemoration devoted to the Lost East.

It seldom occurred to expellee leaders that commemoration could fail to encourage the idea of *Heimkehr.* And to this end (to combine the theories of Celia Applegate and Benedict Anderson), they poured all of their energy into the creation of an *imagined regional community*: with the onset of national collapse and boundary changes, the adaptable regional identity resurfaced to trump the national one (Applegate); and diverse and scattered peoples imagined a common bond because of a shared sense of history and traits (Anderson), as when leaders frequently cited the experience of expulsion and eastern German culture as having fashioned expellees into a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*, a community of fate.[55] To produce this regional imagined community, they sponsored the ubiquitous creation of material artifacts meant to commemorate and "preserve" the world they had lost. Usually tapping into their federal funds, *Heimat* groups erected almost five hundred monuments across West Germany by the late 1960s to memorialize the expulsion and the German Eastern Territories, while street names, town squares, and whole newly constructed quarters and towns took on the names of people and places in the former East. Even commemorative postage stamps were devoted to the lost territories.[56] As a tribute to Gablonz in the Sudetenland, famed for its glass industry, Neugablonz was founded to house the same industry next to the town of Kaufbeuron in Bavaria. At Germany's southern border in Friedrichshafen on the shores of the Lake of Constance, a large stone still bears the inscription "to the constant remembrance of our eastern German *Heimat*," as well as

[55] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (New York: Verso, 1991); Celia Applegate, "A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (1999): 1157-1182.
[56] Eva Hahn and Hans Henning Hahn, "Flucht und Vertreibung," in *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte: Eine Auswahl*, ed. Etienne Francois and Hagen Schulze, 332-350 (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2005), 337; Kai Struve, "Vertreibung und Aussiedlung," in *Schlesische Erinnerungsorte: Gedächtnis und Identität einer*

the coats of arms of provinces in the 1937 borders (and even as distant as the Baltic and Volga). Far to the north in Lübeck, expellee suffering is still commemorated directly beside one of Germany's most potent symbols of the air bombardment: the bell which smashed to the floor in the tower during the Allied bombing raid on Palm Sunday night, March 28, 1942. Under a disk-shaped plaque "in commemoration of all the dead that rest in the distant *Heimat*," stained glass windows bear the names and coats of arms of all the major provinces and cities that had once been home to German-speaking populations well beyond just the Oder-Neisse territories. At similar memorials across the whole of West Germany, expellees were intended to find the names of their old *Heimat* and believe that here, at least, it lived on.

West German states and cities also took on *Patenschaften* (sponsorships) for lost regions and cities. In sponsoring Lower-Silesian Jauer, Herne (in the Ruhr region) promoted the creation of *Jauer Street*, a large wall mural with a silhouette of the Jauer townscape, Jauer *Heimat* maps, a Jauer *Heimat* room, and a bookstore of the German East containing a large Silesian selection.[57] At *Heimattreffen* (homeland gatherings) expellee leaders incessantly preached that *Recht auf die Heimat* meant *Heimkehr* (as at the first Silesian *Landsmannschaft* gathering in Lower Saxony on September 17-18, 1949, attended by 80,000 people).[58] This official culture of commemoration continued with little change over the following decades. After presenting all Germans, Jews, and East Europeans as victims of Hitler and Nazis, a 1963 picture book of "Germany yesterday and today" sought to dispel any notion that, because it was currently behind the Iron Curtain, the German East could possibly constitute such a boring, Russian Steppe. Rather, it painted landscapes devoid of human habitation, a gorgeous German East of natural wonders, undisturbed

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mitteleuropäischen Region, ed. Marek Czapli ski and Tobias Weger, 281-305, Eine Veröffentlichung des Schlesischen Museums zu Görlitz, (Görlitz: Neiße Verlag, 2005), 286.

[57] Tost, *Heimatbuch des schlesischen Kreises Jauer-Bolkenhaim*, 6.

[58] "Schlesiertreffen in Hannover," *Kirchenblatt für Evangelische aus Schlesien* 9/10, October/November 1949, 8-9.

and frozen in ether. Pretending that the expulsion had never taken place, the book boasted that Silesian wines in Grünberg [Zielona Góra] were still better than Saxon varieties, and the *Schneekoppe*, the highest point of Silesia's *Riesengebirge* mountain chain, lived on like its poets Gerhart Hauptmann and Jacob Böhme: immortal, idealized, and German.[59]

Expellee leaders were not "inventing traditions" out of air; to produce a sense of social cohesion and membership in their cause, the histories, landscapes, costumes, and other cultural "traits" that they invented were *in dialogue with* the oft-idyllicized living memories and traditions of the expellees themselves.[60] At the same time that leaders adapted expellee depictions of *Heimat* for their own purposes (to demand border revision and *Heimkehr*), their slogans did not convey the real intentions of those who had first articulated them.[61] The diverse body of expellees was fully capable of interpreting and using the leadership's histories, speeches, and monuments for their own needs after the trauma of loss and displacement.[62] As will be further discussed in chapter five, expellees in fact used the commemorative space of *Heimat* gatherings as a venue to commemorate *Heimat* with old friends. The production of a regional imagined community even had potential to work *against* the objective of *Heimkehr*. If an expellee was consoled to find beloved past icons preserved around him in the West, what need was there to return to the East?

This brings us to critically engage the third variant of *Recht auf die Heimat*: the objective of *Heimkehr*. From the leadership's assertions in mainstream society, the movement's take on *Heimkehr* might already seem to be a given: all expellees should return to the Lost East when, in

[59] *Deutschland gestern und heute, Eine Porträt in Farben* (München: Südwest Verlag, 1963), 191, 193.
[60] Eric Hobsbawm favors a more artificial and solidly top-down approach to invented traditions in his introduction to *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 9.
[61] Jürgen Joachimsthaler, "Die Semantik des Erinnerns," in *Landschaften der Erinnerung*, ed. Elke Mehnert, 188-227 (Frankfurt, 2001), 224-225.

due course, it was returned to a united Germany. In fact, this official narrative was often contested from within the movement itself. While past literature has illustrated how petty fights over jurisdiction or party control damaged the movement's momentum, I propose a more devastating weakness: a broad swathe of the local or small-time leaders competed in denouncing the leadership's narrative as insufficient, even harmful, because it proposed a *Heimkehr* too impractical to ever be physically achieved.[63] As numerous as they were small, groups proposing alternate interpretations of *Heimkehr* were often severely marginalized, not just by the expellee leadership, but by expellees themselves, who tended not to worry about practical complications in a *Heimkehr* they never intended to undertake. Most militated against any thought of *Heimkehr* to a realistic future world that would, of course, be much different from the *Heimat of memory* they cherished.

At the heart of "practical" proposals of *Heimkehr* was the unavoidable question of what was to be done with Silesia's Polish settlers. After the trauma of expulsion, and amid the glaring reality that Silesia was becoming a Polish province, spokespeople only rarely mentioned their tacit assumption that Germans should settle Silesia at the expense of the Poles who lived there now. Herbert Hupka proclaimed in 1959 that, on the day of *Heimkehr*, "what is done in the meantime with the foreign property masters [Polish settlers] in Silesia cannot affect any one of us, as if new circumstances for justice are created by accomplished facts."[64] Such a chilling

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[62] Unger has claimed the *Ostforschung* had potential to serve as an instrument that helped expellees to come to terms with loss, see *Ostforschung in Westdeutschland*, 111.

[63] See studies such as Ahonen, Stickler, and Schoenberg for the significant infighting within the expellee movement. To name just an example, Linus Kather (a lawyer from East Prussia) helped to co-found the CDU to lobby for the interests of expellees; he then left the party in protest in 1954 to join BHE and gave constant headaches to the Upper Silesian expellee advocate Hans Lukaschek, who remained in the CDU.

[64] Herberg Hupka, "Freiheit für Schlesien," in *Freiheit für Schlesien. Deutschlandtreffen der Schlesier. Köln 26.-28. Juni 1959*, ed. Landsmannschaft Schlesien (Groß-Denkte über Wolfenbttel: Grenzland-Druckerei Rock & Co, 1959), 11-13.

dismissal of the problem met with conflicting interpretations from the most ardent believers in *Heimkehr*.

Some declared that "justice" could only mean a *Heimat* violently restored to what they imagined it to have been. Nursing his resentment of past suffering, one leader asserted: "it's certainly worth protesting the idea of living together with Poles in our Silesian *Raum*, because it is *our Heimat*."[65] The fringe group Aktion Oder-Neiße likewise explicitly demanded the "withdrawal of the 'residents of eastern Germany unjustly living there now,'" arguing that "according to generally recognized rules of state and human rights, not only eastern Germany but also the Sudetenland and Memel region," even Danzig should be German territories. With callous generosity, AKON promised that the new expulsion of Poles would be far more humane than what had happened to the Germans before them.[66]

At times, sincerity for ethnic cleansing and "reordering" appeared more reminiscent of the future-oriented Nazi vision for a "new order" than a "return" to an idyllic past. When Georg Schmelze proposed *Rücksiedlung* (return settlement), he insisted that the East, allegedly given its "pure German" quality by an age-old German tribal settlement, was to become the *Heimat* for all Germans. Legal provision, he argued, had already taken place: because the West German regime had granted aid to expellees in the *Lastenausgleich* (Equalization of Burdens), "the personal rights to the earlier property" had now devolved to the state. Because of this, he declared, all West Germans were now "settlers" and should send pioneers to the East. With regard to Polish borders and settlers, he demanded that Poland legally recognize the borders of 1918, after which time "the German *Volk* could also renounce parts of East Prussia, Posen, and east Upper Silesia for the resettlement or re-ordering." So granting Poland a few more "German" territories than it

[65] Italics in original, Paul Korpilla, "Kein Ressentiment?" *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 3, no. 1 (January 1954), 3.

had possessed by 1937, he felt that the demands of "good neighborliness and cooperation" would be satisfied.[67]

By contrast, other expellee leaders proposed that *Heimkehr* should involve finding a way to live *with* the Polish inhabitants. Based upon the idea that "the circle of time is not to be turned back," Ludwig Landsberg came to the conclusion that Germans should be "ready to live and work together with the people who have come to take possession of the land in the meantime."[68] As the leader of an expellee student movement in Heidelberg, Horst Matzke went so far as to embrace the hypothetical vision of a future multicultural Silesia; because in the eyes of God both Poles and Germans had a "right" to the land, he and his fellow returnees would "have to find a new means of living together with those that we encounter there, without resentment and hatred!" While he and other returnees would of course take back possession of their former property, he sought to humanize those they would encounter there: "the Poles who were born in 1945 in our old *Heimat* are now eleven years old, just as old as many of us were when we were expelled."[69] However it became clear that this vision was just as unrealistic as the official narrative at a November 1951 meeting of German expellee and Polish exiled youth in Paris. For all their common espousal of the right of peoples to return to their *Heimat* of origin, any mention

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[66] "'Akon' fordert Abzug der Polen aus Ostdeutschland," *Dürener Nachrichten*, November 10, 1964, BAK B 234/42.
[67] Georg K. Schmelze, "Ostmitteleuropa. Grundlage seiner Zukunft," conceptual tract for the article "Ostmitteleuropäische Zukunft" at the presentation on December 30, 1962 in Amiesenhof von Waldhäuser, BAK B 234/64, 1, 4.
[68] Ludwig Landsberg, "Rückkehr ohne Illusion. Ein Beitrag zur Vertriebenenfrage," *Briegische Briefe* 6, no. 2 (February 1952): 36-39.
[69] Horst Matzke, "Ist der Begriff 'Heimat' Ausdruck der Vergangenheit? Gedanken aus dem Arbeitskreis 'Europa und der osten' der Heidelberger Studenten-Gemeinde," *Schlesien jenseits und diesseits der Neiße. Mitteilungsblatt der Evangelischen Jugend aus Schlesien* 3, no. 3/4 (March/April 1956): 8-9. Matzke was likely from Gross Wartenburg, since a youth by this name attended the Silesian city's *Bundestreffen* in 1957, along with his parents and sister. "Rückschau auf das Bundestreffen 1957. Erfreuliches und Unerfreuliches– Der Kreis Groß Wartenberg wieder stark vertreten," *Heimatblatt für den Kreis Groß Wartenberg in Schlesien* 3, no. 7 (October 1957): 2.

of the Oder-Neiße line stimulated hostility, demonstrating the "real problems" standing in the way of any common ground.[70]

As a final example, Theodor Kapitza's O/S Aktion expellee group deplored all population schemes and proposed a deeply regionalized, Upper Silesian vision of *Heimkehr*.[71] In continuity with local independence movements dating back to the Upper Silesian plebiscite of 1921, his intimate, if isolated group demanded the creation of an independent Upper Silesia, dominated by a Schlonzok dialect-speaking population that shared both German and Polish roots and cultural traits.[72] It openly attacked the Silesian *Landsmannschaft*'s vision of *Heimkehr*, comparing the idea of settling Germans in Upper Silesia to Hitler's plan to degrade Slavs and transform Upper Silesia into "a raped [*vergewaltigte*] colony settled with foreigners [*Landfremden*]," that is Germans.[73] As punishment for its rejection of the privileged official narrative, O/S Aktion found itself cut off from federal funding, though for members this became a point of pride, proving that Kapitza was working "out of love for our Upper Silesian *Volk*, rather than out of love for the Federal coffers at Bonn."[74] So it was that O/S Aktion transformed the word *Heimkehr* into a slogan calling "all Upper Silesians" to return home beside kin still

[70] lt, "Der Boden wird aufgelockert," *Der schlesische Katholik* 1, no. 1 (January 1952), 3.
[71] A distinct Upper Silesian identity was common among expellees, even prompting the creation of a separate Upper Silesian *Landsmannschaft.* Literature by Upper Silesian expellees, whether by Horst Bienek or August Scholtis, has often depicted the region in very localized terms, drawing on its mixed ethnic heritage while emphasizing its place in a German Fatherland. Scholtis, *Reise nach Polen: Ein Bericht* (München: Biederstein Verlag, 1962); "Nur mit dem Kopf im Westen. Der aus Schlesien stammende Schriftsteller Horst Bienek im Gespräch mit Adam Krzeminski," in Klaus Bachmann, Jerzy Kranz, and Jan Obermeier, *Verlorene Heimat. Die Vertreibungsdebatte in Polen* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1998).
[72] For more on the interwar Upper Silesian independence movement, see Günther Doose, *Die separatistische Bewegung in Oberschlesien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg, 1918-1922* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987) and Tomasz Kamusella, *The Szlonzoks and their Language: between Germany, Poland and Szlonzokian Nationalism* (San Domenico: European University Institute, 2003).
[73] Steffan G. Malek, "Das muß jeder Oberschlesier wissen!" *Piasten-Kurier: Wegweiser für die Heimkehr nach Oberschlesien* 2, no. 5 (November 1952), 2.
[74] Ibid., 2-3.

living in the *Heimat*, to build a free Upper Silesia for Upper Silesians.[75] How this would come to pass was never fully clear, though presumably there would be protection by neutral powers, and the province's industry would somehow help to build a more united Europe.[76] In the end, for all of its activism in sending proposals to the German, Polish, and even U.S. governments, O/S Aktion's newsletter vanished in 1954, after only four years in print. For most Upper Silesian expellees, awareness that their kin still suffered persecution and poverty in Stalinist Poland made Kapitza's call for *Heimkehr* little more appealing than the *Heimkehr* envisioned by the mainstream expellee leadership.

The official narrative's rigid platform for *Heimkehr* not only alienated certain members of the leadership– what leaders saw to be a very logical political argument for recovering the homeland unwittingly damaged their own program to convince expellees of the need for return. In their zeal to demonstrate how much Poles had "mismanaged" the *Heimat* they had left behind, the leadership added even more fuel to the sense in the whole expellee population that the cherished world of the former East no longer existed to be returned to. Already for most expellees, Silesian history was not cyclical but linear, a steady stream of progress broken at the end by final rupture. They nursed a sense that injustice had been perpetrated against them, but also felt a growing despondence that there could be no *Heimkehr* to a *Heimat* that was gone forever. However, as this grassroots revolution away from the idea of *Heimkehr* forms the main focus of the coming chapters, analysis of this third form of *Recht auf die Heimat* will focus on the leadership's perspective.

3. The Leadership's Response to Lack of Interest in *Heimkehr*

[75] Schriftleitung und Verlag, "Unser Weg," *Piasten-Kurier: Wegweiser für die Heimkehr nach Oberschlesien* 3, no. 1 (January 1953), 2.

On the surface, when they looked to their influence in political circles and the reach of their propaganda, things were going very well for expellee scholars and educators in the mid-1950s. On April 13, 1953, the interior ministry for North Rhine Westphalia ruled that schoolteachers were to call the DDR the "Soviet Zone," and areas on the other side of the Oder and Neisse rivers should be known as the "German Eastern Territories under Polish or Soviet Administration."[77] It was with this license that leading expellee scholars opened a state-sponsored volume on pedagogy in 1955 with the typical assertion that:

> according to human rights, the German Eastern Territories, which stand under foreign administration, are still a part of Germany as before. Winning them back in a peaceful fashion is the task of the whole German people. Historically, culturally, and economically, the German East has always been extremely important for all of Germany. For this reason, every school and all who enter into them also have the special task to give instruction about [the German East].[78]

To achieve these stated goals, *Ostforscher* had great influence at teaching conferences, as in April 1954, where instruction was dedicated to instilling in expellee youth a spiritual bond with their old *Heimat* and convincing Rhinelander youth generally that their history was inextricably tied to that of the "German East".[79] Another such conference in July 1955 decreed that every school should have at least one *Ostforscher*, each university should have a research council for eastern German questions, and *Ostkunde* (study of the East) was to receive emphasis in teaching examinations and course lectures.[80] All of this was to ensure that students learned of how

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[76] Theodor Kapitza für die 'Oberschlesische Aktion,' "Protest der 'O/S-Aktion' an den US Präsidenten Eisenhower," *Piasten-Kurier: Wegweiser für die Heimkehr nach Oberschlesien* 3, no. 3 (March 1953), 1.
[77] "Bezeichnung der sowjetischen Besatzungszone, Runterlaß des Innenministers des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen I-16-70 Nr. 48/53 vom 13 April 1953," in *Der Deutsche Osten im Unterricht* (Troisdorf/Rheinland: Wegweiserverlag, 1955), 19.
[78] *Der Deutsche Osten im Unterricht*, 3. The cultural minister of North Rhine Westphalia had spoken out in several ordinances that the German East should be an integral part of classroom instruction.
[79] Hermann Aubin, "Westöstliche Forschungsaufgaben der Sozial und Wirtschaftsgeschichte," in *West-Ostdeutsche Forschungsaufgaben: die Wechselbezeigungen zwischen west und Ostdeutschland als Forschungsaufgabe der Geschichtlichen Landeskunde. Bericht über die 12 Arbeitstagung des Instituts für geschichtliche Landeskunde der Rheinlande an der Universität Bonn vom 12. bis 14. April 1954*, 72-76 (Troisdorf/Rheinland: Wegweiserverlag, 1955).
[80] "Engschließungen zum Ostkunde-Unterricht in den Schulen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen," in *Ostdeutschland im Unterricht: Vorträge Gehalten auf der ersten Ostdeutschen Unterrichtstagung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen im St. Georgsheim in Süsseldorf-Hassels Juli 1955*, ed. Arbeits- und Sozialminister des Landes Nordrhein-

"Germany" existed "in a peaceful struggle for reunification with its central and eastern territories."[81]

Many textbooks published in the 1950s and 1960s devoted extensive space to the former German east. The re-publication of Emil Hinrichs's 1939 history textbook for "Germany and the surrounding lands" in 1962 featured a map of Germany in its 1937 borders, asked students to name the three rivers that met the Oder river in Silesia between the Glatzer and Lusatian Neisse, and never mentioned the Third Reich at all, much less the role and legacy of Central Europe's Jewish population.[82] Over half of the section concerning Germany's neighbors was devoted to praising German achievements in the East and pretending that the Oder-Neisse territories remained German: prewar photographs featured Danzig and the Hela Peninsula, Königsberg was described as though it were still capital of East Prussia, Stettin was again Germany's third-largest port. Only in depressing photos thereafter did the reader witness *Stalingradstraße* in a Königsberg destroyed by war, where "Germans don't live anymore."[83] A 1956 general geography textbook written by a Hamburg-born scholar likewise ignored Nazi abuses in his treatment of the "German East," as they could have complicated his narrative about the ongoing, timeless influence of German culture in the lands of Germany's eastern neighbors, where borders awaited final delineation in a future peace conference.[84] A map of Germany in its 1937 borders

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Westfalen, 200-203, *Der Wegweiser*: Zeitschrift für das Vertriebenenwesen 10 (Troisdorf/Rheinland: Wegweiserverlag, 1956), 201.

[81] "Geleitwort," in Ibid., 3. *Ostforscher* did attempt some strides toward a more balanced view of the Nazi period, as when Gotthold Rhode, Freiherr von Braun, and Werner Conze, among others, backed Enno Meyer's 1956 theses about representation of the German-Polish relationship in history instruction. In addition to the classic tenets about the German civilizing mission to the East and the tragedy of the expulsion, Meyer also recommended discussion of Polish and Jewish victimhood in Nazi concentration camps. *Über die Darstellung der deutsch-polnischen Beziehung im Geschichtsunterricht* (Braunschweig: Albert Limbach Verlag, 1960), 18. The first and second editions sold out within months, leading to a third edition in 1960.

[82] Emil Hinrichs, *Deutschland und die Länder Europas ringsum: mit beiträgen von Wilhelm Franz und Wilhelm Grotelüschen*, Erdkunde für höhere Schulen (Frankfurt am Main: M. Diesterweg, 1962), 101.

[83] Ibid., 57.

[84] Hermann Bartels, *Mitteleuropa: Kultur und Wirtschaftsgeographie*, Erdkundliches Unterrichtswerk für höhere Lehranstalten vol. 9, 1st ed. (München-Düsseldorf: R. Oldenbourg, 1956), 21.

dominated the cover of Wilhelm Schäfer's 1956 "World History for Higher Schools," and a 1950 population density map featured a heavily-populated "western" and "central" Germany, while the "purely German" *Heimatboden* east of the Oder and Neisse remained *blank*, as though no population lived there at all anymore.[85] Poles did not exist in eastern lands that still had to conform to their earlier, "German" appearance.

By 1955, Albert Schettler, the expellee school advisor to the North Rhine-Westphalia state government, could boast of how he and other self-appointed spokespeople had "slowly made things right."[86] Thanks to his agitation, the state cultural minister had decreed that the dates October 25-28, 1955 were to celebrated as "Eastern and Central German Days" to emphasize, renew, and deepen knowledge about territories still considered part of Germany.[87] In Hesse, primary education already featured seven centuries of alleged German achievements on behalf of Western civilization in the East, including an "hour of attentiveness" for the East each day.[88] Schettler was certain that, at the DDR border, signs were posted which provided the distance to cities still called Breslau, Kattowitz, and Königsberg, and train maps once again included routes through the German East. Maps with the 1937 borders were everywhere.[89] Coffee table books about Germany represented the 1937 borders to preserve the myth "that the

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[85] Wilhelm Schäfer, ed., *Erdkunde für höhere Lehranstalten*, vol. 9 Kulturgeografie Deutschlands, 2nd ed. (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 1956), 7.
[86] Albert Schettler, "Deutsche Ostkunde in den Schulen," in *Der Deutsche Osten im Unterricht*, 5-15, here 5-6.
[87] Arbeits und Sozialminister des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, ed., *Der Deutsche Osten im Unterricht*, 20. *Ostdeutscher Wochen* also took place in Lower Saxony. The state minister for expellees devoted 4,000 DM for a week meant to "deepen understanding about the German East" in classrooms through lectures, films, slide shows, musical performances, folk dances, etc. Niedersächsische Kultusminister und Minister für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und Kriegssachgeschädigte to Regierungspräsidenten in Hannover, Hildesheim, Lüneburg, Osnabrück, Stade, Aurich, die Präsidenten der Niedersächsischen Verwaltungsbezirke Braunschweig und Oldenburg, und die Staatliche Verwaltung der höheren Schulen in Hannover, "'Ostdeutsche Wochen' im Haushaltsjahr 1955," July 7, 1955, BAK B 373/33.
[88] Schettler, "Deutsche Ostkunde in den Schulen," 14.
[89] The inclusion of Kattowitz demonstrates the flexibility of the border demands, as the city had already become Polish Katowice in 1921. The Sudeten-German movement naturally hoped for the borders of 1938, while some, such as Rudolf Winde, called for restoration of the 1914 borders. "Die schlesische Landschaft (mit 5 Karten im Text)," in *Unser Schlesien*, ed. Karl Hausdorff, 65-92, here 65.

German land lives in its entirety as before, and that no outside borders can destroy the inner interconnectedness and common belonging of all the German lands."[90] To instill zeal for return and resettlement (*Rückkehr und Rückbesiedlung*), the *Kulturwerk der vertriebenen Deutschen* (tied to the BdV) sought to surpass the many nostalgic films about the lost *Heimat* and "make the lost *Heimat* spiritually present" for all Germans.[91] The exhibition *Deutsche Heimat im Osten* traveled around West Germany in 1950 and 1951, preaching that German law, language, culture, architecture, and farming had infused the East with Germanness. In view of such timely dissemination of the politicized *Recht auf die Heimat*, Schettler expressed confidence that, when Germany one day existed again within its 1937 borders, all youth – not just expellees – would "newly build up and settle our eastern German fatherland."[92]

For all his apparent confidence, Schettler made the very common lament that Germans in the West knew next to nothing about the German East, and though the Westphalian cultural ministry had already mandated classroom maps with the 1937 borders in a 1951 ordinance, few teachers had bothered to display them.[93] Another expellee leader complained that, without any sign in school atlases that the East was "*urdeutsch*," it was made to appear "as though there will never be a *Heimkehr*."[94] By 1965, a West Berlin expellee association so feared that public attention was lost that it passed a resolution demanding that the state and federal governments spread information in schools promoting the reunification of Germany in its 1937 borders.[95] But, as Manfred Malzahn later recalled his expellee schoolteacher's impassioned lectures about the former East in the 1960s: "Herr Hass must have realised that he was fighting a losing battle with

[90] *Westermann's Deutschland Buch* (Braunschweig: Georg Westermann Verlag, 1951), 7.
[91] Clemens J. Neumann, Bundespresse- und Filmstelle des BVD to Sekretariat des Kulturwerkes der Vertriebenen Deutschen, "Was sollen wir spielen? Zum Programm der Bundesfilmsstelle des BVD," August 6, 1954, BAK B 137/1251, 2.
[92] Schettler, "Deutsche Ostkunde in den Schulen," 8.
[93] Ibid., 6.
[94] npd, "Wo liegt unser Schlesien?" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 7, no. 2 (January 25, 1955), 18.

most of us."[96] Lack of sympathy among students also came from rising awareness of their professors' Nazi pasts.[97] So it was that, through the 1950s and certainly the 1960s, expellee leaders came to realize that, for all their efforts, nothing had really been achieved since Elisabeth Pfeil had wondered in 1948: "Who in the west and south of the *Reich* were familiar with the East Prussian cities and knew how one lived in them and on the land? Who really felt this loss in their heart?"[98]

Expellees in general and the youth in particular seldom took the idea of territorial revisionism to heart. It was bad enough that the expellee leadership had "fallen behind" before 1949, when exiles from the East had learned to get by commemorating *Heimat* without them. At the very height of their supposed influence in the 1950s, they found widespread disinterest in their agenda, especially among expellee youth, and they grew frantic, for they would need young backs in the event that they returned to seize possession of the *Heimat*.[99] Already in 1952, *Eichendorffgilde* chairman Rudolf Jokiel posed (in the event of border revision): "will we really forcibly resettle Silesians that no longer think about or believe in their *Heimat*, and so practice a

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[95] Hannes Kaschkat to Bundeskanzleramt, Berlin, January 1, 1965, BAK B 137/5998.
[96] Manfred Malzahn, *Germany, 1945-1949: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 2.
[97] As Burleigh observes, "Young scholars discovered that beneath the smooth mask of academic respectability, with its subscription to professional values and humanistic culture, lay the more sophisticated colleagues of the witless sadists whose actions have become all too horribly familiar." *Germany turns Eastward*, 278.
[98] Pfeil, *Der Flüchtling*, 58-59.
[99] An attempt to retain interest in "recovering" lost lands remote to most citizens' experiences was not unique to West Germany. Japan faced a similar problem in keeping alive consciousness of territories lost during World War II. When the Japanese ambassadorial secretary Kume telephoned Ottokar Chyla, the *Bundesminister für gesamtdeutsche Fragen*, on June 15, 1965, he discussed interest in West German "progress" in spreading awareness of the Oder-Neisse territories and asked for any pointers that his government could offer. Chyla, Bundesminister für gesamtdeutsche Fragen to Staatssekretär, UAL I B and AL I, "Auskunft über die Aufklärungstätigkeit der Bundesregierung über die Oder-Neiße-Gebiete– erbeten von der japanischen Botschaft," June 15, 1965, BAK B 137/1298. Though tellingly after this first conversation Chyla had already forgotten the name of the lost Japanese islands in question (part of the Kuril archipelago, Chishima in Japanese), he and other ministers did empathize that, "although one could also never closely compare the two [territorial] questions, it is nevertheless also the case in Japan that the consciousness threatens to weaken within a great portion of the general public that this island group is Japanese land." Despite his knowledge that, for all their efforts, public awareness of the German East was "weakening," Chyla ultimately presented the latest works of *Ostforschung* to Kume, who thanked him heartily and departed, really no further along than he had been before. Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen Referat I

new 'forced expulsion' from their current residences? Do we want to form penal colonies if they won't go of their own free will?"[100] In 1951, a school principal even declared his wish to force-feed love of *Heimat* into his students, narrating for them that they should "see their little houses and the land of their *Heimat*. . . shout for joy in the splendor of the Baroque in the *Grüssauer Klosterkirche*. . . climb their mountains and feel ecstasy at the forests around them."[101] Any heavy-handed attempts to indoctrinate the youth could hardly succeed, and reports continued to emerge from many quarters within the leadership that expellee youth were "no longer responsive" to any appeals to show love and care for the *Heimat*.[102]

The overwrought, frantic character of the leaders and blithe disinterest among students is vividly displayed in the records of the *Verband Heimatvertriebener Deutscher Studenten* (VHDS, founded Nov. 12, 1950 and divided into regional associations according to province of origin). Demanding "the recovery of the German Eastern Territories" in its October 1950 founding statement, the student association devoted itself to spreading knowledge and excitement about the German East at universities. For all their meetings, events, and lectures by *Ostforscher*, the group was of marginal importance from the beginning, and by 1963 it reported just four members in its Silesian Student Union (SSB) at Kiel, by 1966 a mere 2,000 members for the whole VHDS at forty-five universities.[103] Commenting on their smallness, Jörg Kudlich, the chair of the VHDS, complained at the time of how "the VHDS as a political student

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7, "Auskunft über die Aufklärungstätigkeit der Bundesregierung über die Oder-Neiße-Gebiete- erbeten von der japanischen Botschaft," July 5, 1965, BAK B 137/1298.

[100] Rudolf Jokiel, "Zwangsrücksiedlung nach Schlesien?" *Der schlesische Katholik* 1, no. 7 (July 1952), 3.

[101] Stumpe, *Schlesien*, 21-22.

[102] "Engschließungen zum Ostkunde-Unterricht in den Schulen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen," in *Ostdeutschland im Unterricht*, 201. Observations that "knowledge" of the *Heimat* was not being transmitted were common. See for example the noted sociologist Eugen Lemberg's observation at a conference for expellee administrators. "Die kulturpolitische Lage und Aufgabe im Hinblick auf die Vertriebenen und Flüchtlinge," Tagung der Landesflüchtlingsverwaltungen in Bad Dürkheim, May 20, 1954, BAK B 373/33.

[103] "Programm für das VHDS-Jahres-Seminar 1964," BAK B 290/2; *Schlesischer Studentenbund* (SSB) *Rundbrief* 4 (July 1963), BAK B 290/2, 6.

association has still never been able to have a very great influence in university circles and in the realm of other political associations in German universities." Blaming failures in past leadership, he grumbled of his "shock" whenever he went to university functions as a VHDS representative, and "the question is raised: 'What, the VHDS is still alive?!'"[104]

It is not as though there was a lack of interest in the lost *Heimat* among students. Kudlich regularly observed a plentitude of apolitical *Heimat* groups, which he belittled as "active only as historical, chummy unions that think it grand to represent eastern German history (mostly limited to one province) as lost anew, and, incidentally, only for their own satisfaction. They seldom appear at all in public, and knowledge of their existence remains reserved only for the 'inducted'."[105] For all their disinterest in rightist political agendas, young expellees really did care about the lost *Heimat*. Even though they were more likely than their parents to gain a sense of rootedness in their new lands of settlement, they often found the regionalized imagined community for Silesia appealing and, as will be further demonstrated in the coming chapters, commemorating the lost *Heimat* as they grew older.[106]

The VHDS, however, was too closed-minded to appeal to the youth, and for this it reaped its irrelevance. On June 19, 1963, a Herr Leopold (who was studying to be a journalist) sought to help the SSB make its political discussions relevant to the rest of the student body. His talk about coexistence from the Communist perspective was certainly important for the question of Silesia and probably of greater interest to the student body than the SSB's usual retreat into discussing historic border struggle, Silesia's eternal Germanness, or the need for territorial revision. For all

[104] Jörg Kudlich, "Die ostpolitische Aufgabenstellung des VHDS," BAK B 290/2, 1.
[105] Ibid., 2.
[106] This sense of connection to the lost *Heimat* was also prompted by social conditions. Kranke Dettmer found through his interviews in the 1980s that, over three decades after their expulsion, the children of expellees still remembered the discrimination against them by the western natives, and this contributed to their continued sense of difference from them. "Konflikte zwischen Flüchtlingen und Einheimischen nach Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs," *Jahrbuch für ostdeutsche Volkskunde* 26 (1983): 311.

this, the SSB leadership cancelled his talk and later pardoned itself for Leopold's very appearance in their circle: "the speaker wasn't anyone we knew and didn't comply so very much with our expectations."[107]

At the same time that they failed to capture the political sympathies of the youth, leaders were also aware of a growing disinterest in *Heimkehr* among adults. Already in 1949, Eugen Lemberg simply could not deny the fact "that individuals don't want to or aren't able to go back again." Observing a lack of readiness for *Heimkehr* among expellees, he was led like other leaders to rely on the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft* in order to continue to assert German territorial claims: "not this or that group of people, but rather the whole German *Volk* needs the lost space."[108] Of course, if anything this was even more far-fetched, since non-expellees were seldom able to point out where Breslau had been on a map; why would they ever want to *move* there? By 1952, Ludwig Landsberg was urging his peers to consider the grim reality:

> not all expellees will return, perhaps not even the majority. Though most of the elderly yearn for the old *Heimat*, many of them will remain here, because there, where the work of pioneers must succeed, there is no space for old people. Many of those who have in the meantime found an existence here, who have no reason to return back, will also remain here. Why should the Upper Silesian miner leave the Ruhr region again, where he found the same work and better living conditions than what the East can offer him? Why should the agricultural worker from the East [return] who has in the meantime gone into industrial labor? Why should all of the others who had nothing, came here with nothing, and found their bread here? Only mass-unemployment could expel them again.[109]

This realization – that expellees had attained their economic *Recht auf die Heimat* and grown roots in the West – was coupled with his observation that expellees were losing their political utility, coming to "dwell in passivity" due to their commemorative *Recht auf die Heimat*, their "memory of a better past." This brought Landsberg to the same conclusion that Lemberg had reached three years before: the resettlement of the East would have to be undertaken by the entire

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[107] *Schlesischer Studentenbund Rundbrief* 5 (1963), BAK B 290/2, 18-20.
[108] Eugen Lemberg, *Die Ausweisung als Schicksal und Aufgabe: Zur Soziologie und Ideologie der Ostvertriebenen* (Gräfelfing: Edmund Gans Verlag, 1949), 15.
[109] Ludwig Landsberg, "Rückkehr ohne Illusion. Ein Beitrag zur Vertriebenenfrage," *Briegische Briefe* 6, no. 2 (February 1952): 36-39, here 38.

German *Volk*, without consideration of restoring the former world. Even in this (unlikely!) possibility that all Germans would take on the cause of resettling the old *Heimat*, he saw only "a small remnant of hope."[110]

If indeed fewer and fewer expellees truly planned to return to the *Heimat* as the years passed, why have so many polls recorded findings to the contrary? Disregarding the prevalence of handpicked audiences or other means of distortion, the political and emotional baggage involved simply made the statistical findings unreliable. Depending on how questions were framed, an expellee might very well agree to *Heimkehr* in one poll, reject it in the next, and all the while presume that she had upheld her *Right to the Heimat*. In 1961, the editors of *Der Spiegel* assessed that, based on recent polls, "the '*Recht auf Heimat*' has long been a trifling declamation: experts estimate that at most a million people would actually be ready to return back to the East. . . . What remains is a theoretical claim to the territory which from year to year must become more questionable."[111] By contrast, through a poll only two years before, Karl Deutsch and Lewis Edinger concluded that "expellees want to regain their former lands, properties, and social positions; about one-half seem willing to settle there again; and their aspirations have the approval, mild or strong, of many German voters."[112] Had millions of expellees (not to mention millions of West Germans) simply given up on *Heimkehr* in the space of two years? What did it mean in 1959 when a mere 35% from among "1000 eligible voters" declared their belief "that Pomerania, Silesia and East Prussia will one day belong to Germany again" and were not "lost forever," while the same poll found that, out of a sampling of 2000 other eligible voters, a considerable 67% voted that the BRD "should not recognize" the Oder-

[110] Ibid., 36, 39.
[111] "Polen, Oder-Neisse Grenze: Das große Tabu," *Spiegel* 48 (22 November 1961): 65-66.
[112] Karl W. Deutsch and Lewis J. Edinger, *Germany rejoins the powers: Mass Opinion, Interest Groups, and Elites in Contemporary German Foreign Policy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 25-26.

Neisse border?[113] What was the point in refusing to recognize the border, if the provinces themselves were lost forever?

This confusion is compounded by the fact that most of those who voted for *Heimkehr* were simply expressing what they *felt* rather than what they *planned*. Here the old axiom "words are cheap" comes to mind– it was an easy thing to protest the loss of *Heimat* by claiming a desire to return, but a much harder and less likely thing to actually intend to do it. When, in a 1959 poll, expellees were asked, "If your homeland tomorrow belonged to Germany would you return there, or would that be out of the question for you," what were 38% of polled expellees imagining was at stake when they answered that they would definitely return?[114] Did they fear that, "renouncing" the world they had known, they would show satisfaction with borders they felt symbolized the "injustice" of their fate? By contrast, when one poll exposed expellee respondents to the realities of life in Silesia, it yielded a response strongly opposed to *Heimkehr*. In their summer 1962 issue, *Stern* reporter Egon Vacek and photographer Max Scheler put pictures of prewar and postwar Oels [Oleśnica] side by side, alongside interviews with the Polish inhabitants. With the *Heimat transformed* suddenly in mind, only 18% of expellees polled were ready to return to their old *Heimat*, while 61% agreed that Poles born there in the interim had acquired a *Recht auf die Heimat*.[115]

Aware of the political languor of its constituency, the leadership feared for the public viability of its objectives and so had strong incentive to "turn" results for its own purposes. As late as 1967, the *Ostforscher* Bolko Freiherr von Richthofen was adamant that seventy percent of Silesian youth wanted *Heimkehr*, while "the overwhelming majority of Silesians who haven't

[113] Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls 1947-1966*, ed. Erich Peter Neumann and Elisabeth Noelle (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1967), 482-483.
[114] Ibid., 482-483.

organized fully" still "completely endorse the line of the [*Landsmannschaft*] organization and its freely elected circles of leadership."[116] That same year, Walter Rumbar, the head of the Silesian *Landsmannschaft*'s Bavarian chapter invented a "purely factual" piece of *Meinungsforschung*, asking 5,845 members: "Does Silesia still appear to you as your *Heimat*? Or do you consider your current place of residence your *Heimat*?" After 99.2% in his captive audience affirmed that Silesia remained their only *Heimat*, "they" then somehow chanted their united "support" for "every suitable effort to reunify Silesia to Germany in a peaceful manner."[117] In the end, such statistical "proof" of a strong desire for *Heimkehr* cannot serve as a reliable indicator of expellee thought; it merely demonstrates how expellee "spokespeople" sought to invest the numbers with the results that they wanted to believe.

Conclusions

One would expect that, to survive, the expellee political movement would have to modify its claims over time in order to speak to the great economic, social, and political changes of the latter 1950s and 1960s. After all, though expellees still generally possessed lower means than their neighbors, the economic miracle was steadily erasing the ruins and impoverishment wrought by war and expulsion; a new generation was coming of age that had not experienced its parents' trauma; and the Cold War was entering into a new phase, in which the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 made reunification between the BRD and DDR less likely, a major setback for any realistic hope that the Eastern Territories could ever return to Germany. This makes it all the more striking that the expellee leadership's claims *barely changed at all*. In its

[115] Manfred Kittel, *Vertreibung der Vertriebenen? Der historische deutsche Osten in der Erinnerungskultur der Bundesrepublik (1961-1982)* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 36.
[116] Bolko Freiherr von Richthofen, *Die Schlesier vor und nach der Vertreibung aus ihrer Heimat* (Wolfenbüttel: Grenzland-Verlag, 1967), 14.

1959 Kassel Resolution, the BdV proclaimed that the four partitioning powers still had to negotiate a just and lasting peace for an undivided Germany that took into account the expellee "right to self-determination" and "claim to the *Heimat*," that is the presumed desire among expellees for *Heimkehr* back to the East. They fell back on their traditional threats of radicalism, declaring that the consequences of Versailles (Nazism and war) should serve as an historical warning.[118] And rather than give up on the Lost East, the events of 1961 actually prompted the West German regime to sponsor the publication of a book meant to educate Germans, especially the youth, about the importance and beauty of the inherently-German eastern territories.[119] As chapter seven will show, these arguments continued with little change over time: expellee leaders lobbied hard against the BRD's official recognition of the German-Polish border at the time of the 1970 Warsaw Treaty and even after reunification in 1990.

Taken from this view, the failure of the official narrative stems in large part from the fact that the leaders were simply out of touch with the desires of most expellees– not because they continued to depict the Lost East as an idealized and ever-German realm (as discussed above, many expellees supported and took part in this culture of commemoration), but because they held firm to the fantasy of return, the platform that these lands were to be reconquered and resettled with their former inhabitants. When Juliana Braun recently reviewed the thirteen hundred letters and thirty-three volumes of circular letters written from the expulsion onward by former classmates in a Breslau girl's school, she noticed that "return back to Silesia was ruled out very quickly, along with the hope to see the *Heimat* again, though their homesickness didn't

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[117] Ibid., 13-14. Meanwhile, when a poll outside their control turned out contrary to their interests, leaders attacked "misleading wording" and made excuses for the lackluster expellee poll response. Ewald Mühlberg, "Zur Aussprache gestellt. Unverrückbares Ziel: Heimkehr!" *Heimat und Glaube* 9, no. 8 (August 1957), 6.
[118] Schoenberg, *Germans from the East*, 164.
[119] Manfred Vollack and Georg Schmelzle, *Ostdeutschland und ehemalige deutsche Siedlungsgebiete in Ost- und Südosteuropa* (Stade: Selbstverlag der Schulerzeitung WIR, 1961), 4.

die away for some time."[120] Braun never addressed precisely why the girls proved so unresponsive to political demands for territorial revision and return. Finding this answer will be the goal of the next four chapters.

For a preliminary look at this "expellee take on *Heimkehr*", we will conclude by referencing the most influential document that the expellees ever produced: the Expellee Charter (*Charta der Heimatvertriebenen*), ratified by an expellee parliament in Stuttgart on August 5, 1950, and continually reprinted and cited in the years to come. Here, "conscious of their answerability to God and other people, in a Christian cultural milieu, the elected representatives of millions of expellees" renounced "revenge and retaliation" (*Rache und Vergeltung*), called for the building of a united Europe "in which peoples can live without fear or coercion," and vowed "to take part in the reconstruction of Germany and Europe through hard, untiring work." Regarding their lost *Heimat*, they declared that

> to separate people from their *Heimat* by force means to kill them in spirit. We have suffered and experienced this fate. Therefore, we feel ourselves called to demand that the *Recht auf die Heimat* be recognized and realized as one of the fundamental rights granted by God. As long as this right has not been realized for us, however, we do not want to be judged for being inactive on the sidelines. We want to create and work toward understanding and brotherly coexistence with all the members of our *Volk* in new and purified ways.[121]

In keeping with five years of reflections in pastoral letters, meetings, and correspondence, the Charter established the idea that, though expellees might feel injustice at the loss of the East, neither violence nor ethnic cleansing, much less war, had a place in their *Recht auf die Heimat.* Shortly after the Charter's ratification, a Silesian Protestant newsletter, the *Schlesischer Gottesfreund*, entreated expellees and church groups to live out the ideals of the Charter. Each Silesian was to ask whether he or she was truly willing to renounce revenge and retaliation, call

[120] Juliane Braun, ed., *Ein Teil Heimat seid Ihr für mich. Rundbriefe einer Mädchenklasse, 1944-2000* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2002), 267-268.
[121] "Charta der deutschen Heimatvertriebenen, Stuttgart, 15. August 1950," in *Bonn-Warschau 1945-1991*, ed. Jacobsen and Tomala, 74. The Charter was reprinted in countless expellee publications thereafter.

for a better future, and so seek equality before the law, not in an abstract legal sense (as in the legal right to certain borders) but in the "reality of everyday."[122] This peaceful legacy was borne out through the coming decades in the nonviolent, commemorative interpretation most expellees had of their *Recht auf die Heimat*. As Heidelberg-born Klaus Schütz, West Berlin's mayor for over a decade, recalled in 1969: "Against the suspicion that someone among us could think about violence in connection with the territories beyond the Oder and Neiße, there is the 'Charter of the German Expellees,' which was adopted by the first expellee parliament in August 1950," renouncing revenge and retaliation, and in this manner preparing expellees for the coming ratification of the border in 1970.[123]

Of course, the self-appointed spokespeople (many of whom had signed the Charter) generally interpreted it as a softhearted approach toward territorial revisionism and, presumably, further forced expulsions in the name of "peace." As Albert Schettler reflected in 1955, of course "we expellees are not interested in revenge or retaliation: at each great rally of the eastern German *Landsmannschaften*, it is stated time and again that we only propose a peaceful re-conquest of the *Heimat*."[124] In works of *Ostforschung* and in *Landsmannschaft* tracts, the Charter was reprinted, at times with very misleading English translations, and then contorted to revisionist purposes.[125] This being said, some expellees used the Charter as a way to get the leadership's endorsement while avoiding revisionist rhetoric. The editor of a small cultural journal won the support of the Silesian *Landsmannschaft* in 1951,[126] then used the Charter as a

[122] "Kirchlich betrachtet: Das Grundgesetz der deutschen Heimatvertriebenen- eine Totgeburt?" *Schlesischer Gottesfreund. Kirchenblatt der evangelischen Heimatvertriebenen* (October 1950), 68.
[123] "Artikel von Berlins Regierendem Bürgermeister, Klaus Schütz, in der *Zeit*: 'Unsere Politik gegenüber Polen,' 27. Juni 1969," in *Bonn-Warschau 1945-1991*, ed. Jacobsen and Tomala, 189-195, here 192.
[124] Schettler, "Deutsche Ostkunde in den Schulen," 15.
[125] See for instance the strident demands in the translation in Association of Expellee-Landsmannschaften, *The European Significance of the Oder-Neisse Territories* (Göttingen: Martin Saß & Co., 1954).
[126] Walter Rinke, Landsmannschaft Schlesien, *Guda Obend, Ihr lieba Leute*, ed. Paul Zwiener (Tauberbischofsheim: Fränkische Nachrichter, 1951), 4.

means to present his more moderate stance: the expellee right to the *Heimat* must be "valid before the whole world" and would "never be given up," but at the same time "we wish in no way for the restoration of our right to the *Heimat* to call forth a new war." In this vein, the text also emphasized the need to make a new *Heimat* in the West and cherish a love for the *Heimat* that expulsion had made stronger than before.[127] These latter reflections prevailed in the next year's issue, when the journal called for the preservation of memories and never voiced any demand for return.[128]

The Charter's ideals also appealed to Silesia's Jewish holocaust survivors, who in their exile often mourned the German-Jewish Silesia of their memory, but had no reason whatsoever to desire *Heimkehr* to an East that had been lost long before 1945. In words very much in keeping with the sentiment of the Expellee Charter, Robert Naumann cited a 1932 speech by the famed Silesian poet Gerhart Hauptmann that "the world will not be saved through gold or acts of violence, but rather *only* through *humanity, awareness of people, and good will.*"[129] "Even as a Jew" forced to flee from Liegnitz twenty years before in 1938, Naumann eschewed the idea of collective guilt as justification for Germany's loss of Silesia and his old *Heimat* in Liegnitz, though he feared that the injustice of Germany's lost eastern territories could portend another war.[130] His fear of future violence reflects the fact that the expellee leaders had managed to take over the idea of *Recht auf die Heimat* with their revanchist plans for *Heimkehr.* Naumann was unaware that many of his former neighbors also agreed with the ideals of Hauptmann and the Charter, and desired peace despite their sense of injustice.

[127] Ibid., 40.
[128] *Guda Obend, Ihr lieba Leute*, ed. Paul Zwiener (Waiblingen: Hochwacht-Druck, 1952), 3.
[129] Italics in original, Robert Naumann, "Blick auf Deutschland," 1958, LH 532, 24.
[130] Ibid., 11.

The next chapters will investigate how this process came about through analysis of four important venues. The first, foundational venue took place when expellees were still in Silesia, or when they heard of experiences there. From this formative stage, expellees entered the most passive but also prevalent venue: their own private reflections. These reflections then contributed to more intense commemorative endeavors in the third venue, group gatherings, where they found new rootedness in surrogate Heimat spaces in the West. Finally the venue of travel back to Silesia, made possible in limited numbers by 1956, stimulated a dramatic acceleration in the confrontation with loss, exposing expellees after many years with the stark difference between what the *Heimat* had been and what it had become. In its own way, each venue prompted expellees to contrast the two images of Heimat (*Heimat of memory* and *Heimat transformed*) and so come to realize that there was no going back to reside in a land that they could only truly possess in their memories.

CHAPTER 3

HOMESICK IN THE *HEIMAT*: GERMANS IN POSTWAR SILESIA AND THE YEARNING FOR EXPULSION[1]

"When you come back, the mountains will surely still be there!" With this promise, a priest from Hirschberg [Jelenia Góra] "sought to comfort" his parishioners as they waited for a cattle car on May 28, 1946 that would carry them from Silesia. "'Just hold on,' he urged, 'certainly they will have to leave the mountains standing there for us.'" But Gertrud Rauch was skeptical and thought: "Yes, but would we really come back?!"[2] Over the past year, she had been plundered to the point of impoverishment, forced to serve as a housemaid to the Poles who had taken over her home, ejected into ever-smaller living quarters, and had finally found herself in a camp. She had watched the invaders erase everything recalling Hirschberg's German history and grew depressed when her train to the West took her "through a devastated, destroyed Silesian land, through burned out cities." Virtually nothing was the same any longer, virtually nothing remained of her *Heimat* in this ruined, foreign land of suffering. Could mountains be enough to call her back? In the coming days, when she sought relief from the everyday misery in the West, where refugees only further narrowed housing and work possibilities, Rauch often dreamed of her mountains, but she never hoped for a return to Silesia; after the trauma of witnessing the *Heimat*'s transformation, she found instead that her "yearning goes constantly toward the lost paradise in my heart."[3] The experience of everyday foreignness and suffering in Silesia had transformed *Heimat* into an idyllic dreamland of pristine mountains and ordered German

[1] Some of this chapter has grown out of ideas in Andrew Demshuk, "'When you come back, the Mountains will surely still be there!' How Silesian Expellees processed the Loss of their Homeland in the early Postwar Years, 1945-1949," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropaforschung* 57, no. 2 (2008), 159-186.
[2] Gertrud Rauch, "'Mein Schlesierland, mein Heimatland. . . .' Und das war das Ende!" Archive Haus Schlesien [henceforth HS] BER00014, 52. This translation of *wenn* as "when," rather than "if," is deliberate; a reading of the rest of the text indicates that this was the implied meaning.
[3] Ibid., 52.

villages. Such cherished memories lived on to give her strength in her new existence in the West, while the nightmare of life in postwar Silesia left her with no desire to move back to the East.

Millions of Germans experienced the same ordeal and came to a similar understanding about the loss of *Heimat*. When the Russian offensive broke through to Silesia in January 1945, the majority fled west into the Sudeten mountains and Bohemia, into Saxony and the German heartland with whatever they could pull or carry through the snow. Though the majority of them never saw their familiar landscapes overturned by war and resettlement, a large portion of the population either stayed at home or, like Gertrud Rauch, returned from the West the following spring. Through the coming months, they tried in vain to restart their lives in the old *Heimat*. Depressed by ubiquitous signs of destruction and incapable of preventing their *Heimat* from transforming into a foreign world around them, they grew aware that others were fashioning the postwar history of the world where they had once been the masters. This imprinted indelible, negative memories of Silesia into each individual's mind; though they still felt a strong attachment to the *Heimat* they remembered, most came to yearn for expulsion to the "golden lands" of the *Reich*, a traditional designation for the German heartland in the West which many of them had never seen before, but which they imagined to embody the Germanness and prosperity that they missed in the East.

This was not the first time that eastern Germans had migrated "home" to the *Reich*. Not long before, Hitler inaugurated the ethnic cleansing of the Second World War in 1939 by calling on ethnic Germans to come "home to the *Reich*" (*Heim ins Reich*). Due to a bilateral treaty between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and motivated by fear of the coming Soviet occupation, over 60,000 Baltic Germans and 132,950 Germans from eastern Poland arrived in the *Reich* by the end of the year, many to be resettled in newly annexed territories where Nazi

occupiers were in the process of deporting the ethnic Polish and Jewish majority that had lived there.[4] By January 1944, the number of ethnic Germans coming "home" had reached 750,000.[5] Then, as the war drew to its apocalyptic finish in 1945, *Heimkehr* began to shift in meaning. Over the coming years it came to embody the hope of millions of eastern Germans even within the German nation-state's interwar borders: migration to a much smaller German heartland-*Reich*, rather than colonization of a greater German *Reich* established on conquered lands.

By 1949, virtually all the Germans left in Lower Silesia and many in Upper Silesia had been "expelled" by the Soviet and Polish authorities (on the basis of the Potsdam agreement), and, especially in the first year's deportations, they often endured lengthy stays in squalid camps and the loss of most of their remaining possessions before reaching the four occupation zones. Not all of them wanted to go, and most of them still yearned for the spaces that they remembered. Nonetheless, contrary to the presumption implied in the term "expellee," a great many of them had come to desire a postwar variant of *Heimkehr*. Gradually convinced that their *Heimat* would never become German again and sensing that they had endured enough, they yearned for "expulsion" to the *Reich* in the West where, despite the fact that natives often denigrated them as "Polacks" or "Gypsies", they found life far better than in the Lost East.[6] Those that remained behind in the *Heimat* after 1949 testified regularly to the fact that they would very eagerly join them. In August 1951, J. Langer wrote a letter to *Der Schlesier*

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[4] Valdis O. Lumans, *Hitler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 164-170. The idea of the *Reich* was flexible– after the Nazi aggression of the late 1930s, a swathe of "The East" suddenly became designated as part of the *Reich*. For more on how the movement of ethnic Germans were part of the process that brought about the Holocaust, see Götz Aly, *Final Solution: Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews*, trans. Belinda Cooper and Allison Brown (London: Arnold, 1999).

[5] Matthew Frank, *Expelling the Germans. British Opinion and Post-1945 Population Transfer in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.), 40.

[6] As Dieter Sauermann found in his hundreds of interviews with expellees, recollections still abound today of the poor welcome expellees received after such high expectations. *"Fern doch Treu." Lebenserinnerungen als Quellen zur Vertreibung und ihrer kulturellen Bewältigung, am Beispiel der Grafschaft Glatz* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 2004), 227-228.

expressing his despair at the devastation and the Polonization efforts he saw around him in Upper Silesia, declaring: "Those that remain behind in the *Heimat* are without rights and *heimatlos*."[7] Like Langer, hundreds of thousands of Upper Silesians yearned to escape from a *Heimat* that was no longer home. Softened borders amid the thaw of the mid-1950s later allured almost all ethnic Germans in former southern East Prussia to the West, and the concentration in Upper Silesia diminished with each year.

Meanwhile, as soon as expellee leaders attained power after the formation of the Federal Republic, they turned *Heimkehr* around to denote a "return" to *eastern* areas of settlement; but to their dismay this definition had little traction among the Germans still scattered through the former eastern territories and living under foreign rule. Because Upper Silesians undermined German claims to the region when they left the *Heimat*, officials in the Federal Ministry for All-German Questions (BMgF) tended to procrastinate in fulfilling any requests for *Heimkehr*. When the International Red Cross first announced its plan to assist Germans who wanted to emigrate from Poland, expellee leaders declared it "a new European scandal."[8] Such an unbending vision of *Heimkehr* failed to speak to Germans still living in the East. Weary of foreign rule, desperate to see their friends and family again, and interested in taking part in a better economic environment, they turned West, not East, to the *Reich*.

Tales from Silesia had a profound influence on the culture of commemoration that arose in West Germany. Trapped in the crowded, ramshackle environment of the immediate postwar Western partition zones, expellees regularly indulged in the illusion of living again in the old *Heimat*, precisely as they remembered it. The common sense of loyalty to the old *Heimat* and feeling that its loss was an injustice made it painful to explicitly admit that there could be no

[7] J. Langer, "Rosenenberg, kleine geschäftige Grenzstadt," *Der Schlesier*. *Breslauer Nachrichten* 3, no 24 (August 25, 1951), 4.
[8] "Schlesiertreffen in Hannover," *Kirchenblatt für Evangelische aus Schlesien* 9/10, October/November 1949, 8-9.

return, above all when the trauma of separation was yet so close. Yet at the same time, the continued stream of stories from hundreds of thousands of Germans still in or just leaving Silesia communicated a lived understanding in these formative early years that the old *Heimat* was already foreign and lost. As the Sudeten scholar Hans Lemberg observed by 1949, expellees had believed at first that they would eventually wake up from their "bad dream," that return to the *Heimat* had to be possible, that through some change in political fortunes they would go back, find their *Heimat* "devastated," and then bring it "back into order." However, despite his own hopes for a new political settlement and border revision, he observed that somehow "the people must have learned something from the continuing catastrophe of their messed up lives. Hope for a quick return (*Rückkehr*) is proven by now to be a self-deception (*Selbsttäuschung*)."[9] Indeed, in the first two years after the end of the war, roughly one out of every five expellees was already willing to acknowledge that they would not return to the East. When surveyed by the American occupying powers in 1946 and 1947, between fifteen and twenty-one percent of expellees asserted that they would never return due to the presence of Russians and Poles and because they "wouldn't find anything there, all is destroyed." Nearly all native West Germans, by contrast, who had not experienced the changes in the former East, presumed that the expellees would return if given the chance.[10] This further demonstrates the importance of expellee firsthand experience in the old *Heimat* for jumpstarting the process of dealing with loss. Even the regular distortion of the Nazi past, whether through its omission or its contortion to amplify a sense of

[9] Eugen Lemberg, *Die Ausweisung als Schicksal und Aufgabe: Zur Soziologie und Ideologie der Ostvertriebenen* (Gräfelfing: Edmund Gans Verlag, 1949), 5.

[10] Correspondence regarding Displaced Persons; the Public Health and Public Welfare Branches; Subject Files of the Medical Affairs Section 1945-49; OMGUS RG 260, NACP, 6. In November 1946, 79% of those asked responded yes to the question: "If you had permission sometime in the future, would you go back to your homeland?" In September 1947, the statistic was 85%. As of November 1946, 91% of native Germans thought that expellees would go back given the chance.

German victimhood, had potential to feed the prevailing sense of helplessness that the old *Heimat* was lost.

In sum, the peculiar homesickness that Silesians felt in the land that had so recently been their homeland fashioned a poignant departure point for further reflection over the following years. As Silesian exiles read these "survival accounts" in the West, they were prompted to ponder a decoupling of space and time, a steady process through which the imagined *Heimat of memory*, now temporally frozen, became the "real" Silesia to be preserved for future generations, while the *Heimat transformed* lost its appeal with each fresh report. Before the return of economic prosperity fostered their material integration into West German society, and before expellee organizations could form to make political demands for territorial revision, expellees started to come to terms with the permanence of their loss. After the next wave of emigration began in 1956, the dwindling remnant in Silesia sent reports that portrayed the old *Heimat* to be a land ever more foreign, ever more lost, and so demonstrated that the chasm between the two images of *Heimat* was continuing to widen. Even the Germans who still lived in Silesia mourned the loss of their *Heimat*.

1. The Physical Destruction of the *Heimat*

Our discussion of how Silesians came to yearn for expulsion begins with the factor of physical devastation. To varying degrees, Germans everywhere experienced the destruction of familiar spaces during the 1940s. Expulsion added a major difference for Silesians, since, in addition to returning to burned villages or shelled cities, most of the people they had once known were dead or scattered too far afield to ever come back. Moreover, while, as in the West, physical destruction was not seen as insurmountable, Germans in the East learned very quickly that they could hardly clear the rubble and start over. Deprived of resources to rebuild a life amid

the plundered, damaged spaces of the East, and usually forced to leave it behind in a ruined state, the Germans in Silesia absorbed a profound pessimism that the beloved *Heimat* was physically lost, graspable only in memory. As the next section will show, destruction became an important backdrop for the decisive factor of invading "foreignness," perceived in a Nazi-induced climate of heightened nationalism and the first stages of communism.

While some remained to witness the destruction of their Silesian hometowns, many hundreds of thousands fled to the mountains in January 1945 and then returned home, shocked to find ruins where they remembered an ordered *Heimat*. In his reflections over Christmas 1948, farmer Herbert Koffmane looked back on his return, in May 1945, to his farmstead in the village of Neudorf bei Bernstadt [Bierutów]. Before 1945, he could recall a proud history of hard work: planting fruit trees, increasing the livestock, and establishing electricity and plumbing. That "both houses and the old barn with attached shed were burned down" did not hold Koffmane back from starting a new existence. Previous efficiency (having added a new oven to the worker's house), combined with resourcefulness (planting potatoes and acquiring beds and tables from a nearby relic of the recent Nazi past casually referred to as the "French camp"), ensured that his family did not go hungry, even if their horses were stolen a short time later.[11] As will be shown, it was only the arrival of the Poles that ended what Koffmane fondly recalled as a promising start in overcoming the physical destruction of *Heimat*.

Elsewhere, physical destruction and the expulsion of the inhabitants convinced witnesses at once that the *Heimat* was permanently lost. In no place was destruction more total than in Glogau [Głogów]; once the largest city on the Oder river between Breslau [Wrocław] and Stettin [Szczecin], the Nazis had declared it a *Festungstadt* (Fortress city) in January 1945 and left it

[11] Herbert Koffmane, "Niederschrift des Bauern Herbert Koffmane aus Neudorf bei Bernstadt Kreis Oels/Schlesien," Christmas 1948, HS BER0036, 9.

ninety-seven percent destroyed. From the ghastly wreckage that remained, the Silesian actor Servas Lantin reported in late 1945 that, apart from a few buildings where only 800 to 900 Germans still lived:

> everything else is destroyed. . . . I spoke with the so-called Polish police president, and it is good if every Glogauer becomes used to the idea that he has written off Glogau as his *Heimat*stadt. This sentiment is little comfort for all of us today, who more than ever cling to our little piece of soil that we called *Heimat*, from which we were uprooted, but it is unfortunately the bitter truth.[12]

Roughly two thousand more Germans had returned to Glogau by late 1945 and witnessed this destruction.[13]

Memory of a ruined *Heimat* offered Silesians in both the western *and* the Soviet zones of Germany a similar starting point for their process of coping with loss. In her daybook of experiences in the ruins of Breslau [Wrocław] through April 1947, the future DDR citizen Elisabeth Waage found herself overwhelmed by the sheer extent of the destruction in what had once been her home. As in the case of Koffmane, this was just her first step toward the alienation from her former *Heimat*.[14] Though Erika Herbich settled in July 1945 with relatives in Görlitz, a town suddenly on the new Polish border along the Neisse river and just a stone's throw from her home village, destruction already made her feel less prospect for return. In a letter to former classmates from Breslau on December 5, 1946, she wrote:

> Rauscha, only forty kilometers away, has become unreachable for us. Our house was said to be burned down in October. What will the coming year bring? Will we see each other again?

Most important, she entreated her classmates, was to get a firm footing "in the new *Heimat*," while making sure that "our beautiful Silesia isn't forgotten because of this."[15] As in the West,

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[12] Servas Lantin, "Eindrücke des Schauspielers Servas Lantin aus den letzten Tages der Festung Glogau," 1945, HS BER0004.
[13] T., Report 10 in "Berichte aus Schlesien," ed. Alfred Schulz Präcentor z.Zt.Regensburg, November 1945, BAK Z 18/131, 23.
[14] Ursula Waage, *Bleib übrig. Aus den Tagebuchaufzeichnungen in der Festung Breslau und der Nachkriegszeit von January 1945 bis April 1947* (Halle: Juco, 2004).
[15] Erika Herbich, December 5, 1946, in *Ein Teil Heimat seid Ihr für mich. Rundbriefe einer Mädchenklasse, 1944-2000*, ed. Juliane Braun (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2002), 52.

this starting point in the confrontation with loss yielded an important legacy of healing over the coming decades. Indeed, everyday confrontation with the loss of the East was more comparable across the German-German border than has often been assumed, despite the fact that communist-ruled Silesians were steadily influenced by a very different political context.

2. The *Heimat* becomes a Foreign Country

When Richard Rückert left Silesia in winter 1947, he "came to accept that he would never see his *Heimat* again, because at that time the enmity and hate against Germans was so great and appeared insurmountable." It was only in 1976 that he visited Silesia again and started to explore his *Heimat* as it had become.[16] In the tense climate so soon after the cruelties of Nazism, the perceived abuses and decline wrought by implicitly inferior Polish "foreignness" proved decisive in alienating Silesians from the *Heimat* whose physical traces still surrounded them. Though at times the remaining Germans humanized, even pitied their new Polish neighbors, they seldom recognized that a German-led war had impoverished them and given them cause to resent all things German. More often the presence of Poles stimulated extreme bitterness, as well as a loathing for the lawlessness and brutality perceived in communism. Both perspectives created the sense that Silesia was now dominated and given its shape by Poles, rather than Germans; by communism, rather than the peace and order they longed for in an imagined past which, with each month, they increasingly realized could never come again. This led many of them to yearn for expulsion.

While conditions in Lower and Upper Silesia differed significantly, accounts from both regions are interchangeable in their portrayal of alienation from the onetime spaces of *Heimat*, the shared desire to preserve Silesia as they remembered it, and the wish for escape. In Lower

[16] Stephanie Rückert to Andrew Demshuk, April 7, 2008.

Silesia, an aggressive campaign led by the new Polish state to locate and integrate "autochthonous" Poles left very few of the original inhabitants, so that, by comparison to Upper Silesia, Kashubia, or Masuria, the period of immersion in a *Heimat* transforming into foreignness was short and intense.[17] This affected those that had never left, those that returned from the mountains, and some who even managed to come back using communist credentials.[18] For Gertrud Rauch, Poles became an invasive element, steadily ruining each of the most cherished parts of the former *Heimat* and stimulating a firm desire to escape the nightmare. By Christmas 1945, the Poles who had taken over her home had forced her mother to bedeck the Polish Christmas tree in her former living room with her family's traditional Christmas ornaments, to which Rauch reflected: "It's good I didn't need to see it, since I think I would have screamed." Shivering without a winter coat, she found it hard to watch a Polish woman strut about "in my pretty coat with the fur collar" and "my morning skirt of royal blue velvet," which had been ruined with mud after four weeks. In the end, her family wore rags and lacked good shoes.[19] Small wonder that Rauch no longer cared about eviction from her lifelong house in February: "we didn't look around anymore and we also didn't cry. It's just how it was. And that was the best comfort at the time."[20]

For Koffmane, Poles were an obstruction to the reconstruction of his farmstead. After the first Polish families entered his village in June 1945, the progress he had made faltered amid ceaseless plundering and attacks by Polish militias. The Polish woman who came to occupy the neighboring room was eager for the Germans to leave what was now hers: "at first shy and humble, the woman turned into a spiteful, slanderous person who only harassed us, because in

[17] Beata Ociepka, *Niemcy na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945-1970* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1992).
[18] Kommunistische Partei Ortsgruppe Hartha, notice, May 22, 1945, attached in Rudolf Uzt to Andrew Demshuk, January 18, 2008.
[19] Rauch, "Mein Schlesierland, mein Heimatland," 45.
[20] Ibid., 47.

her eyes we were only bandits."[21] When the expulsion order in September ended hopes that the Poles might leave: "It wasn't so hard for us to bid farewell to the places that had been our *Heimat* and where we still had to endure so much." His journey west, seeing only "weeds and thistles" in once-managed fields furthered his relief to cross the Neisse and ultimately reach what he called "the new *Heimat*," in which "the joy of reunions and finding people was very great."[22]

As demonstrated in Koffmane's account, the *Heimat*'s transformation often led Silesians in the East to dream of "Germany" in the West. A Silesian correspondent from *Die Zeit*, who had remained among remaining Upper Silesians in the East until 1949, observed this idealization of lost German values of "Ordnung, Wohlstand, Kultur, which they have always come to know in connection with the Germans." This resulted in "a bearing of incessant attentiveness! One works and keeps quiet and waits for better times. Expectations are bound up in an almost mythical belief in the idea of the German West (*Idee des 'Reiches'*)."[23] Dreams of "Germany" were often intensified from concrete news that life was regaining a forward momentum for those that resettled, as when Elisabeth Waage's family was lured by the prospect that relatives had already settled in the West and started new lives.[24]

By contrast to Lower Silesia, Upper Silesia suffered less physical damage and possessed a longer history of German-Polish exchange, such that the hundreds of thousands of so-called "authochthonous" onetime German citizens who remained to work the region's industries possessed a more fluid national identity. For all this, these Silesians also felt a sense of foreignness in the rapidly Polonized land that had been their *Heimat*, along with a strong desire to escape to "Germany." With the passage of just a few months after the end of the war, the

[21] Koffmane, "Niederschrift des Bauern Herbert Koffmane aus Neudorf bei Bernstadt Kreis Oels/Schlesien," 10.
[22] Ibid., 13.
[23] "Im Jenseits von Oder und Neiße. Wie es in den alten deutschen Gebieten im Osten wirklich aussieht," *Die Zeit* 4, no. 46 (November 17, 1949), 9. Silesians, like other eastern Germans, traditionally referred to the western German heartland as the *Reich*.
[24] Waage, *Bleib übrig*, 78.

correspondent for *Die Zeit* returned to his own village, which had not been damaged in the war, and was appalled to find what he considered to be "Polish" characteristics: nine of the thirty-eight houses were uninhabited and entirely "cannibalized" of their roof shingles, doors, windows, and floorboards, the overall population had fallen from 286 to 127, and the "autochthons" who remained struggled to learn the difficult Polish language. If this hadn't already challenged his claimed desire for a change in the border, it was troubled in an encounter he had with an Englishman in Spring 1946. Strolling the Polonized towns, this neutral outsider was led by everything around him to believe that Silesia had simply always been Polish. The correspondent could only try to convince him otherwise by referring to trace relics, most destroyed or concealed: German signs that had preceded the freshly painted Polish ones, church registers, and the old telephone book.[25]

Alienation in the *Heimat* itself changed a Silesian's devotion to the political agenda that the land should one day be German again. To take just one case, though an anonymous Upper Silesian writer called for the return of Silesia to Germany in the name of justice, the sheer extent of foreignness and personal suffering when he returned to his *Heimat* in August 1945 led him to despair that the lands were too far gone to ever be recovered. He yearned for escape from the *Heimat* and felt great relief once finally away.[26] With a thudding heart, he walked the empty streets and was intimidated by the prevalence of thuggish militiamen, the lack of a civil police force, and above all the thoroughly Polonized, and therefore lifeless landscape:

> Life in the cities appears to be extinguished. Everywhere, there are only Polish voices, Polish national emblems, Polish inscriptions greeting returnees and settlers. Everything is so arranged as if Silesia were an ancient Polish (*urpolnisches*) land that Germans took away from the Poles, and thus as if now an old injustice was being made right.

[25] "Im Jenseits von Oder und Neiße," 9.
[26] "Ein Christ erlebt Schlesien!" BAK Z 18/131. It was signed off as "*Beglaubigt*" by the *Justizoberinspektor* in Munich on March 22, 1946.

When he ran into his wife, she wept of the rape and suicide suffered by women of all ages.[27] The rest of Silesia he found to be a land "of absolute lawlessness," in which thousands starved because the fruitful earth was "untended," and all tried to escape to the West.[28]

That the "master race" now found itself subjected to "misrule" by "inferior races" bred racist overtones in the idea that the land had degenerated and was becoming less and less salvageable. In his four years under Polish administration, first in his hometown of Breslau and then in Bad Kudowa, Erhard Kotschenreuther's family lived off mushrooms and berries, spent a winter without heat or windowpanes in "half-crumbling houses which baffle any description," and the militia ransacked their quarters in the middle of the night for suspected possession of a typewriter. That it took four days to reach the Leobschütz camp stimulated a racist assessment of "*Polnische Wirtschaft*!", the age-old German slur imputing hereditary Polish inferiority and chronic mismanagement. Spending eleven more days in the camp did little to lift his spirits. Only in the West did he find that "we can breath freely and feel like free and secure people again."[29] Similarly, Freiherr Magnus von Braun loathed what he saw as inherent laziness in the Polish settlers, which he thought boded ill for the future fruitfulness of the land, as well as the plundering, lawless militia, which made it dangerous to walk the streets in broad daylight.[30] After also suffering in a festering camp, he was shipped West, where he and his relatives used whatever means they could to get his parents out of Silesia. For though he often recounted his profound sense of injustice and fondly recalled the former days in the homeland, he was not avid in a desire to return.[31]

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[27] Ibid., 3-4.
[28] Ibid., 14.
[29] Erhard Kotschenreuther, "Bericht über unseren Aufenthalt unter der polnischen Besatzung und unsere endlich ermöglichte Ausreise aus Niederschlesien," June 30, 1949, BAK Z 35/286, 107.
[30] Magnus Freiherr von Braun to Cardinal Graf von Preysing, August 1, 1946, BAK N 1085/63, 2-3.
[31] Ibid., 4.

In the eyes of Walter Roth, appointed as the German representative in Hirschberg's immediate postwar Polish administration, Polonization reduced a former German town to a Polish realm where Germans could only know suffering. As he reflected shortly after his escape to the West in 1946: "There were never German schools. The children also had to go begging. Whole streets received Polish names. All German inscriptions had to vanish from the streets. Hirschberg was outwardly a pure Polish city with a German slave population." Though he saw Silesians clinging to any of "the most senseless rumors" that promised the chance to remain, they were disappointed daily and realized "more and more" that Polish administration would be anything but temporary.[32]

Curt Exner described Polish foreignness as a great wave spreading over the land, steadily corrupting each space. As he made his escape from Hirschberg at the end of August 1945, "the land looked sorrowful. All the farms were in Polish hands, just like the businesses in the city. The farmers were reduced to laborers (*Knechte*) on their own farms." Only as he passed through Löwenberg [Lwówek] county did he find villages that "were still Polish-free," and therefore, at least temporarily, remained intact. But any thought that this last glimmer of the old German Silesia might survive was overshadowed when he received two letters from Hirschberg at the end of October, which "not only confirm my impressions but also show that, in the meantime, circumstances have become even worse." Thus, he argued, "when one has the bridge over the Neisse behind him and enters the Russian-occupied region, he breathes easily," because here, "people live with some security and are not seized by some sort of violence day and night."[33]

[32] Walter Roth, *Rübezahl heimatlos* (Hamburg: Hans Schlichting Verlag, 1949), 37-38.
[33] In an October 22, 1945 letter from Hirschberg, he was told: "Be glad that you are not here anymore, because the conditions here are terrible. No rest day or night. When will the whole situation change? Perhaps we will see each other sooner in the West than here in Hirschberg." Curt Exner, "Hirschberg im Riesengebirge in der Zeit vom 7.5. bis 25.8.1945," Bamberg, November 1945, HS BER0026, 15-16.

While Exner felt that Silesians had the "right" to one day rebuild their *Heimat* when (he hoped) the Poles left, these first months of sustained occupation depressed him terribly:

> We hope that the time of suffering for Silesia doesn't last much longer. Each day under Polish rule costs many Germans health and life and destroys irreplaceable worth. We must be clear that, if we return one day, we will find an empty, completely plundered land before us.[34]

As months turned to years of Polish administration, Exner despaired that Germans would never recover the Silesia they had lost.[35]

In the end, living among even the friendliest Poles became unbearable. Rauch humanized the Poles she lived with for the last months at the same time that she yearned to leave the place they had so transformed. In Rauch's eyes, the Polish family became "almost German": they had lived ten years in the *Ruhrgebiet*, started up a printing business as they had in the Ruhr, spoke fluent German and led a "model family life. The housewife, a mother of eight children, was like a German housewife." Nevertheless, when on the day she received notice of her expulsion, "the oldest son came and indicated he would have eventually envisioned a closer relationship," she responded with incredulity: "My God! He was a nice man, from a faultless, cultivated family. I could have had it good. But my guts turned inside me: I could have never married a Pole. In him, I would have always seen his people." With word of the expulsion order, "a stone fell from my heart, and I only wanted to leave."[36]

Though Waage's family also befriended "their" Poles, they had to move into even smaller quarters on the day that Poles celebrated the one-year anniversary of the end of the war,

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[34] Ibid., 17.

[35] Similarly, in late November 1945, a priest in Breslau warned a friend in a letter that Silesia had degenerated to lawlessness worse than that found in "backward" societies, and that awareness of this would dissuade anyone from coming back, no matter how firm their rights to the land: "The insecurity in Silesia is simply without limit. How good one had it in the Middle Ages or in Mexico! Each person there was armed when he stepped out of his house." His belief that lands west of the Glatzer Neisse would one day belong to Germany again brought on despair that, after such brutal Polonization and expulsion, "everything, everything is unspeakably bitter." On the day these lands became German again "just who will still be here in this land?" Th.l. to Elisabeth, "Ein Brief aus Breslau," circa November 1945, BAK N 1085/108, 1.

[36] Rauch, "Mein Schlesierland, mein Heimatland," 50-51.

and Polish neighbors kept asking when the last Germans would leave so that they could have their space. Thus, she wrote:

> in view of the fact that our *Heimat* has become lost to us anyway and each month living here further is the loss of time, we put ourselves on the resettlement list together with the Sperling family on June 19, 1946.[37]

When on May 9, 1947, they stepped off the train in Radeberg by Dresden, she realized that "this is now our new *Heimat*" and reflected on a poem she had written in Breslau, which concluded that both the natural world and the ruins of *Heimat* "sing to us of farewell forever."[38] Though she retained an inner love for Silesia, Waage integrated into life in the SBZ and tried not to think of her painful past; only after the *Wende* in 1989 did the process of reviewing her old daybooks bring back memories of her experience and compel a visit to Poland and the memory spaces there, after which time she became extremely active in seeking reconciliation between Germans and Poles.

On rare occasions, the experience of Silesia's transformation did not result in a sudden end to hope for real *Heimkehr*. Having suffered in a ravaged *Heimat* and even befriended Poles, a man from Steinau [Ścinawa] asserted in 1948 that Poles, too, had been expelled and yearned for return:

> Until my evacuation, I got to know many Poles, who enjoyed it very much when I visited them. Most of them were also robbed of their *Heimat* by the Russians and hope to see it again soon. Matters for them are just as they are for us. They don't feel right in a foreign land and sometimes understand our situation of need better than our own countrymen. When will the day finally come when we step out in Steinau again and are allowed to remain there.[39]

From his perspective, a twin return-migration would make everyone happy, even if Silesia itself was in ruins. Occasionally, the traumatic memories of life in Silesia likewise caused an expellee to nurse his resentment and stubbornly refuse to accept that Silesia's transformation decreased

[37] Waage, *Bleib übrig*, 75.
[38] Ibid., 91-92.
[39] A Steinauer, "Aus der alten *Heimat*," in Superintendent Gawel, *Steinauer Heimatbote* 7, September 5, 1948, EZA Z 1006, 2.

chances of it being reclaimed. Despite having settled and been employed in Baden for over eight years by April 1956, Christian Zeller remained unreconciled to his fate. After his *Volksturm* regiment had capitulated in 1945, he had used his cousin's bicycle to cross the devastated Silesian countryside and reach his empty village, which had been one-third burned-down and "gruesomely laid waste." He had even cycled to find his family in Dresden and bring them back for a year in the *Heimat*, where his three-year-old daughter had died from lack of milk.[40] For all this, he attested that, because of God's eternal goodness, "our hope for winning back our Silesian *Heimat* without war will never be extinguished."[41] Seldom did such extremists entertain concrete plans to live alongside Poles; Silesians like Zeller saw the forced expulsion of Polish settlers as justified or ignored this factor altogether by framing themselves as pioneers restoring a German mission in the East.

3. Germans in Silesia and the Nazi Past

From most of the accounts analyzed so far, it is clear that the Nazi past was often just below the surface as Germans struggled alongside new Polish neighbors in the present. It is true that, both for Silesians exiled in the West and their former neighbors still trapped in the East, the onset of an obvious, drastic decline in lifestyle tended to encourage idealization of an immediate past that overlapped with the Nazi period (though explicit symbols of National Socialism seldom manifested themselves in the *Heimat of memory*). However for the Germans in Silesia, sudden rule by the victims of Nazism also encouraged the identification of "German" traits of order, cleanliness, and a sophisticated culture with the West, even the Soviet zone, where Germans entered positions of power to form what was imagined to be "German" *Heimat* spaces in Saxony and Thuringia. Likewise, with Nazi victims crowding in around them, the remnant of the "master

[40] Christian Zeller to Magnus Freiherr von Braun, April 3, 1956, BAK N 1085/69, 3.
[41] Ibid., 3-4.

race" in Silesia occasionally gave casual reference to Nazi crimes and envisioned their own victimhood in terms of Nazism. All of this reflects Alon Confino's recent intervention that "if one takes seriously Germans' ideology during the Third Reich, as well as the possibility that many Germans viewed their lives as good, lawful and just," then it should make sense that Germans tried to interpret (and selectively remember) what they had done in the recent past; scholars "should not just criticize the distortions as misunderstandings of reality or attempts to repress and conceal, but instead try to illuminate their function and meaning."[42] What was the meaning of the way in which Silesians still living in the Polish-administrated portions of the prewar *Reich* envisioned the extremely recent Nazi past? Sometimes they found their bearings in the changing world through offhanded remarks about the Third Reich, which could be seen through their eyes to represent former stability (as in the case of Koffmane's reference to a "French Camp"). At other points, they sought to gain sympathy by complaining of what they remembered as their own victimhood under Nazism, as well as the continuities they perceived in their continuing victimhood (that is, their view that Germans in the West were turning a blind eye to their suffering). Most disturbing, a few Silesians went so far as to interpret what was happening to them as Polish-*Nazi* crimes, even projecting fears of a Polish campaign to "exterminate" Germans in "concentration camps" if they remained in the former *Heimat*. In this way, they betrayed awareness of recent German atrocities by conflating them with what they now experienced themselves. They yearned to leave Silesia as a land of Polish Nazism in order to reach German lands, which were apparently free of Nazism.

[42] Alon Confino, "Traveling as a Culture of Remembrance: Traces of National Socialism in West Germany, 1945-1960," *History and Memory* 12 (2000): 95, 100; idem., "Dissonance, Normality, and the Historical Method: Why Did Some Germans Think of Tourism after May 8, 1945?" in *Life after Death. Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann, 323-348 (Cambridge and Washington D.C.: Cambridge University Press and the German Historical Institute, 2003), 330.

To begin, it should be noted that Silesians were not alone among Germans for using the Nazi rhetoric that had become so familiar to them as a means to understand what they saw as a postwar incursion of foreignness. Comparison is useful: in Katja Naumann's assessment of four Leipzig journals written immediately after the war, former Nazi sympathizers and activists despaired that the Germandom they identified with Nazism should be destroyed, and they loathed the thought that Germany should now be misruled by inferior Slavs. Anna Regner, a convinced Nazi, saw the entry of Russians into Leipzig in 1945 entirely through a racist Nazi worldview— it was the incursion of Asian hordes from the steppes, and she suspected an Allied plot for "the humiliation and extermination of the strong German *Volk*."[43] Because Silesians represented a broad sampling of Germans from every political mindset, it is to be expected that some of them retained Nazi sympathies, or at least remembered Nazi rhetoric as they perceived eastern peoples flooding into their homeland and behaving in ways which they imagined fit with the barbarity Nazi leaders had predicted; this much is apparent in the accounts about "foreignness" above. That being said, the full brunt of the losses resulting from Nazism, along with direct exposure to the victims of Nazism, occasionally had potential to help Silesians recognize that Germans had victimized Poles and Jews, or perhaps the idea that German crimes were the root of their own suffering; at worst, it led them to invert roles and portray the victims of Nazism as "Nazi" perpetrators victimizing Germans.

While the specifics of Nazi crimes (most especially crimes against Jews) remained elusive in most Silesian writings, contact with Poles yielded some recognition in the first postwar decades that unnamed German crimes in the East had caused the "unjust" response of expulsion. This is in keeping with Utz Jeggle's observation that, in their nightmares and fantasies, expellees

[43] Katja Naumann, "Alltägliche Feindbilder. Eine mikrohistorische Studie zu Tagebüchern aus der Leipziger Nachkriegszeit," in *Der Feind im Kopf. Künstlerische Zugänge und wissenschaftliche Analysen zu Feindbildern*, ed. Thomas Klemm, Christian Lotz, and idem. (Leipzig 2005), 134-135.

also betrayed a sense of guilt; German suffering became medium for describing Nazi atrocities and a means to atone for the suffering Germans had caused to others.[44] So it was that, as they got to know Poles in Silesia, some Germans even came to see them as fellow victims, albeit accompanied by the conviction that the Poles would be happier if they all simply went away. The Polish family Elisabeth Waage worked for treated her well, and her sister's employment by Jews brought about a very moving and rare recognition of the persecution Germans had inflicted on others. As she recorded in her daybook:

> through them, Margot learned for the first time what the Germans really did to the Polish people, especially the Jews. They didn't want recompense from Margot because of this, they handled her in a civil and correct manner and gave her the advice to go to the western parts of Germany rather than East Germany in the event that she was resettled. A professor who had survived the concentration camp even gave her the addresses of friends in West Germany who could help her further.[45]

As will be shown in the sixth chapter, travel in Polish Silesia after the mid-1950s offered an especially potent opportunity to put a human face on the Polish "victimizers," to witness a shared humanity, and recognize that it was thanks to German crimes that Poles had been resettled to into the former German *Heimat*.

Another response was to frame the suffering of Silesians as a form of atonement for German crimes, at the same time implying that German crimes were continuing, now directed at the Silesians themselves. This was particularly explicit in the reflections of Walter Roth, the postwar German representative on the Polish ruling council in Hirschberg, who resented the perceived injustice that, while all Germans were implicitly guilty for Nazi crimes, Silesians had inherited an unjust share of punishment: "Time and again, we hear the following questions: Do we eastern Germans have to pay for the war alone? Is it only we who have lost the war? Do we

[44] Utz Jeggle, "Sage und Verbrechen," in *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in der westdeutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte*, ed. Doris von der Brelie-Lewien, Helga Grebing, and Rainer Schulze, 201-206 (Hildesheim: August Lax Verlag, 1987), 205-206.
[45] Ursula Waage, *Bleib übrig*, 69-70.

alone have to atone for the guilt? Are we that much worse than the others?"[46] Richard Süssmuth went further when he wrote to the diocesan offices in Regensburg of the devastation he observed in his *Heimat* Penzig [Pieńsk] in late 1945:

> Must we eastern Germans alone pay for this war, [must we] alone atone for the guilt? Are we really so much worse than the others? We know that a deed of expiation [*Sühneleistung*] is also necessary from society for collective guilt. But don't we merely belong to this fully guilty society? What happened to the national community [*Gemeinschaft des Volkes*]? Why doesn't anyone care for us? Why are we cast out here like lepers in the streets? Why do thousands, tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions die on the sides of the roads, in the refugee camps?

Never mentioning the victims of Nazism, Süssmuth like Roth felt that Germans as a whole were guilty, and in his anger at the utter failure of the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*, he warned in terms directly reminiscent of the Holocaust that soon the Silesians would suffer the fate of Nazism's unnamed victims, declaring: "the German Volk will be complicit in the extermination (*Ausrottung*) of the Silesians."[47]

At the same time that Silesia's remaining Germans tried to present themselves as the new victims of German "guilt," there were also rare accounts which transposed German guilt onto those who had recently been their victims, to the point that Silesia became imagined as a land full of Polish "Nazis."[48] In an autobiography written shortly after the war, the first (and last) German postwar mayor of Szczecin [formerly Stettin] alleged that the Polish militia, unlike the Soviets, had worn fascist uniforms with red and white arm bands.[49] An expellee from Glatz [Kłodżko] likewise recounted that:

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[46] Roth, *Rübezahl heimatlos*, 26.

[47] Richard Süssmuth, Pensig in Schlesien, August 20, 1945, Report 8 in "Berichte aus Schlesien," ed. Alfred Schulz Präcentor z.Zt.Regensburg, November 1945, BAK Z 18/131, 17-21. See also an abridged account, which excluded some of the closing statements about collective guilt: Anonymous, August 20, 1945, BAK N 1085/108.

[48] Expellees in the West who read the accounts of their neighbors in Silesia also applied this language. As one expellee complained, the Poles were perpetrating crimes that belonged to "the epochs of legitimized megalomania and Nazi arrogance overcome long ago, times in which democracy, human rights, and the Atlantic Charter were still not everywhere to be heard." In his eyes, German Nazism had been overcome long ago (four years!), and the Poles were backward for allegedly perpetuating such savagery. Of course, this also testified to knowledge that the Nazis had been savage as well. See "Was wurde aus Breslau!" July 5, 1949, EZA 47/76, 3.

[49] Erich Wiesner, "Damals in Szczecin," Bundesarchiv in Berlin [henceforth BAB] SgY 30/1016, 132. Wiesner later settled in the Soviet Zone and received a mayoral post in Mecklenburg. As he was accepted in the DDR leadership

> Polish militiamen, attired in old SA uniforms and armed with cudgels and rifles, drove everyone over to the other side of the street. At night the screams of the prisoners who were being mishandled re-echoed through the street, despite the fact that the Poles tried to drown the noise by turning on their wireless sets as loudly as they possibly could.[50]

Another Silesian saw himself as a victim of the Polish *Gestapo*. After beating him repeatedly, the Polish secret police had forced him to sign a contract obliging him to cooperate with them; once safe in the West, he asserted that he did "not regard this pledge as valid, since *Gestapo* methods of the most evil kind were used to make me sign it."[51] The blindness to German crimes which resulted from the need to blame others could reach such extremes that, when one expellee railed against the death of four priests after the war in Birkenau at the hands of Russian soldiers, he completely failed to recall that this had been the site of the Auschwitz concentration camp, and that indeed the priests may well have been ministering to the camp's personnel. Only a hint arose, perhaps an attempt to deny any possibility of the clergy's complicity in Nazi crimes: a priest shot while administering the sacrament was later exhumed from a mass grave and found not to have decomposed as badly as the (presumably Nazi) soldiers buried with him.[52]

Perhaps the Poles really wore old Nazi uniforms, perhaps their German victims merely associated them with the SA; in either case, these expellees now saw themselves as victims of Nazi atrocities they themselves had been aware of, and their onetime *Heimat* was terrorized by a Polish or Soviet "Nazism" that compelled escape. In this manner, Walter Roth imagined in Hirschberg that the Poles were applying a "German system" which they had learned from the Nazis, driving Germans together like slaves, striking them with rifles, forcing them to perform hard labor eight to ten hours a day without wages or food. Indeed, for Roth the Polish "Nazi"

(which officially saw Poland as a friendly Socialist neighbor), it is all the more revealing that, at the time of his expulsion, he visualized Poles as Nazis.

[50] Johannes Kaps, ed., *The Tragedy of Silesia, 1945-1946. A Documentary Account with Special Survey of the Archdiocese of Breslau*, trans. Gladys H. Hartinger (Munich: Christ Unterwegs, 1952/53), 531.

[51] Italics added, Ibid., 533.

[52] Ibid., 527.

methods were far worse than the German ones: at least the "German system" had been realized by a German

> enemy during the war [in] the fascist state. Back then, each Pole could defend himself and did defend himself, as is narrated often enough with pride. . . . Now the war is over, [and] they could have shown us how to do things better. They only showed us one thing: we will never believe that the Poles are better people than the Germans.[53]

Simultaneously appalled by what he saw as the physical decline of Silesia's cities but also unwilling to accept any "just" cause for Germans to have to leave them, Roth nonetheless concluded with ardent yearning to escape to lands still "German" in the West: "Slowly but all the more firmly we all developed the wish: away and again, away! Back to culture, to humanity. Back to order, to reconstruction, to work."[54] Silesians had to flee a former German *Heimat* that they now fantasized to as a place of Polish "Nazi" atrocities and reach an idealized "Germany," where the real physical presence of former Nazis was simply irrelevant— one may presume because *these* Nazis were German. As Cardinal Graf Preysing declared upon reaching the West in January 1946, "for the Germans, Silesia remains just a big concentration camp!"[55]

4. The Arrival of Stories from the *Heimat transformed* in the West

There was nothing in the conditions of the postwar occupation zones which should have encouraged expellees to reconcile with their loss: they lived in miserable poverty and felt little hope of recovering their earlier social standing; they received citizenship but seldom felt welcome; and they had every reason to think that the border might be pushed back.[56] As the SPD newspaper *Volk und Zeit* reported in November 1946: "millions of refugees live in the most difficult and extreme circumstances west of the Oder-Neiße border, burdened by the everyday

[53] Roth, *Rübezahl heimatlos*, 37-38.
[54] Ibid., 46.
[55] Kardinal Graf Preysing, "Behandlung der deutschen Bevölkerung in Schlesien durch die Polen," January 24, 1946, BAB SAPMO DO 2/53, 7.
[56] Andrew Demshuk, "Citizens in Name Only: The National Status of the German Expellees, 1945-1953," *Ethnopolitics* 5, no. 4 (Nov. 2006): 383-397.

struggle for a bare existence, for a mattress, a cooking pot, for a roof over the head." Despite this, they always found time to chatter about their "burning concern: how does it look in the *Heimat*? Time and again, their thoughts, wishes and dreams fly over to the East. . . where the buildings and land, the friend, wife, or husband have remained behind in the *Heimat*." Exiled Silesians were hungry for the stories that arrived from their former neighbors who still lived in the East. It was the content in these stories – the depressing picture of a *Heimat transformed* – which gave an initial shove to expellees in the West to begin coping with loss. After its introduction, *Volk und Zeit* printed dozens of accounts by expellees who had recently arrived from the East. These offered a building-by-building view of how most everything in Breslau had been destroyed or damaged, of how Germans in the Silesian capital often lived six families to an apartment in lodgings that were barely habitable, of how they were said to suffer ongoing rape, plundering, and humiliating poverty. All of this led the editors to conclude that "slowly, the Germans in Breslau are spiritually going to ruin."[57] The coming section will survey how accounts from the East, disseminated through letters, books, and periodicals, conjured up a similar sense among exiled Silesians that what they had known was gone forever– a fundamental first step in a lifelong process that will be examined in greater depth in the three chapters to come. Shocked at such news of destruction and foreignness in the dear places they had left behind, expellees in the West first came to realize that, horrible though their current existence might be, a return "home" would be far worse.

Letters and firsthand narrations from acquaintances had potential to spread a particularly intimate and trusted view, as a consequence yielding the most enduring impression that physical return was no longer desirable. After settling with relatives near Fulda, Klaus Werner's family

[57] "Breslau Wroclaw - August 1946. Ein Bericht aus der schlesischen Hauptstadt," *Volk und Zeit. Monatszeitschrift für Demokratie und Sozialismus*, November 11, 1946, HS BER0018. *VZ* was published under "reporting control of the military government."

learned that friends who had fled in 1945 and tried to return to Silesia a few months later were looted, abused, and returned West demoralized; this prompted realization that there was no going back, even though in coming years they often shared warm memories of the *Heimat*, bought books with Silesian poems and tales, and cooked Silesian food at Christmas.[58] Lore Buschendorff's father cycled through the ruined *Heimat* after the war, and his painful stories kept her from visiting Silesia until the late 1990s.[59] In March 1945, Erwin Rosner learned of the utter destruction of Neisse [Nysa] from eyewitnesses, and after he was wounded in Italy, "in feverish and sleepless nights, I often saw a burning city, an image of horror." So terribly did it disturb him that he sought out people from Neisse on a refugee transport in late May and took copious notes about how each intimate space had been destroyed. With the old *Heimat* lost, he urged expellees to seek the best life possible where they were and to find strength in God.[60] The Felder family wrote their pastor from Weimar in January 1949 that they found life in the Soviet zone "much better than in Liegnitz. The last space of time there was no longer good for the Germans. Now my sister writes to me that we should be glad to be away from there."[61] These reports continued after the founding of the Federal Republic. In 1951, a "faithful reader" wrote in to *Der Schlesier* that a friend still living in Wrocław [formerly Breslau] had been so overwhelmed with the surrounding foreignness of the *Heimat* that she had become desperate for escape, sending applications for both West *and* East Germany. "What can I do otherwise?" the woman in Wrocław wrote. "Certainly one can no longer hope for a change. Therefore, sooner or later, we will have to undertake a trip into the unknown (*eine Fahrt ins Blaue*)."[62] Though

[58] Interview with Klaus Werner, October 3, 2007.
[59] Lore Buschendorff, June 10, 1990, in *Ein Teil Heimat seid Ihr für mich. Rundbriefe einer Mädchenklasse, 1944-2000*, ed. Juliane Braun (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2002), 213; ibid., October 20, 1996, 230-231.
[60] Erwin Rosner, "Die zerstörte Stadt. Bericht vom Untergang des schlesischen Rom," *Heimat und Glaube* 2, no. 5 (May 1950), 10-11.
[61] Familie Felder, letter in *Das katholische Liegnitz*, Seelsorgebrief, April 1949, BAK Z 18/222, 11.
[62] "Brief aus Breslau," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 3, no. 3 (January 25, 1951), 5.

conditions in Silesia started to improve by the mid-1950s, depressing reports of a lost *Heimat* continued to flow via letters and narrations to acquaintances in the West.

The memory of how the family responded to such accounts lived on to the next generation. When Uwe Ehrling, a descendent of East Prussian expellees, looked through the attic of his deceased grandmother in 1985, he thought back on the question so ubiquitous in 1945: after the tremendous suffering of the flight, would it would have been better to stay? The answer came from the letters he found, circulated in great number by mid-1946, from those who had remained behind in Polish-occupied southern East Prussia, which reported time and again of "horrors, rapes, murder, martyrdom," as well as disease and starvation. Reflecting on a letter his family had received from an old neighbor in East Prussia, Ehrling argued that the report "definitely shows that remaining was no less terrible than the flight. . . . The letter from Mrs. Lasogga shows me that it would have made no sense to remain behind, because the deadly threat for the remaining [Germans] was as terrible as for those who fled."[63] A generation later, old letters from the *Heimat* continued to have the same effect.

Periodicals and books circulated stories about the *Heimat transformed* more broadly. In one of many examples, the *Westfälische Zeitung* reported in May 1948 that Breslau had become a city of black markets and thievery, in which "the ruins still stand as before. They collapse in on themselves more and more, and weeds grow on the heaps of rubble."[64] In his influential and controversial 1949 compilation of newspaper and survival accounts from Breslau, Franz Otto Jerrig conveyed a more three-dimensional image of foreignness:

> Sounds from another language resound in the streets that remain intact. The Silesian certainly knew them as near neighbors. But now they have been brought into his land. With their differing traditions customs, they give the city a changed appearance.

[63] Uwe Ehrling, "Wo ist Heimat?" in *Grenzerfahrungen. Jugendliche erforschen deutsch-polnische Geschichte*, ed. Alicja Wancerz-Gluza, 295-310 (Hamburg: Edition Körber-Stiftung, 2003), 304.
[64] "Ein Bericht aus Breslau," *Westfälische Zeitung* (May 31, 1948), BHI-PAS P0385.

This led him to conclude that "Wrocław emerges out of Breslau." The world he had known only lived in memory, and someone else's world was coming out of it: "what was 'back then' begins to become memory today. And what came next dominates the here and now. This 'time after' has become a bad dream for people from the great city on the Oder. One desires to wake up from it. But today, this 'time after' is reality."[65] There could be no going back.

In the early years when the East retained its most considerable German minority, the circular letters through which pastors reached out their scattered but intimate flocks played a key role in disseminating firsthand accounts about the *Heimat*'s transformation, as well as active discussion about how they should respond. Over and over, both pastoral and lay accounts in circular letters testified to the changes in the *Heimat*, described their desire to leave for "Germany" in the West, and warned their expelled countrymen that any wish for return was misplaced. Having left so many dear parishioners in terrible suffering when he left the old *Heimat* in November 1945, Pastor Alfred Schulz conveyed his conviction that return to Schweidnitz [Świdnica] was unthinkable. Some of his flock found this too depressing, and he responded by promising to never stop praying for the *Heimat*'s return, but that it would take a "miracle" (*Wunder*) for Silesia to become German again.[66] Reports of the foreignness of the *Heimat* and "slavery" of Germans forced to remain there led pastor Paul Karzel from Bielitz to argue from his first letter in 1946 onward that "yearning for the *Heimat* in those that left Bielitz later has almost died out. We who left earlier or could not ever go back still have the old image of the *Heimat* before our eyes and in our hearts; that belongs conclusively (*endgültig*) to the past."[67] He urged his flock to considered how "the disappointment that would have to meet us in our old *Heimat* would be more painful to us than the homesickness that afflicts us now in foreign

[65] Franz Otto Jerrig, *Aus Breslau wurde Wroclaw* (Hannover: Verlag Wolfgang Kwiecinski), 1949, 7.
[66] Alfred Schulz, *Rundbrief*, December 19, 1945, BAK Z 18/222; idem., February 11, 1946, BAK Z 18/222.
[67] Paul Karzel, *Bielitzer Rundbrief* 2, January 1947, EZA Z 1.142, 5.

lands. Wherever we went, we would remember the injustice that cries out to heaven." In response to this painful reality, he entreated them to carry the *Heimat* in their hearts and share it with one another, thereby finding a means to "overcome homesickness and win a higher meaning of what *Heimat* is."[68] By 1954, his position had not changed; he implored his community to seek God, the creator of a new heaven and new Earth, since this was "the only hope that doesn't prove itself to be an illusion."[69]

As will be shown in the coming chapters, the influence of stories from Silesia proved far-reaching through the coming years, as Silesian exiles in the West learned that the *Heimat transformed* was drifting ever further from the image they cherished in their hearts. When over two hundred expellees from Liegnitz crowded into a room in West Berlin in April 1951 to watch a slideshow that would lead them "on a tour about the center of their city," the group leader reflected that they all "saw the old, intimate streets of the *Heimat* city of their birth, the houses in which they lived and worked, fully aware that much looks very different there now." It might have been harder for anyone who had managed to escape before the changes began to truly grasp "that the known sites are burned out, torn down, and transformed," but they still knew and for this reason cherished the former images of *Heimat* in memory.[70] If there was any doubt, expellees also continued to receive letters at their meetings from acquaintances still in the old *Heimat.* During a Liegnitz *Heimat* meeting in Wuppertal in 1958, expellees gathered around to listen as the last mayor read a letter he had received from an old woman who still lived in the old *Heimat*. Greeting all of them, yearning with all her heart to be in the West with them, she then spoke of how she liked to look out onto the landscapes of the *Heimat* and the towers of Liegnitz from a nearby hill by the old German cemetery. "When I see all of this from where I stand, I

[68] Karzel, *Bielitzer Rundbrief* 3, May 1947, EZA Z 1.142, 1.
[69] Karzel, *Bielitzer Rundbrief* 24, Advent 1954, EZA Z 1.142, 5.
[70] Hgf, "Lichtbildvortrag in Berlin," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 3, no. 5 (May 1951): 38.

perceive all of the land out to the horizon as my personal possession and woe to he who would claim otherwise. But as soon as I have stepped back into the city, I am small and ugly again. Only my belief remains, which perhaps can not only move mountains but maybe even peaks."[71] Only from afar, away from people and physical changes, away from the environment that oppressed her with a sense of inferiority, even inhumanness, did she once more genuinely feel that she was in the *Heimat*. It was as much of a fantasy as the *Heimat of memory* that her old neighbors sought to recreate at their gathering. What point could there be in returning "home" to the East, if even there the expellee could only see the dear *Heimat* again by dreaming?

5. Expellee Leaders and the Experience of the *Heimat Transformed*

Expellee organizations raced to adapt the stories from Silesia for their own uses and discard perspectives they found inconvenient to their political objectives. In 1950, Bolko Freiherr von Richthofen and his fellow *Ostforscher* denounced Franz Otto Jerrig as a "nationalist reminiscent of Hitler with Polish characteristics"; they dismissed his 1949 book about the changes in Breslau as enemy propaganda which served "Stalinist Communists" and could "only damage" attempts toward the sensible "compensation" (*Ausgleich*) between Germans and Poles which all "sober" Germans wanted.[72] Upon the formation of the Federal Republic of Germany in May 1949, expellee politicians and scholars suddenly wrested control of mainstream dialogue about the Oder-Neisse territories and viciously attacked anything that threatened the idea of a physical return to the old *Heimat*. In this atmosphere, Jerrig's observations became so dangerous that Richthofen, himself an ardent follower of Hitler just five years before, berated Jerrig's "Polish" lineage and made unsubstantiated claims that he had been a Polish nationalist from

[71] "Ein Gruß aus der Heimat, Liegnitz d. 27. 5. 1958," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 10, no. 18 (September 25, 1958), 289.
[72] Bolko Freiherr von Richthofen, "Aus Breslau wurde Wroclaw," *Breslauer Nachrichten. Die Zeitung für alle Schlesier* 2, no. 12 (April 25, 1950), 3.

childhood. As well as being racist, Richthofen's claims were incoherent given his further mention that Jerrig's father, born in the mixed German-Polish Prussian province of Posen [Poznań], had Germanized his last name and become a high civil official in Breslau, while Jerrig himself had been educated in Stralsund before living in Breslau. Jerrig's book was dangerous to expellee leaders, because its portrayal of a new Polish Wrocław could undermine any desire for return among their alleged constituents. Fearful that expellees were reaching their own conclusions about the changes in the old *Heimat*, Richthofen fretted that Jerrig's book "found only recognition almost everywhere!"[73]

In fact, many of the expellee leaders themselves could not help but be strongly affected by the first stage of coping with loss. Like their supposed constituencies, they too had either experienced the deprivations of postwar Silesia or heard of its dramatic transformation. Visions of the *Heimat transformed* led them to despair at first; for the sake of their own belief in the official narrative, they had to persuade themselves to stop dealing with their trauma and instead fixate on their hazardous political objectives. Richthofen himself provides a useful example. This relative of the famed "Red Baron" had a long history as a German nationalist. He helped to lead the 1921 *Freikorps* assault on Polish forces at the Upper Silesian shrine at Annaberg and as a professor in Königsberg [Kaliningrad] ceaselessly attacked interwar Polish claims to German territories.[74] For all this, when he returned home to Silesia from the Eastern Front in 1944 after helping to destroy libraries in the Soviet Union, he unwittingly anticipated the talk of a Lost East that was to come. In a poem exploring cherished landscapes around his hometown of Mertschütz, he described an ever-present, bracing *Ostwind* threatening all he observed and concluded: "How

[73] Ibid., 3.
[74] Most famous was his bitter dispute with the Polish archaeologist Józef Kostrzewski in 1929 about the ethnicity of the Lusatian and Pomeranian cultures. Bolko Freiherr von Richthofen, *Gehört Ostdeutschland zur Urheimat der Polen? Kritik der vorgeschichtlichen Forschungsmethode an der Universität Posen*. Ostland-Schriften 2 (Danzig: Ostland-Institut, 1929), 3-4.

transient (*vergänglich*) are the things that appear eternal today."[75] Later poems written amid the misery of the flight and expulsion further emphasized impermanence and the need for justice without hate, revenge, and retribution.[76] Thus, from the pen of a leading *Ostforscher*, there slipped signs of coping with loss that were incompatible with the political arguments he later advocated about Germany's eternal right to Silesia.

Change came quickly for Richthofen with the onset of the 1950s, as he adopted his new role as an expellee leader by taking on such titles as Federal scholarly advisor (*Bundeswissenschaftsberater*) to the Silesian *Landsmannschaft*. With orientalized imagery worthy of his interwar polemics, he projected his own *Heimweh* onto Silesia's new Polish population, declaring that Polish "fellow sufferers" (*Schicksalsgefährten*), having settled in what they knew to be an eternally German Silesia, now yearned for a "peaceful *Heimkehr*" to the "endless plains of the East" to make way for a German return.[77] Superficial tolerance gave way in his later poetry to open revanchism when he depicted Polish settlers as a pestilence that the *Heimat* itself wanted removed: "The old elm trees started to complain: 'those living now in the village don't understand us. Their language and faces are foreign, their feelings and songs are foreign. Where did they come from? Oh just go back!'"[78] By 1955, he was demanding that, in the name of "faithfulness," Germans correct the injustice of the lost *Heimat* by conquering it again.[79] By 1959, he went so far as to fantasize that the Poles he so loathed actually thought like him, pretending that *Ostforscher* and *Landsmannschaften* were reaching out to Polish scholars,

[75] Meditations on the *Vergänglichkeit* of material things was a common means of coping with loss; see chapter four. Bolko Freiherr von Richthofen, "In Mertschütz Kreis Liegnitz," in *Heimat im Herzen: Schlesische Gedichte* (Herne: Grabski Verlag, 1956), 9. Though published in 1956, the writings in this book originated during the previous fourteen years.
[76] Idem., "Den Heimatvertriebenen. Im Geiste der internationalen Erneuerungsbewegung 'Moralische Aufrüstung'," in *Heimat im Herzen*, 18-19.
[77] Idem., "Unter dem Band einer friedlichen Hoffnung," in *Heimat im Herzen*, 20.
[78] Idem., "Ein Traum," in *Heimat im Herzen*, 30.
[79] Idem., "Heimat," in *Heimat im Herzen*, 33.

whom he (very inaccurately) alleged had rejected the new border in order to make both Germany and Poland "European outposts against Eastern Communism."[80] In 1962, he became cofounder of the expellee splinter group AKON (Aktion Oder-Neisse), which was devoted to border revision at all costs. Hence, after his momentary lapse, Richthofen diverged from the reflections on loss underway among his fellow expellees and transformed into a particularly vicious revanchist "spokesman."[81]

A comparable progression can be followed in the important expellee paper *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten*: news from Silesia first stimulated a struggle to grapple with loss, but this entered into tension with the increasing domination by an unthinking official narrative, which won out in the end. Founded as *Breslauer Nachrichten* in 1949 in the idyllic little hamlet of Cham in the Bavarian hill country (suddenly inhabited by many Silesians as well), the editors first invited participation of any kind, "only any sort of party politics is forbidden." Like most expellee papers of the day, they narrated how, though they yearned for *Heimkehr*, it simply wasn't possible:

> our old, beloved Breslau just doesn't exist anymore! Today's political map knows no place with such a name. Behind the Iron Curtain of the Oder-Neisse Line, there lays a great site of ruins called Wroczlaw [sic!]. The earlier Breslauer would look to so many of the church towers left standing, to so much rubble from surrounding structures, and here and there also a stopped street car. He would say: here stood my *Vaterstadt*. . . out of which I had to flee or was forcibly expelled two or three years ago.[82]

In this manner, rather than raise political demands, the paper helped to disseminate the sense that every detail so dear in the former Breslau had transformed. When a leading article referred to

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[80] Idem., "Beginnings of a genuine German-Polish understanding," *Free World Forum* (1959): 15.
[81] As before the war, he now continued to attack Polish scholarship posing an "eternal Polish" quality to the borderlands, as with Poznań scholar Josef Kokot's *Logic of the Oder Neisse Line* (1957/9). Richthofen, *Die Schlesier vor und nach der Vertreibung aus ihrer Heimat* (Wolfenbüttel: Grenzland-Verlag, 1967), 24. Each expellee leader follows his or her own story toward revanchism. At first glance, Herbert Hupka appears far less likely than Richthofen to espouse strident German nationalist visions for the East. Born to a Jewish mother, who had been sent to the Theresienstadt concentration camp, he had himself suffered a humiliating, anti-Semitic trial and dismissal from *Wehrmacht* service in August 1944. Yet in time he came to dominate the Silesian *Landsmannschaft*.
[82] St., "Zum Geleit," *Breslauer Nachrichten. Das Heimatblatt für alle ehemaligen Bewohner von Breslau und Schlesien* 1, no. 1-2 (March 15, 1949), 2.

Breslau as *unvergängliches*, this signified the "unperishing" pages of its history, which remained forever pristine despite the fact that history had ended in the ruins of the present reality.[83] With this in mind, the paper devoted itself to helping readers find the whereabouts of their loved ones and make their peace in the West.

By the time *Breslauer Nachrichten* had been renamed *Der Schlesier* in 1951, its most prominent articles reiterated the mainstream political arguments about border revision and praised those who made them. While not yet fully apparent in January 1950, when the paper became chief mouthpiece for the Bavarian *Schlesiser Verband*, this came about instantaneously with its adoption as "newsletter of the Silesian *Landsmannschaft*" on February 25, 1950. Suddenly Curt Petzold was calling on all expellees to support the Saarland's return to Germany, because it prefigured Silesia's return. In the next issue, he implored expellees not to allow the idea of *Heimkehr* "to disappear in the fog of wishes and dreams" and demanded the peaceful liberation of the DDR as a first step toward a peaceful return home to the Lost East.[84] By April, the *Landsmannschaft* president himself used *Breslauer Nachrichten* to claim that every "sensible" organization was seeking "*Rückkehr in die Heimat*!" as their chief goal.[85]

In sum, shaken by the news and experiences in Silesia, many expellee leaders and the periodicals that they later hijacked at first entered into productive reflections on loss. Perhaps having lived this healing process themselves (however briefly) before turning to the hard official line, they feared all the more that it was adversely affecting the desire of their constituents for return to the East. The *Ostforscher* Ansgar Grzimek captured this feeling in 1953, when he protested that, though "much has been written from our side in the past two to three years," most

[83] W. Erich Spaethe, "Unvergängliches Breslau," *Breslauer Nachrichten. Das Heimatblatt für alle ehemaligen Bewohner von Breslau und Schlesien* 1, no. 1-2 (March 15, 1949), 3.
[84] Curt Petzold, "Der Weg zur Heimat," *Breslauer Nachrichten. Die Zeitung für alle Schlesier* 2, no. 6 (February 25, 1950), 3; ibid., no. 7 (March 5, 1950), 3.
[85] Walter Rinke, "Neue Heimat–alte Heimat!" *Breslauer Nachrichten. Die Zeitung für alle Schlesier* 2, no. 8 (March 15, 1950), 3.

of this "was really just reports and memories about the *Heimat* which has been wrested away from us." Now, as they undertook "the scholarly task of exploring and representing Upper Silesia," expellee leaders had to bury or contort any reports and memories from Silesia that failed to serve their political goals, just as they had discarded any such sentiments in themselves.[86] In the end, however, the leadership's strenuous efforts to use the images from the *Heimat transformed* proved in vain: they were incapable of breaking the solid arc through which expellees were steadily coming to terms with loss, a process that had started with the realization, begun amid the debris of the *Heimat* itself, that the physical *Heimat* had transformed into a ruined, foreign space far less desirable than the memories they cherished.

Conclusions

In 1957, an eighty-year-old Silesian still living in Liegnitz pleaded with his fellow expellees in the West not to spoil "the faithful image" in their hearts by traveling to see a *Heimat* already lost. He had read their letters about homesickness for the familiar world they had left behind: "You see the house that belonged to father and grandfather, the beloved old garden producing richly year by year. You see your wide fields in the splendor of a full yield. You hear the forests rustling mysteriously through the night. You feel warmly united to the *Heimat* now as ever." Having spent twelve years "homesick in the *Heimat*," he expressed the deepest envy for their consoling dreams:

> It is bitterly painful when I see the dismal transformation of the old *Heimat*. The gardens without care, the fields hardly managed, the elderly. And foreigners look out in every part of the city from familiar homes. . . . The words are in a foreign language, the bread comes from a foreign hand. The *Heimat* itself has become a cold, foreign land. I am at home, but homesick!

[86] Grzimek was in fact envious of what he saw as the contrasting "scholarly" focus in Poland through the immediate postwar time, when Polish scholars had received state support for their nationalist propaganda about Silesia's "eternal Polish character" See "Die Dringlichkeit der wissenschaftlichen Erforschung und Darstellung Oberschlesien–Geleitwort," in *Die geistige Gestalt Oberschlesiens und ihre Stellung innerhalb der deutschen Kulturlandschaften*, by Emil Brzoska, 5-8 (Frankfurt/Main: Unser Oberschlesien, 1953), 6-7.

With a final entreaty to stay home and cherish what they had known, he shared his only remaining, fast-approaching consolation: to "seek the eternal *Heimat*, the final journey into sleep!"[87] In death, he would ascend to find the idealized *Heimat of memory*, the paradise of Silesia that he had been denied for twelve years in the *Heimat transformed*.

At the same time that the old Silesian mused on his death, much of the dejected German remnant in Silesia was already preparing to escape at last to the *Reich* in the West. Already, after years of suffering aggressive Polonization efforts, roughly 80,000 Upper Silesians claimed German nationality with the publication of new identification cards in 1952.[88] Between 1955 and 1970, a thaw in East-West relations finally made it possible for approximately 370,000 Germans to emigrate from Poland's western territories into West Germany, facilitated through agreements between the German and Polish Red Cross.[89] Nearly all of Lower Silesia's few remaining natives and a significant portion in Upper Silesia left. Wolfgang Meißler, the last German Protestant pastor in Silesia, tried to frame the mass-migration as a new "expulsion,"[90] but those who left Silesia in 1956 generally did so of their own free will and fully aware that there was no *Heimat* left to be expelled from. They entered the West, tried to restart their lives, and wrote letters to the government, begging for help in getting their loved ones out of the *Heimat*.[91]

The mood among the homesick Silesians as they left their homes was captured well in the excited lines of Fritz Schaaf's diary, which he jotted down from a temporary resettlement camp

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[87] "Heimweh in der Heimat," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 4 (February 25, 1957), 55.
[88] Ingo Eser, "Einleitung," in *Unser Heimat ist uns ein fremdes Land geworden*, ed. Wlodzimierz Borodziej and Hans Lemberg, Band 2: Zentralpolen, Wojewodschaft Schlesien (Oberschlesien), 355-399 (Marburg: Verlag Herder-Institut, 2003), 394, 398.
[89] Bogdan Koszel, "Die Außenpolitik der Volksrepublik Polen gegenüber der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949-1989," in *Erlebte Nachbarschaft. Aspekte der deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Jan-Pieter Barbian and Marek Zybura, Veröffentlichung des Deutschen Polen-Instituts, 57-75 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 66-67. Many others who could not get passes for the BRD emigrated into the DDR.
[90] Wolfgang Meißler, "Schlesien unter dem Kreuz 1945-1962," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 17, no. 21 (November 10, 1965), 309.
[91] See for instance the many letters to the BMgF in the file BAK B 137/1295. The federal ministry often made excuses, reinforcing the impression that the regime was not doing all it could to bring Upper Silesians "home" from the *Heimat*.

in West Germany in the weeks after his arrival in summer 1957.[92] Since his birth in 1911, Schaaf had lived in Liegnitz; for all this, when he and his family learned on July 2, 1957 that, thanks to continued agitation from friends in the West, they would receive their emigration passes, "this report unleashed indescribable joy, because a twelve-year forced existence was finally coming to an end." With just sixteen days left in Lower Silesia, Schaaf and the sixty other Germans in Liegnitz who were slated for departure rushed to fit in many last visits, both with friends, as well as to the cemetery. When at precisely 2:30 PM on July 18 their train pulled out of town, "everyone stood at the windows and took leave of Liegnitz, their city. [We had our] last view of the houses of the city, there the northern spa, there the potter's hill, Boberau, the black waters, Rüstern, the city forest, the outer heath land, and then the county of Liegnitz was already behind us." Far from having lost any connection to Silesia, they stayed at the windows and bid farewell to every town they passed, "taking the landscapes in." But this was also a happy departure, accompanied by "a good mood" and even "much singing" until nightfall, when at last they crossed into the DDR and, as Schaaf observed, "we were 'in Germany'."[93] All were enthused to "notice at once the difference between Polish and German cultivation of the land," marked in Schaaf's eyes by "the care, order, and cleanliness in every respect." Their joy only increased when they passed into West Germany and, at 5:30 AM, found themselves greeted at the border town by a brass band and choir, which performed the famous German hymn *Holy God we praise Thy Name*. "We stood at the open windows and were speechless. Many eyes filled with tears." As they left the train, they "knew now that we were in Germany, which we had yearned for

[92] "Wir sind umgezogen!" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 19 (October 10, 1957), 314.
[93] Fritz Schaaf, "Liegnitz—Friedland. Ein Reisebericht," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 19 (October 10, 1957), 302.

through twelve long, difficult years. Our wish was no longer a dream, it had been fulfilled. We were free."[94]

In no uncertain terms, the Germans who had been able to remain in Silesia spread word that the old *Heimat* was no longer Germany. As Schaaf himself argued to his long-exiled neighbors after his arrival in the West, "Whoever was familiar with the former Liegnitz and experiences it today through a stroll in the city must ascertain already from the first view that its appearance has changed markedly."[95] This revelation found further reinforcement in the coming years, as, after the migrations of the mid-1950s, the culture of the old *Heimat* quickly became even more Polish, even more distant from what expellees remembered. While Schaaf proclaimed "we were free" when he entered into "Germany" in 1957, the editor of a *Heimat* paper cried "we were shocked" when he learned from a travel report in 1958 that the children of natives in the Upper Silesian town of Oppeln [Opole] were speaking Polish better than German. When a West German traveler had shown them a prewar postcard of Oppeln with its old German name and descriptions of German landmarks, the children had been amazed at such a novelty.[96] How could their *Heimat* have ever been Oppeln, when in their experience it had always been Opole?

[94] Ibid., 315.
[95] Fritz Schaaf, "Ist Liegnitz noch immer eine Gartenstadt?" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 18 (September 25, 1957), 284.
[96] Karl Wiechmann, "Deutsche lernen die deutsche Sprache. Jugendliche aus dem Osten sprechen polnisch besser als deutsch. Deutschunterricht in Eschwege und Vorbereitung auf einen Beruf," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 7, no 2 (1958), 11.

CHAPTER 4

RESIDING IN MEMORY: PRIVATE CONFRONTATION WITH LOSS

In April 1957, an expellee from Liegnitz [Legnica] complained that the meaning of *Heimat* was turning "schmaltzy" and losing all connection with reality. The more that the experience of expulsion receded into the past, "the more the *Heimat* of expellees is transfigured by idealized imagining and immersed in romanticism. The more miserable things are for these people in the total change of their everyday lives, the more the *Heimat* of the past streams with light as a lost paradise, as the epitome of intimacy, security, and a prosperous, always calming, blissful memory."[1] For all his disdain, this commentator offered an incisive illustration of the memory culture that had permeated the individual lives of a great many expellees. In daydreams and diaries, each Silesian in West Germany retreated into the *Heimat of memory*, an imagined past where one could take refuge, not only from the harsh realities of life in the West, but also from one's own perception that the present-day spaces of Silesia had become a *Heimat transformed* to which there could be no return.

The private experience of *residing in memory* represents a far more passive, safe, and continuous form of the process of coping with loss than that illustrated both in the previous chapter and in the two that follow. Though in their solitary reflections of loss expellees often derived impetus via news from Germans still living in the old *Heimat*, from stories at *Heimat* gatherings, or from travel accounts, many of them never experienced any physical contact with the *Heimat transformed*. They were left to a lifetime of gradually coming to terms with the ever-broadening gap between the two images of *Heimat* from the quiet spaces of their exile, where

[1] "Die Schnulze von der Heimat," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 8 (April 25, 1957), 113.

they embraced images in their minds that they felt retained the very substance of *Heimat* lost in the world around them.

Already in 1950, Felicitas Hoppenstedt-Stirum offered incisive testimony to her awareness that the meaning of *Heimat* had diverged from tangible expressions of reality. "We still want to know the bridge where we had our first date, the bench where you kissed me, the café or telephone booth where I answered the phone with beating heart," she reflected, "but doesn't all of this fall away into a twilight, created from dreams, desires, and fleeting reality?" In the face of these desires, she knew full well that, somewhere in Poland, a "heap of rubble lies where once we knelt in prayer." *Heimat* was not to be found there; though geographically contiguous with the old Silesia, these ruined spaces could no longer even be considered reality. "*The* reality remains imperishable (*unvergänglich*), it becomes an island for us in a sea of dispersion."[2] Genuine reality, *the* reality, lived on, secure in the stasis of her memory, cherished and preserved within.

Like Hoppenstedt-Stirum, the diverse exiles from Silesia spent their lives confronting the loss of *Heimat* through a lengthy, often contradictory series of reflections. In the same memoir, an expellee might protest loss and then reach an epiphany about the permanence of exile. This process appeared in *Heimat* books, private diaries, small publications, and *Heimat* periodicals. At first glance, these sources' heavy political content is misleading; while conservative publishers often used the first pages to feature revisionist polemics, the inner pages were usually left to local, less political perspectives. On page five, expellees of diverse backgrounds had space to ponder the loss which the front page asserted was only temporary. Influenced by past experiences, political and religious affiliation, age, class, gender, and above all personal character, the old town pastor, mayor, newspaper editor, teacher, nun, farmer, and factory worker

each privately came to recognize the permanent division of the two *Heimat* images in the seclusion of his or her own thoughts. From the many methods through which this therapy process took place, this chapter investigates three of the most common. In the first, most passive method, expellees cherished and "restored" memories of idealized *Heimat* spaces that were barred to them by the rupture of expulsion; they documented and sought to preserve their *Heimat of memory* on the pages of village chronicles, picture books, and even the canvas of paintings. Second, they more personally invested themselves by "jumping into the picture book" itself through imagined journeys back to the world they had lost; this method forced them to confront even more sharply the knowledge that it no longer existed outside of their own minds. A third, metaphysical response to the incompatibility between the two images of *Heimat* developed in Christian circles: Silesian Christians had the chance to recover the idealized *Heimat of memory* they had lost in the past by recognizing the transience of the earthly *Heimat* in a fallen world of change and sin and then seeking an eternal, lasting *Heimat* from God (often through death itself).

After examining these methods, it will be shown that a few expellees refused to be deterred from demanding an actual return to Silesia, despite each of their personal awareness of the incompatibility between the two forms of *Heimat*. But this tended to be an exercise in voicing "rights" and protesting "injustice" and less about genuine planning for a return which, in the end, they knew to be unfeasible. Finally, having assessed the three methods in isolation, the chapter will conclude with an intimate look at the reflections of two *Heimat* paper editors to demonstrate how, over time, the various methods became intertwined and contributed collectively to the process of coping with loss. So devoted to the *Heimat* that they continued to produce its newspaper from a western exile, *Heimat* paper editors tended as a rule to cling to the fantasy of return much longer; yet over the course of their lives awareness of the incompatibility

[2] Italics in original, Felicitas Hoppenstedt-Stirum, "Die Dominsel," *Merian* 3, no. 3 (1950): 43-44.

between the two images of *Heimat* gradually led them to realize the impossibility of physical return.

1. Preserving the *Heimat* in Chronicles and Picture Books

When he bemoaned the "schmaltzy kitsch" of *Heimat* in 1957, the expellee from Liegnitz accused *Heimat* films of propagating imagery of lost eastern lands as colorful and false as Technicolor American westerns. Though he conceded that the "overexposure" (*Überbetonung*) of *Heimat* was spreading at least some awareness of the former East, he feared that the real essence of *Heimat* was being lost.[3] But what was the *real essence* of Silesia, when the physical experience of the old *Heimat* drifted further away with the passage of time, and contemporary, Polish Silesia diverged into something so alien from what they remembered? Whether or not the *Heimat of memory* offends one's taste as "false" or "kitsch," it was chiefly through residing in an idealized aesthetic of what had been that expellees managed to continue on without losing a sense of their own identity. To illustrate how this process worked, I will begin with two very prevalent and interconnected forms which stimulated interchange between the two images of *Heimat*: chronicles of the parochial history and "character" of local communities too small to have been known far outside the region (sometimes even the county) and imagery commemorating the *Heimat*'s history, landscapes, and monuments.

By contrast to the official histories detailed in chapter two, local chronicles seldom featured a cyclical approach to historical events, in which German progress repeatedly intervened to repair devastation from regular invasions from the East (implying an inevitable pattern of death and resurrection over time and thus a coming resurrection again through *Heimkehr*). Rather, often tapping into material from earlier, interwar chronicles, amateur

[3] "Die Schnulze von der Heimat," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 8 (April 25, 1957), 113-114.

historians (pastors, schoolteachers, mayors, farmers) presented a linear and tragic account of ever-increasing progress, happiness, and Germanness in a cozy *Heimat* village that suddenly died and was buried under foreign invasion in 1945.[4] Freikorps, communists, Nazis– these remained conspicuously absent in most accounts, replaced by a tale of stability, culture, productivity, pastoral serenity, and urban vitality. In the face of the sudden rupture at the story's end, it was clear that only the *Heimat of memory* survived, strengthened by the chronicle.

Though awareness of Silesia's transformation was all too obvious, chroniclers especially in the immediate postwar years felt that the rupture after 1945 was too painful to receive more than mention. The Protestant pastor Konrad Müller's 1948 chronicle of an idyllic prewar Breslau suddenly collided on the last pages with the "bitter farewell" (*Abschied*), as hundreds of thousands were forced to separate from the beloved *Heimat*, "of which nothing more should be said."[5] On the last page of Müller's book, pastor Ernst-Walter Maetschke's 1948 sermon emphasized the need to cherish the *Heimat of memory* and recognize that this world no longer existed in the East: "Do not speak so much about how the *Heimat*'s bright good fortune sank behind us! Just carry in your heart what your eyes drank in of her with the last, thirsty glance."[6] Likewise, in 1947, Linde Englert concluded an extended poem chronicling the beauty of *Heimat* with the reflection: "I am still so far from there, from by beloved *Heimat*; and though I'll never go there again, I will never, ever forget it."[7]

With a few years' distance, it was more typical for an extended look at the *Heimat of memory* to conclude with painful glances back at memory of the *Heimat*'s death. When Dr. H. Steinbock looked back in 1954 to the small Lower Silesian town of Bunzlau at the turn of the

[4] For instance, the chronicle in the Löwenberg *Heimatbuch* took material from earlier editions in 1825 and 1925. *Heimatbuch des Kreises Löwenberg in Schlesien*, 3rd ed. (Bückeburg: Grimmesche Hofbuchdruckerei, 1959).
[5] Konrad Müller, *Breslau wie es war* (Goslar: Verlag Unser Weg, 1949), 39.
[6] Ibid., 40.

century, he recalled a primitive village without good shops or modern conveniences that had been cozy, slow-paced, and insular. Then accelerating German progress enlivened and expanded the town, so that no one "suspected how short the city's time of prosperity would last." Having thus hinted at the tragic end, his idealized history concluded that, though Bunzlau was "in large part destroyed today, and in the foreseeable future it certainly doesn't look like we will see the beloved *Heimatstadt* again, it nonetheless remains written in our hearts and lives in memory as the city of good clay," a reference to the esteemed local pottery industry.[8] After an extended history of the "happy days" of the years gone by in Glatz, Gustav Richter bemoaned in 1952 of how "the blind fury of Polish robbers" suddenly ravaged sacred sites like the grave of the poet Hermann Stehr, and he concluded that "happiness and brightness left Glatz with us." In the face of such rupture, convinced that expellees would probably never experience Glatz again, Richter encouraged readers to keep their memories alive and so sustain Glatz for future generations.[9] In his 1959 *Heimatbuch* contribution, Adolf Möller went so far as to recount of how:

> with the occupation of our *Heimat* by Russians and Poles, the darkest time in the history of Löwenberg began, in which most of what efficient generations had built in seven centuries was destroyed and lost. Löwenberg had been forced to undergo many wars over the course of the centuries, however none of these wars had brought so much suffering and pain over the residents as the last war, which not only reduced our *Heimatstadt* to debris and ruins, but, what is most cruel, expelled the people out of their *Heimat*.[10]

Comparing pristine and timeless prewar images of Löwenberg with the widespread devastation, the piles of rubble and lifeless streets of postwar Lwówek, recounting story after story from former residents who had suffered abuse and witnessed wanton destruction and plundering,

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[7] Linde Englert, "Das Beskidenland ist mein Heimatland," in Paul Karzel, *Bielitzer Rundbrief* 4, October 1947, EZA Z 1.142, 4.
[8] H. Steinbock, "Bunzlau um die Jahrhundertwende," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 3, no. 1 (January 1954), 12.
[9] Gustav Richter, "Glück und Glanz über Glatz," in *Schlesische Rundschau*, 25 Apr. 1952, BHI-PAS P0385 (Glatz before 1978).
[10] *Heimatbuch des Kreises Löwenberg in Schlesien*, 188.

Möller left his readers in little doubt that the rupture of 1945 had been no mere war as in earlier centuries but an apocalypse that had definitively ended all they had known.[11]

As shown in the case of Möller, pictures contributed powerfully toward producing the effect of rupture between a tenuous *Heimat of memory* and the ever looming *Heimat transformed*. Indeed, the textual construction of the *Heimat of memory* and its fragility regularly interacted with and complemented omnipresent *Heimat* artwork; pristine paintings and photographs of steeples and smokestacks became artifacts to a lost civilization where it had always been bright and sunny, where winter had brought gentle snowfall rather than mud and decay. They froze the idealized *Heimat of memory* in an ether of timelessness: always out of reach and in need of continual remembering, lest it slip from memory itself.[12] Just as expellees drew strength from reconstructing this *Heimat of memory*, they found it draining to muse on the *Heimat transformed*, where it was always cloudy and muddy and everything once loved was crumbling away.

Images of a ruined *Heimat transformed* filled publications of every sort and reinforced the concept that the *Heimat* had died in physical space and only lived in memory. Sixteen photographs of Glogau (only one of them a postcard-perfect aerial shot from before the war), distributed for three and a half German Marks by the *Verband der Ostvertriebenen* in 1952, demonstrated the totality of destruction (like other major Oder river crossings, the Nazi regime had declared it a "fortress city" to be defended to the last). Arranged like an obituary and entitled "in memoriam Glogau," it may well have had an effect that the political leadership didn't intend, proving the harsh reality that the *Heimat* "before the destruction" in the first photo could never

[11] Ibid., 199.
[12] David Blackbourn likewise observes that East Prussians remembered the East as "an idealized land, frozen in time," tamed from a wilderness through German hard work. *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 314, 316.

return.[13] At times, this yielded frustration and a stubbornness like that of Silesian novelist Arnold Ulitz, who argued that, unless Breslau's "German stones" were reassembled by its own people, on its own soil, in the way his idealized photographs depicted it, the whole German East had simply ceased to exist. Though by 1956 the Poles were inhabiting and reconstructing the city, he fumed that "the Oder must be a German stream; otherwise, there is no Breslau."[14] If the *Heimat of memory* could not be miraculously restored to an idealized state it could never possess, he preferred to ignore reality and live in memories.

In the face of pervasive awareness of the drastic changes in the *Heimat transformed*, expellee editors assembled a multitude of picture books and other artistic representations to help both themselves and their readers to reinforce their fading memories of the cherished *Heimat of memory*. As noted in a 1950 picture book of "the *Heimat* never to be forgotten," picture books were to facilitate "hours of memory" between expellees, as they passed the book around and narrated "about what their *Heimat* once was, as well as the closed, lost land it is for them today."[15] When fellow Silesians looked at his picture book, Edmund Glaeser entreated that they "should not weep and mourn when they see these pictures of their old, unforgettable *Heimat*, but rather should be thankful and proud that they had once been permitted to participate in the formation and care of a grand landscape of old German ways of life and civilization."[16] This was to serve as a means of retaining pride in one's Silesian identity and inculcating it into future generations amid permanent exile in a foreign West German environment.

Pristine, black-and-white photographs of Breslau's town hall, the *Riesengebirge* mountain chain, Breslau's "beautiful Madonna" statue, happy children in regional costumes, and

[13] "Bezeichnung der Fotos von Glogau-Oder," December 19, 1952, HS BER0023b.
[14] Arnold Ulitz, "Geliebte Stadt – gelebte Stadt," in *Breslau: Hauptstadt Schlesiens in 71 Bildern*, ed. Herbert Hupka (München: Gräfe und Unzer Verlag, 1956), 12.
[15] *Nie vergessene Heimat: Erinnerungsband an die Ostgebiete* (Hamburg: Thordsen, 1950), dust jacket.

other *lieux de mémoire* were reprinted from book to book. Images of industrial landscapes frequently received praise as "scenic" aspects of the countryside.[17] Despite the fact that Breslau's Jewish population had suffered persecution and then violence at the hands of their German neighbors after the Nazi seizure of power, the Jewish Breslauer Ernst Scheyer's photographic memoirs featured an upbeat portrayal of a bustling town, infusing personal anecdotes with architectural highlights. As he commented in an article for the Tel Aviv periodical devoted to Jewish settlers from Breslau, "Breslau formed me, both its character as a city in the German East and its educational institutions. . . until the catastrophe of early 1933."[18] Beneath a pristine black-and-white photograph of the flamboyant neo-gothic Kaiser-Wilhelm lookout tower, Scheyer recalled how his father had taken him to see it aboard a steamer.[19] Always the descriptions appeared in past-tense, and melancholy melted through periodically that the *Heimat of memory* could never be grasped physically again. When introducing Sheyer's 1969 picture book for Breslau, Günther Grundmann emphasized the "inaccessability" (*Unerreichbarkeit*) of the lost *Heimat*.[20] He came to this insight after an energetic journey in reconciling with loss; once Silesia's prewar monument preservationist, he continued his on as a postwar preservationist of images and documents detailing the Silesian *Heimat of memory*.[21] Already, in 1952, he had come to terms with the thought that the rich artistic heritage of Silesia

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[16] Edmund Glaeser, *Heimat Schlesien, 63 Fotos*, third ed. (Munich: Gräfe und Unzer Verlag, 1951), 5.
[17] See for instance photos of industrial landscapes in Karl Hausdorff, ed. *Unser Schlesien* (Stuttgart: Karl Mayer Verlag, 1954).
[18] Ernst Scheyer, "Bildung in Breslau," *Mitteilungen des Verbandes ehemaliger Breslauer in Israel* 10-11 (early 1964), 2.
[19] Idem., *Breslau so wie es war: ein Bildband*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1972), 20.
[20] Günther Grundmann, Forward, in *Breslau so wie es war*, by Ernst Scheyer, 6.
[21] For key examples of his postwar preservationism, see Grundmann, ed., *Schlesien* (Berlin und Wiesbaden: Anton Schuhmacher, 1952); *Stätten der Erinnerung. Grabmale und Denkmäler aus acht Jahrhunderten* (Konstanz and Stuttgart: Jan Thornbecke, 1964); *Schlesien. Eine Erinnerung. Ein Bildband der Heimat* (Frankfurt/Main: Wolfgang Weidlich, 1966). Grundmann continued his prewar attentiveness to Silesia as chair of the *Kulturwerk Schlesien* from 1951-1959. He also sought to preserve monuments in West German cities such as Hamburg, which were damaged by war and often even more by haphazard reconstruction. *Unsere Städte in Gefahr. Ihre Vergangenheit und ihre Zukunft* (Hamburg: Christians Verlag, 1976).

was destroyed or "mute" because it was surrounded by foreigners, and that therefore the only task which remained was to "keep alive memory of [what once was] as a precious, spiritual heritage."[22] Now, in 1969, he urged his fellow Silesians to use pictures to overcome the physical *Unerreichbarkeit* of the *Heimat*, "the impossibility to wander again through the roads, to cross the squares, to seek out acquaintances, or to find intimate friends again, and to discover the new things that no longer come to mind."[23]

Generic picture books devoted to representing "all of Germany" also preserved the myth of pristine eastern provinces, ever alive as an intrinsic part of a united whole, though now they only existed in the past.[24] While contemporary photographs illustrated the modern, postwar life of cities in the West and often even in the DDR, pictures from the former eastern provinces usually dated to before the war, complete with old cars or horses. Only occasionally did a contemporary image appear, and these always focused carefully on reconstructed monuments like the Breslau town hall, whose repair after the city's destruction was usually attributed to unknown forces. Under a brilliant color photo of the town hall, one picture book merely noted that "the damages from the war are, as one sees, completely remedied."[25] Such books preserved Germany's eastern territories outside political realities, united and intact with the common heritage of Kant from Königsberg, Eichendorff from Neisse, Luther from Wittenberg, and Beethoven from Bonn.

To cope with their permanent exile, many expellees painted away their loss by immersing themselves in pictures of what had been and sketching representations of an eternal *Heimat of*

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[22] Gründman, "Die Kunst in Schlesien," in *Schlesien*, ed. Idem., 112-143 (Berlin and Wiesbaden: Anton Schuhmacher, 1952), 143.
[23] Idem., Forward, in *Breslau so wie es war*, 6.
[24] See for instance *Deutschland. Ein Hausbuch* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Verlag, 1960, 1964); *Deutschland. Landschaft, Städte, Dörfer und Menschen* (Frankfurt/Main, Umschau Verlag, 1959); *Deutschland. Das Land in dem wir leben. Porträt in Bild und Wort* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Verlag, 1966).
[25] *So schön ist Deutschland* (Heidelberg and Munich: Keysersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1959), image 228.

memory to be adored and cherished now that the physical *Heimat* was gone. During an afternoon of leave in his *Heimatstadt* Liegnitz in early autumn of 1944, Alfred Otte, a soldier from the Vistula Front, had captured an album's worth of photographs when, in a remarkable dehistoricization, he imagined wistfully that everything was still "in peaceful calm."[26] For all his repeated claims when writing in 1960 that he "still didn't suspect that these would be the last impressions and pictures of Liegnitz," severe military setbacks surely motivated his highly nostalgic stroll past his old school and favorite monuments on the eve of their destruction, for he took great pains to construct an eternalized memory at a specific moment in time with both his camera and a memory apparently anxious blot out the prevalence of refugees from bombed out western cities, the slave laborers, the absence of Jews, and the large water reservoir established near the main market square to put out anticipated air-raid fires. Now, in his exile, he liked "to look at these photos over and over again," because they constantly kept alive "memories of a beautiful childhood and easy-going childhood."[27] There was no question for Otte of ever returning to see the physical spaces of *Heimat* again. "The sight of it in its current state would be too painful. I want to keep it in memory just as I saw it for the last time: a perfectly clean city kept in order and cared for by its citizens, [a city] that was once known far beyond Germany as one of the most beautiful cities of the German East."[28]

Starting at age seventy-six, Silesian expellee H. Heyer restored and preserved his *Heimat of memory* by painting 689 watercolor images from 1951-1959. Based upon already idealized photographs and postcards of Silesia (absolutely nothing from East Prussia, Austrian Silesia, or

[26] Alfred Otte, "Abschied von Liegnitz. Aus meinem Fotoalbum," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 12, no. 11/12 (June 10, 1960), 177-179. The photos themselves had a remarkable history. Otte sent his film from the Front back to in-laws in Liegnitz, who were ultimately expropriated. However, neighbors that remained as forced laborers on the in-laws' former estate under Polish supervision discovered the package of film hidden in the attic. They smuggled it out of the house, managed to bring some of them past the border guards when they left Silesia in 1958, and brought them back to Otte, which he treasured as "a piece of Heimat!" (179).
[27] Ibid., 177.

any area outside his bordered *Heimat*), he put painstaking work into sketching and then shading fifteen images of the Breslau town hall alone, often featuring intricate statues and decoration. As comparison with an interwar source-photograph of Liegnitz proves, Heyer occasionally moved people or objects, but the buildings themselves he sought to reproduce as closely as possible, even city gates that had ceased to exist before he had been born. Never did Heyer depict wartime devastation or postwar Polish Silesia; his memory work meant to preserve with his paintbrush the Silesia he wanted to remember, because it no longer existed in reality. It was ultimately a very private form of dealing with loss: the work was never displayed, and it was ultimately given to the Herder Institut by Heyer's grandson, archived away as a testimony to a generation's nostalgia for a world that was lost.[29]

Oil paintings preserved at the Oppeln [Opole] *Heimat* archive in Bad Godesburg testify to the widespread nature of dealing with loss on the canvas. Dating from 1955-1962, the various artists depicted the town hall, riverfront, and churches of their Upper Silesian *Heimatstadt* in colorful scenes with blue skies and lush foliage. Most remarkable, in 1960 "Th. Le." produced a gold, two-meter-tall triptych to the lost *Heimat*, featuring Oppen and its West German "sponsor city" Bonn on opposite doors when closed, and, when open, an evocative meld Christian and *Heimat* imagery. The Holy Family flees, not from Egypt, but from Silesia; St. Hedwig, Silesia's patron saint, prays for all expellees at the foot of the crucified Christ, and at the large center panel, Christ returns at the Last Judgment over a pastoral Silesian landscape to restore at the end of time that which is lost for the rest of mortal existence. For these artists, painting was a means to cope with what had happened and express their love for a *Heimat of memory*. For any outsider, they are crude, even kitsch. During my visit in 2007, Herr Wieczorek, the archive

[28] Ibid., 179.
[29] Heyer's watercolors are stored at the Herder Institut Bildarchiv DSHI 200.

director, berated them for their lack of precision and for their creative liberties. Having left Upper Silesia in 1978, he remembered *Heimat* as a concrete province in Poland where he had suffered for his Germanness.[30] His Silesia had nothing to do with the *Heimat of memory* painted by Silesian exiles fifty years ago.

2. Imaginary Journeys into the Picture Book of Memory

In March 1949, Magdalena John confessed to her old *Heimat* priest of a guilty pleasure: she was habitually dreaming that she was back in the *Heimat.* And rather than scold her, the priest condoned her behavior by publishing it in his circular letter to the scattered flock.[31] Through the first two decades after the expulsion, exiled Silesians regularly closed their eyes and journeyed into the picture book of memory. In poems, articles, and even full-length books, they indulged in the fantasy that they lived again in the *Heimat* they remembered. Each journey was framed by imagery as idealized as in the picture books, but experienced as a far more personal grapple with loss: every intimate detail in the dear old house was always in order, the garden was in bloom, sunshine beamed down on the familiar village spires, and there were no pressing concerns (such as the inflation of the 1920s or Nazi seizure of power). Always fragile and fleeting, this static imagery of a quaint and personal past-heaven outside of space and time offered escape from an alien and impersonal present. Dreamers even set themselves up as guides, leading unnamed companions through the stage sets of a lost past, only to be expelled again from the ethereal *Heimat of memory* when the dream ended. In this way, many expellees did indeed

[30] Andrew Demshuk, interview with Bernhard Wieczorek, October 17, 2007. Herr Wieczorek vigorously denies that his name has any Polish roots at all, though there are roughly fifty thousand Wieczoreks in Poland, and the name roughly translates from Polish as "little evening."
[31] Magdelena John, letter in *Das katholische Liegnitz*, Seelsorgebrief, June/July 1949, BAK Z 18/222, 8.

"dream" of returning to the *Heimat*, but they were visions rooted in a past *Heimat of memory*, always threatened by the inescapable present, the *Heimat transformed*.[32]

Though they always stimulated dealing with loss, imaginary journeys carried expellees to different destinations: picture-perfect fairytales to be relished but never explored in reality, past paradises now cursed as under a spell and barred by reality, and alluring realms of childhood that needed to be experienced one day by a real journey into the *Heimat transformed*. Most commonly, they landed in pristine spaces that gave reprieve and consolation amid a foreign West. In 1947, Luise Scholz imagined *Heimat* within her, intimately, consoling her in exile:

> you can leave *Heimat* a thousand times and still always return back to her. With her towers, churches, and alleys, she is a last good fortune you can never lose. She holds the purest dreams of youth, she embraces you as in a mother's womb, she stretches herself over all areas, and you never come away from her.[33]

Likewise, Jochen Hoffbauer's memory journey to Greiffenberg [Gryfów] ended with the assertion that expellees could find home in any physical space so long as they could close their eyes and ascend into imagined *Heimat* spaces.[34] Memory became the only *Heimat* that they could never be expelled from.

To varying degrees, imaginary journeys tapped into both real experiences from the past and feathery abstractions of desire, in which the very features of *Heimat* dithered away into the obscure mists of a dream. In an extreme case of the latter, Hans Nowak envisioned Silesia as "landscapes from God's hand, a quietly babbling brook and clear lights near the clouds; landscape, formed by human efficiency, used and preserved– a gift, kept in honor and respect. So

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[32] Expellees from other regions, such as the Sudeten-German Franz Fürst, led readers on similar "tours" via memory and any old photo or brochure they could find. See his *"Wie's daheim war. . .!": Eine Reise durch deutsches Land in Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien* (Nattheim: Fürst, 1949), 3.
[33] Luise Stolz, "*Heimat*," in Paul Karzel, *Bielitzer Rundbrief* 4, October 1947, EZA Z 1.142, 3.
[34] Jochen Hoffbauer, "'Alles ist mir wie ein Traum'. Erinnerungen an Greiffenberg. Besuch in der Queisstadt im Nachbarkreis Löwenberg," Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung 8, no. 11 (1959), 7.

did we see it and experience it, and look out and see it in a dream."[35] Another poet reflected that the dream of *Heimat* could only be encountered on a moonlit night.[36] Even more abstract, the lost paradise often transformed into a fairytale land, both physically and temporally lost in another realm "once upon a time."[37]

By animating the static *Heimat* idyll of memory into an imaginary journey, Maria von Buttlar restored for herself and her imagined companion-readers a consoling reflection of "what once constituted our lives."[38] In the landscapes of the Rhineland outside her window, she listened to the singing of expellee children, "a piece of *Heimat* for us, the adults, who carry their fate heavily." With this sound in her ears, darkness fell and

> the contours of the Rhenish landscape dissolve away more and more, everything lights up before my mind's eye. As on a smooth gold background which the old master finished painting, the image of the *Heimat* stands before us, neither lost nor forgotten. The bitterness, the fears, the angst, every alienating context vanishes before this image that we all carry in our hearts. It is a possession that cannot be lost, it is unchanging in its clarity.[39]

Memory was also a source (*Quelle*) of strength from which Silesians should ladle and drink with sober recognition that the remembered *Heimat* was endangered: though many families tried to pass on customs of *Heimat* to the children, time would make even this lived tradition they took with them "vanish more and more and only live on in nostalgic (*wehmütig*) memories."[40] The imaginary journey was private, accessible only to the intimate circle of those who had known Silesia before the rupture of 1945. When her generation died, imaginary journeys would cease.

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[35] Hans Nowak, "'Es fiel ein Blatt vom Baum' (Schlesien, Breslau)," in *Mysterium Heimat: Städte und Landschaften im deutschsprachigen Raum– Geschildert von achtundsechzig zeitgenössischen Autoren*, ed. Günther Birkenfeld, 105-110 (West Berlin: Verlag für Internationalen Kulturaustausch, 1959), 110.
[36] Anonymous, "Erinnerung," in *Leobschützer Heimatbuch*, ed. Josef Klink (Lengerich/Westphalia: Kleins Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, vormals Bischof & Klein, 1950), 63.
[37] See for instance Emil Heinze, "Das war einmal ein Ausflugslokal," in *Unser Schlesien heute: eine Reise in der Heimat*, by Erwin Hirschberg (Aachen: E. Hirschberg, 1955), 226.
[38] Maria von Buttlar, *Heimat im Herzen: ein besinnliches Schlesienbuch* (Neuwied-Berlin: Michael-Verlag, 1948), 10.
[39] Ibid., 95-96.
[40] Ibid., 11.

Pastors found consolation walking among the idealized pews of their ancient parish churches, which in their imaginary journeys were filled with attentive and angelic parishioners. The former Breslau priest Josef Engelbert thought back:

> When I think of St. Michael's, I see and experience our solemn religious service and the powerful demonstrations during the high feasts and our religious weeks. I see the church overfilled. The brothers and sisters stand shoulder to shoulder and mightily sing our hymns to the praise of the Almighty.[41]

Pastor Küster from Patschkau [Paczków] actually mailed his Protestant community a picture of their church in order to invite them to an imaginary "meeting" (*Treffen*) before the sanctuary of the past, with everyone accounted for and sitting "side by side."[42] "Once upon a time we had this," Fr. Norbert Hettwer sighed, having just envisioned an idyllic Christmas Masses back in Grottkau [Grodków], "these memories will always remain a piece of paradise for us; memories we took with us out of the *Heimat* are something no power on Earth can expel us from."[43]

But alongside this paradise, many imaginary journeys also toured the postwar transformation which now haunted what they had known and indeed endangered their frail images of the past. At the end of his reflections, Hettwer mourned that "our *Heimat* is no longer the land that we hold in our memories, our *Heimat* no longer looks as it did when we had to leave it."[44] When an old man wrote in 1951 of his imagined journey back to Oppeln, he first recalled his physical return for a few months in 1945, when he had found the town square "decimated and burned out," the streets "dreary and miserable," and use of the German language had brought severe punishment. Now, tucked away from the "foreign streets" of the West, he subsisted "on the memory of joyous days in the circle of friends and relatives in the lands of our

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[41] Josef Engelbert, St. Michaels Brief 2, Zum St. Michaelfest 1947, BAK Z 18/212, 122:1.
[42] Küster und Familie, *Rundbrief Patschkau*, Christmas 1948, EZA Z 1.164, 1-2. There were many pastoral fantasies of churches too idealized to have ever been real. Pastor Monse similarly reflected of his community near Glatz: "How efficiently the children progressed in their religious education. You joyfully listened to the sermon, to your clergy's instruction for the youth, in the congregation, in the men's group, in the mothers' union. . . now all of that is over. It was once upon a time." Monse, *Rundbrief*, May 1, 1946, BAK Z 18/218.
[43] Norbert Hettwer, *Rundbrief* 6, Christmas 1946, BAK Z 18/214, 85.

fathers, our *Heimat* Upper Silesia."[45] The imaginary journey allowed him to venture again through his old *Heimat*, the only place where he belonged; but he had no wish to really go back again. In 1957, in the midst of reflecting on his recent release from the Workuta gulag, Horst Bienek imagined himself back in Gleiwitz [Gliwice], the *Heimat* of his youth, where "all the rooms are empty in the house of my childhood, only the lonely clocks hang on the smoke-blackened walls, their hands are oriented, unchanging, on seven-thirty, and as much as I try, I'm not able to differentiate the beat of my heart from the ticking of the clocks."[46] Time passed for Bienek, yet it stood still in that house of his memory, which lay ever abandoned and hollow. In 1949, Elmar Boensch tried to imagine looking out from a hill over the fruitful, "satisfied land" that surrounded his *Heimat* of Frankenstein, he imagined turning to the mountains, to the "realm of Rübezahl," a "paradisiacal natural space" where the people retreated after their customary hard work. But his dreams were haunted by a letter recently received from relatives still in Silesia, which told of overcrowded hospitals, trucks carrying stolen goods as the only traffic on the roads, and the racist image that all the Polish farmers were drunk on vodka, squelching out efficiency and enterprise on the land. He yearned for Germans to bring order and beauty back to the land, to restore it to his idealized memories, but in the end his visions of the past were too rich and full, too impossible to be fulfilled in the face of the "sadness" he imagined now.[47]

Rübezahl populated many imaginary journeys as the symbol of a lost German paradise. The legendary dwarf was said to be the "German" spirit who had given Silesians their special character, just as they had imagined him into existence. He had enchanted the Silesian mountains

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[44] Integration in the West was the only option left to expellees, he concluded, but not at the expense of their connection to the former *Heimat* of their dreams. Norbert Hettwer, *Rundbrief* 9, May 1947, BAK Z 18/214, 90.
[45] W. E. G., "Oppeln, Pforte zum O/S-Industrierevier," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 3, no. 20 (July 15, 1951), 4.
[46] Horst Bienek, *Traumbuch eines Gefangenen. Prosa und Gedichte* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1957), 18.

and now mourned the expulsion of his "children," even shared in their sufferings through imprisonment at the mountain peak or exile to West Germany. In the midst of recounting his bitter experiences as the Polish authorities' administrator for Germans in Hirschberg [Jelenia Góra] from 1945-1946, Walter Roth used Rübezahl as a surrogate on which to project his own homesickness for idealized mountains and villages that had faded like a fairytale. In his imaginary journey, there were no Nazi or Polish authorities– only Rübezahl, king of a Germanic paradise fashioned through the dreams of his German subjects. Expulsion had dissipated Rübezahl's *Reich*: "all of us subjects of the great mountain spirit have been forced to leave our glorious land and are only allowed to dream of it now." With chalk, Roth had made a figure of Rübezahl in the cattle car that transported him to the West: Rübezahl, was now "homeless" and accompanied Roth away from his mountains, for "he no longer found people that he loved, who he understood, who spoke about him in the language of [the Silesian poet] Gerhart Hauptmann, and who read about him in the language of Goethe." Indeed, matters were "worse" for poor Rübezahl, for though Roth was certain Germans would steadily find a new residence in the West, poor Rübezahl, the *spirit* of Silesia, would find no resting place outside of his realm.[48] Only the return of Silesia's Germans could restore Rübezahl to his mountains, but because the *Heimat* only survived in their memory, Roth consigned Rübezahl's *Heimkehr* (and his own) to a timeless and indefinite future space, as far from reality as the inaccessible wonderland of Rübezahl's *Reich*.

On another imaginary journey, a Silesian from the mountains envisioned Rübezahl's *Reich* as a lifeless shell, without any of the warmth and coziness in other visions, "cursed" by the

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[47] Elmar Boensch, "Wie es einst war. . . Wie es jetzt ist. . . Nach einem Brief aus der Heimat vom Februar 1949," in "Hedwigsgruss an alle Gläubigen der katholischen Kirchengemeinden Frankenstein und Zadel, Schlesien," ed Rudolf Kurnoth, no. 16, January-July 1949, BAK Z 18/216, 58.
[48] Walter Roth, *Rübezahl heimatlos* (Hamburg: Hans Schlichting Verlag, 1949), 5-7.

nameless guilt of its former inhabitants. For eight years, he had tried to forget the *Heimat*, pained as he was by its postwar transformation, and he had sought what meaning he could in his new life in the West. Now he flew back in a dream to his "beloved little city in which I know every path, every street, where all the people are intimate to me." But unlike the idyllic journeys of von Buttlar or even Roth, every house was "foreign and drained," and when he waved to his parents' house, "it stood mute and cold, it didn't look at me, it was so foreign." Without knowledge of its actual contemporary appearance, the brick house appeared as fully intact as before; but then "with horror" he realized that "the house had died, like a person its soul had separated from it, had flown away, and what stood here was only the lifeless, stony body, the cold walls within which foreign people now live." He fled from the house through the streets, but the people were foreign, mute, and ignored him like a wisp from an irrelevant past. Certainly recalling reports he had read, he saw foreign names on street signs and the "stone hulls" of shops. Overwhelmed at last, certain that he was "not allowed to search" in the village of his youth, he fled into the mountains, into nature. Here his heart first became lighter; he looked up to the peak, to the *Schneekoppe*, the palace of Rübezahl, and lauded how "no human power" could shake "the German mountain." Yet then he noticed that "all the mountains had fallen into a deep, magical sleep": each village along the way "slept" under a blanket of snow, and more and more the landscapes became "lifeless" and "numb," enchanted by a curse. Upon nearing the *Schneekoppe*, a barricade of stones blocked his journey:

> despairing, I clutched onto the cold stone, and I cried out: 'Rübezahl, where are you? Rübezahl, just answer, Rübezahl.' A little voice sounded in my ear. I rubbed my eyes, looked closer up. No, really, a dwarf stood before me and scolded: 'what are you screaming about, stupid man-child?' [I replied] 'Where is Rübezahl, I want to go to him. Doesn't he know what has happened in our mountains? Why does he allow it, he who should be their guardian?' The voice of the little man rang with pity: 'you shouldn't disturb him, the lord of the mountains sleeps. When you all had to leave him, he remained in order to defend the mountain world. Oh, you can't know the heartache and pain that he suffered. It was too much. Now he has sealed himself away on the *Schneekoppe* to sleep. He has cast a spell on the mountains and blocked all entrances, and I am not allowed to awaken him beforehand: for it should last a hundred years until people live here again who speak his language, and who love him.

The Silesian protested, demanded that Rübezahl allow him to sleep too until the old *Heimat* resurrected again as it was. But the dwarf rebuked him: "If you have lost the old *Heimat*, why would you be allowed to live on [to have] what you want?" Though the German crimes were never named, the Silesian suddenly realized that it was the fault of human beings, not poor Rübezahl, that the "German" mountains of his *Reich* had been lost for the rest of their lifetimes. A terrible cost was being paid, and he accepted the dwarf's command that he return to reality and raise his children in the West. Awake, with his daughter "snuggled confidently and securely" in his arms, the depression left him and he knew that it was his duty "to be strong within myself and to erect the new *Heimat* around me for my child and my family," even if the *Heimat of memory* laid in slumber for the rest of his mortal existence.[49] Having undertaken an imaginary journey and "witnessed" the *Heimat* transformed, the Silesian processed the reality that it was lost for the rest of his life.

At the end of the imaginary journey, the return from dream to reality often appeared as a second expulsion, claiming every dear space until the next fantasy. After indulging in a novel-length journey to the cherished past world, even guiding the reader through the intimate spaces of his house and garden, Wolfgang von Eichborn relived his winter expulsion and felt it steal the intimate spaces away: "village by village, church tower by church tower, the *Heimat* was engulfed by the dissolving loss of the white night. The pyramids of the mountains moved nearer, moved further, disappeared; the landscape of the *Heimat* sank into the dreamful certainty of

[49] "Heimat, wir tragen dich im Herzen. Eine Begegnung mit Berggeist Rübezahl," *Heimat und Glaube* 5, no. 6 (June 1953): 13-14.

memory."[50] Every feature of *Heimat* remained dear in his memory, but they were lost in reality and could only be recovered when he closed his eyes.

Of course, there were those who traveled the lands of memory who later awoke to the strong yearning to undertake an actual journey one day to the *Heimat transformed* to satisfy curiosity about what was left of the spaces they remembered and even care for them in some way.[51] Night after night, an Upper Silesian expellee narrated to his children (some born in Gleiwitz, others in the West) about the dear spaces of the lost *Heimat*. Over time, he recalled, "with each day as the kids got older, I settled down more in these foreign spaces," until the West became his family's *Heimat.* For all this, he prayed "with all my heart that it will be possible for me to be able to show my children the lost *Heimat*," for, much as he tried to tell them of his love for the church of All Saint's in Gleiwitz, he knew that only "when they see it later" could they know "why I loved this church more than any other."[52] Expellee children, often with only the faintest early memories of Silesia, also undertook imaginary journeys across the Iron Curtain, at times writing school papers that inspired them with the prospect of undertaking a trip later on.[53] As will be shown in chapter six, many of them did. No longer protected by the controlled realm of the imagination, they were immersed in a world of disjuncture between the two images of *Heimat* and had to cope with the fact that Rübezahl's *Reich* had become home to a very different history than the one they still cherished in their hearts. Rübezahl's children were now Polish.

3. The Transience of the Earthly *Heimat*

[50] Wolfgang von Eichborn, *Das schlesische Jahr, Landschaften der Sehnsucht* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1948), 122.
[51] Margarete Mönsch-Krämer, "Kreuz und quer durch Schlesiens Bäder," *Guda Obend, Ihr lieba Leute! Ein heimatliches Jahrbuch für Schlesier und Sudetendeutsche in der Fremde*, ed. idem. (Tauberbischofsheim: Fränkische Nachrichter, 1951), 95.
[52] Johannes Blauscheck, "Verlorene Heimat," *Heimat und Glaube* 3, no. 6 (Juni 1951): 5.
[53] Stefan Eich, "Schau heimwärts Vertriebener! Ostdeutsche Heimat heute. Ein Bericht über Schlesien, Ost-Brandenburg, Pommern, Westpreußen Danzig und Ostpreußen," *Revue* 25 (June 21, 1952), 2.

When dealing with the loss of *Heimat*, the starting point for exiled Silesian pastors in both denominations was usually the scriptural passage Hebrews 13:14, "*Wir haben hier keine bleibende Stadt; sondern die zukünftige suchen wir*." (We have no lasting city here, but seek the city that is to come). Well aware from traumatic personal experiences in postwar Silesia and circulating information thereafter that the earthly *Heimat* was by no means a lasting space, the Hebrews verse became a deeply meaningful way to understand the schism between the *Heimat of memory* and *Heimat transformed* as part of God's eternal design. Only the spiritual realm was lasting and eternal (*unvergänglich*); all spaces in the mortal realm were by nature perishing and transient (*vergänglich*). In this light, the physical *Heimat* retained its chief importance only insofar as it lived on as a *Heimat of memory*, a past space to be cherished and preserved as an identity and legacy. Pastors themselves were particularly effusive in their yearning, composing idealized histories for their churches which almost always ended with destruction, dispersion, and the lesson of transience. Such a finish led most pastors to preach that the true purpose in life was to detach from physical expectations and strive toward an unfading, eternal *Heimat*. This often meant building a new *Heimat* in the West, through which they could continue to bear witness as Christian Silesians to the world around them. As a reward for their Christian witness in the earthly realm, they would receive a lasting *Heimat* in the eternal one, which very often resembled the lost and idealized *Heimat of memory* itself. Though in the first months after the expulsion some pastors also assured their flocks that one day the old *Heimat* might be restored to them, repeated proof of the physical *Heimat*'s transience in experiences and reports quickly made the idea of return abstract and indefinite, resting in God's hands.

Especially in the first five years after the expulsion, Protestant and Catholic pastors propagated their discussion of loss to their dispersed communities in all four partition zones

through circular letters (*Rundbriefe*) and small periodicals, in effect a genre between newspapers and private letters. Though a few natural differences arose in presentation, the overarching message in both denominations called for Silesians to master the new situation in the West without cutting roots to the beloved spaces of memory that gave them strength. Indeed, the dominance of passages commemorating the *Heimat of memory*, the regular proliferation of reports about the ruined *Heimat transformed*, and the recurrent letters from former parishioners on both subjects testified to the extreme importance that coping with loss had for pastors and their dispersed communities.[54] By early 1948, some *Rundbriefe* were reaching between 1,000 and 1,500 addresses, from which they were often further distributed to others in the community.[55] 109 *Rundbriefe* from eastern Catholic parishes were collected by the *Katholische Hilfstelle* alone, while a smaller sampling of Protestant *Rundbriefe* survives at the *Evangelisches Zentralarchiv*.[56] Though most widespread through the late 1940s, some *Rundbriefe* continued up to the pastor's death years later in the West, and in rare cases they even continue today. As such, they offer a unique glimpse into how, month-by-month and even week-by-week, pastors with broadly different personalities and backgrounds from both denominations sought to come to terms with the loss of *Heimat*, and how their communities responded.

The first half of the verse from Hebrews–that the earthly *Heimat* was a transient space–became a leading means for dealing with the loss of *Heimat* very early on. In a last sermon to his

[54] At times, Protestant (usually Lutheran) clergy mourned that intrinsic qualities of their denomination would be lost as Silesia turned Catholic. Paul Karzel, pastor of the former Bielitz [Bielsko] community, lamented that they could not celebrate the 400th anniversary of Luther's death together in a land now Polish and Catholic, and he encouraged members of his community to cherish the image of the town's Luther monument that they held in their hearts. *Bielitzer Rundbrief* 1, October 1946, EZA Z 1.142, 1. Catholic clergy often highlighted the suffering of Christ's mother and called on members to pray the rosary for the *Heimat*. See for instance Rudolf Kurnoth, "Hedwigsgruss an alle Gläubigen der katholischen Kirchengemeinden Frankenstein und Zadel, Schlesien," no. 2, September 1946, BAK Z 18/216, 41.

[55] *Rundbrief der Gemeinschaft Heimatvertriebener Schlesier*, March 12, 1948, 6.

[56] Catholic *Rundbriefe* are stored at the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz (BAK) Z 18/212-224; Protestant *Rundbriefe* are stored at the Protestant Central Archive in Berlin (EZA).

long-suffering Breslau congregation on June 30, 1946, Joachim Konrad cited Hebrews 13:14 to affirm that, as they took leave (*Abschied*) from their beloved church of St. Elizabeth, they anchored themselves in God's will, even if this meant losing their precious (but transient) *Heimat*.[57] Richard Hoppe's heavily distributed (2,500-copy) *Rundbrief* offered an excellent encapsulation:

> The view to the earthly *Heimat* and waiting and hoping for its renewal brings us the greatest and bitterest disappointment time and again. And if the earthly *Heimat* were to be given back to us, life there would be hard enough. A paradise will not come into existence there for us again in a dead land of horrors. . . . Through his resurrection, Jesus Christ has gone before us in order to prepare a place in his eternal *Heimat*, from which no one will be able to be expelled and which no one will be able to destroy.[58]

A Protestant paper distributed in 1949 always featured Hebrews 13:14 on its front page and called readers to seek *Heimat* in God, rather than the ancestral village, to avoid "awakening mournful memories" or "enlivening false hopes."[59] By no means did this mean that the physical *Heimat* was simply to be forgotten, for six pages later an advertisement tasked readers to gather surviving materials and share their memories about their former churches; physical detachment was to be paralleled by cherishing and preserving the *Heimat* they had known.[60] During the annual commemoration of the dead in November 1948, Fr. Johannes Smaczny urged his Catholic flock to remember that "everything earthly is impermanent (*vergänglich*), God alone is eternal. Impermanent earthly *Heimat*, eternal God. Impermanent earthly *Heimat*, eternal alone the security in the love of God." Thus, Smaczny concluded, life was "a pilgrimage" toward the eternal: "we are only the tent builders, until they collapse."[61] During the first months in the West, Father Piekorz published letters he had received from parishioners which supported his own

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[57] Lic. Joachim Konrad, "2. Sonntag nach Trinitatis, den 30. Juni 1946. Letzte evangelische und deutsche Predigt in der St. Elisabethkirche," in *Flüchtlinge von Gottes Gnaden: schlesische Predigt 1945 - 1952*, ed. Dietmar Ness (Würzburg: Bergstadtverlag Korn, 1990), 90-91.
[58] Richard Hoppe, "Sonderrundbrief zum Totensonntag 1947 mit Totenliste" (November 1947), EZA Z 1004, 2.
[59] Superintendent Johannes Klein, "Wir Haben hier keine Bleibende Stadt; sondern die zukünftige suchen wir," *Kirchenblatt für Evangelische aus Schlesien* 1/2, February 1949, 1.
[60] Kirchenleitung der evangelischen Kirche von Schlesien, "helft mit!" *Kirchenblatt für Evangelische aus Schlesien* 1/2, February 1949, 6.

entreaty to pray, not only for the lost *Heimat*, but also for the eternal one, to remember "that the unity between people and between people and God is of infinitely greater value than everything we have lost in earthly existence."[62] Josef Ryba also cited a parishioner's letter to emphasize that the expellee's hard lot was meant to instill the realization "that everything Earthly is impermanent (*vergänglich*), so that, purified and satisfied, we can decide our lives rightly" and thus be prepared for entry into heaven.[63] The longevity of this trope for dealing with loss is testified in a 1959 letter from the bishop of Essen to the Catholic community from Gleiwitz on occasion of their regular *Heimat* gathering in the *Patenstadt* Bottrop. Expressing hope that they had found a "new earthly *Heimat*" in the bishopric of Essen, he also expressed: "I am familiar with your love for the *Heimat* and know about the suffering that your expulsion from the *Heimat* meant for you. . . more than other people, you have experienced the truth of the apostle's words: 'We have no lasting place here.'"[64]

Former congregation members living in all four occupation zones read reports of the *Heimat*'s destruction in the *Rundbriefe* and generally agreed with their pastors: though they cherished the *Heimat of memory* and yearned to return to it, their energies should be spent on building a new *Heimat* in continuity with what they had known. For example, the Lauban *Rundbrief* featured letters from parishioners giving thanks for what they saw as a lesson of the expulsion: breaking attachment to the earthly and seeking the eternal.[65] Because they reached Silesians in the Soviet Zone as the Iron Curtain was still solidifying, *Rundbriefe* also demonstrate that Silesians east and west shared comparable interest and yearning for the former *Heimat*.

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[61] Johannes Smaczny, *Das katholische Liegnitz*, Seelsorgebrief, November 1948, BAK Z 18/222, 1.
[62] Piekorz, *Rundbrief*, December 6, 1945, BAK Z 18/219, 3; ibid., October 6, 1946, BAK Z 18/219, 6. Piekorz had led the Catholic community in Lauban [Lubań] for ten years before the expulsion.
[63] Josef Ryba, *Rundbrief*, March 30, 1947, BAK Z 18/222. See also Wolfram Hanow, *Wohlauer Rundbrief* 12, June 1950, EZA Z 1004, 1-2; Alfred Schulz, *Rundbrief*, November 26, 1945, BAK Z 18/222.
[64] Bishop of Essen to Catholic Expellees of Gleiwitz (28 April 1959) Stadtarchiv Bottrop HI2 nr. 5.

Maria Leuschner of Halle celebrated whenever the *Rundbrief* arrived and formed new spaces of *Heimat* among Franciscans from Breslau, "who celebrate the Christmas Eve Mass in the way we always did."[66] The Christian imagery of a fleeting earthly world and eternal future heaven continues indeed to have an impact even outside clerical writing among expellees today. When she discussed her own ongoing struggle with loss in 2002, Johanna Naumann expressed how Hebrews 13:14 continued to console her when she thought "back time and again, and with a distinct melancholy, on the lost landscape of *Heimat*." Though the *Warthebruch* just north of Silesia had faded from the earthly realm, it remained beloved in memory.[67]

As in the town chronicles discussed earlier, pastors were constantly writing short histories of their churches to preserve an idealized narrative of the community's history, and usually, due to personal memories and disseminated reports, they came to emphasize that, while the church as a spiritual and human body was eternal, the church structure and surrounding earthly *Heimat* were transient spaces whose fate was left in God's hands. After an article commemorating every last feature of the massive brick-gothic church of St. Nicholas in Brieg, Protestant Pastor Schmidt von Puskas concluded that "today this church, including the great hall with paintings by Prof. Utinger, is a heap of rubble" a testimony to "the impermanence of all earthly things." He imagined walking among the mighty pillars of his church and among the many graves and feeling "consolation and certainty when gazing upon the ruins of our *Heimat*," for he knew that he could pray to the eternal God wherever he was, in this case in the imagined sanctuary of memory.[68] Ulrich Bunzel, pastor at the Protestant church of St. Mary Magdalene in Breslau for twenty years, had lived for almost two years amid the ruins of his church and yearned

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[65] Piekorz, *Rundbrief*, October 6, 1946, BAK Z 18/219, p. 6.
[66] Maria Leuschner, letter in *Das katholische Liegnitz*, Seelsorgebrief, April 1949, BAK Z 18/222, 3.
[67] Johanna Naumann, "Einige Erlebnisse aus meiner Kindheit von ca. 1935-1945 auf der Enterprise Christiansburg," *Heimatblatt Landsberg/W.* (June 2002), 25ff.

in many passionate reflections for the *Heimat*-church he remembered from before.[69] The contrast between what he remembered and the total destruction he had experienced led him to lament: "We have no lasting city here. . . . the entire mighty church has become a terrifying sermon for us of the transience of every earthly thing."[70] Though his *Heimat* was beloved in memory, he was constantly disseminating reports from the dwindling German population that testified to the *Heimat transformed*'s ongoing transformation.

A palpable evolution transpired in many *Rundbriefe*; pastors with broadly different personalities and backgrounds, from both denominations, tended to progress from yearning for physical return to a growing resignation that the past could never be lived again as reality, and their abilities were needed in the present. Not all reached this sentiment at once, and there were cases where they never reached it at all, but it was the prevailing trend. While in his first letter (1947) Josef Engelbert urged his flock to pray and have patience, that they might one day see St. Michael's church in Breslau again, later that year he urged them "to stand with both feet on the ground of reality," to settle where they had landed, and move on with their professional lives "as if we would always have to stay here"; after all, though western communities lacked cherished Silesian traditions, the most important sacramental elements remained the same.[71] By the time of his last letter, two years later, he had moved to cherishing *Heimat* in memory and focusing on his new duties in Hannover.[72] Franz Wosnitza, vicar general of Kattowitz, processed the loss much more quickly: having returned to see the old *Heimat* and witness change during the Second World War, he knew that it would take a *Wunder* for his region of Polish Silesia, already lost to

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[68] Schmidt von Puskas, "Die Brieger Nikolaikirche," *Kirchenblatt für Evangelische aus Schlesien* 4, April 1949, 3.
[69] Ulrich Bunzel, "Haupt- und Pfarrkirche St. Maria-Magdalena zu Breslau," *Kirchenblatt für Evangelische aus Schlesien* 1/2, February 1949, 3.
[70] Ibid., 3.
[71] Josef Engelbert, *St. Michaels-Brief* 1, St. Joseftag 1947, BAK Z 18/212, 118:1; idem., *Rundbrief* 3, Zum Christfest 1947, BAK Z 18/212, 126:1; another example of this view is in Josef Ryba, *Rundbrief*, November 1947, BAK Z 18/222.

Germany in 1921, to return as an area of German settlement; fortunately, he added, Germans from his region had learned long ago how to get used to life in foreign regions.[73]

Pastors regularly instructed their flock that, by regenerating and rebuilding Silesian traditions and memories in West Germany and remembering that God was with them wherever they were, they were fulfilling the second half of the scripture verse and seeking the eternal, lasting *Heimat*. This approach began in the old *Heimat* itself, as when Joachim Konrad ended his last sermon in his Breslau church by admonishing his flock to reject false hopes of welcome or comfort in the West, to ignore hateful "propaganda" and show that their "firm foundation in life" came from God.[74] Protestant pastor Hanske reflected that his community had experienced the earthly city's impermanence together, and he distributed a pamphlet about God's guidance to 4,200 people, "not to fuel yearning or build illusions, but rather, as one resides and integrates here [in the West], to truly become 'salt for the Earth' and to contribute to the resuscitating communities which had become dead."[75] In 1949, former Breslau pastor Eitner instructed his flock to stay faithful to the church, to remain true in their "love of the *Heimat*," but also "through the dismissal of false yearnings and exaggerated hope" to heed God's will "in the foreign space where the Lord has also placed us."[76] Return to the *Heimat* might occur, but their attention should be on building a heavenly *Heimat* around them.

The religious traditions of *Heimat* returned through commemoration at specific times of year and facilitated widespread coping with loss. A 1949 ritual book for the Catholic church

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[72] Josef Engelbert, *Breslauer Heimatbrief St. Michael* 6, 1949, BAK Z 18/212, 139:4.
[73] Franz Wosnitza, *Rundbrief*, October 9, 1946, BAK Z 18/224; idem., "Polnisch-Oberschlesien daheim und in der Fremde," Undated *Rundbrief* circa 1946, BAK Z 18/224.
[74] Lic. Joachim Konrad, "2. Sonntag nach Trinitatis, den 30. Juni 1946. Letzte evangelische und deutsche Predigt in der St. Elisabethkirche," in *Flüchtlinge von Gottes Gnaden: schlesische Predigt 1945 - 1952*, ed. Dietmar Ness (Würzburg: Bergstadtverlag Korn, 1990), 93.
[75] Kurt Hanske, "Kirchenkreis Lauban," Superintendent Johannes Klein, *Kirchenblatt für Evangelische aus Schlesien* 1/2, February 1949, 7.
[76] "Pastor Eitner in Hannover, Hildesheim und Detmold," circa 1949, EZA 47/76.

calendar year noted that, while not all traditions from the old *Heimat* may be viable in the new Western environment, "perhaps we will also be able to entertain the grounded hope that our own cultural goods could exude an enrichment or revitalization of the church-religious traditions in the new *Heimat*."[77] Easter was a time to reflect on Christ's way of the cross and the way of the cross that they had walked from Silesia, now toward a heavenly *Heimat* prepared for them because of their suffering. November was a time to commemorate the dead and yearn for graves of family. Christmas was a time to think back on eternalized, warm, communal celebrations of the *Heiligabend*, to reflect on how Christ himself had been born in poverty, suffering as they suffered now.

Sometimes expellees wrote of how they saw their new regions of settlement as an opportunity for spreading a uniquely Silesian form of Christian virtue. Regina Walta wrote her pastor from Leipzig in 1948 that she preferred the fullness of the worship she found in the Soviet zone to what she had experienced in the *Heimat* she had left in May 1947. Even if they were ever to return to the old *Heimat*, she was taking note of the liturgical richness of her new community and finding great strength in how it offset the concerns of everyday life in a way she had not experienced in the *Heimat*.[78] Richard Buschke reflected that, after he had returned from his shelter in the mountains to a Polish-speaking, hate-filled space that "was not a *Heimat* anymore" in 1945, he discovered that "only the church still remained *Heimat*."[79]

Seeking a heavenly *Heimat* also meant for some the reassurance that *Heaven* would be just like the *Heimat of memory*, that in death they would find justice when Silesia returned to them in the afterlife itself. As Siegfried Preuß proclaimed, after reviewing his community's

[77] Josef Brauner, *Schlesischer Volksbrauch im Kirchenjahr* (Ulm: Alois Luefke, 1949), 9.
[78] Regina Walta, letter in *Das katholische Liegnitz*, Seelsorgebrief, April 1949, BAK Z 18/222, 6.
[79] Richard Buschke, "Begegnung mit der hl. Hedwig," *Heimat und Glaube* 3, no. 10 (October 1951): 9.

losses, "Heaven will be an eternal Silesia, after all the martyrdom and suffering!"[80] He wanted his flock to be assured that the beloved "earthly *Heimat*" in their minds would resurrect for them in the next life. It has already been noted that the elderly were more likely to withdraw into imaginary journeys than engage with their Western environment; the reality that had befallen them was simply too terrible, the loss too great to go on living in the present. As one pastor observed,

> An old saying goes that you can't transplant an old tree. Homesickness afflicts the elderly worst of all. They can't get used to their new life conditions after they grew up in a stable way of life. Worst for them is also life in a foreign space after the difficulties and deprivations of the flight. Some of them have been prematurely aged by this. Children have it easier, they forget quickly, love change and new experiences, and quickly make new friendships.[81]

Many simply waited for death and lamented that they had not been able to die in the *Heimat.*[82] Martha Krüger went so far as to confine herself to a room where she could fixate all day on pastoral letters, "because darkness is often around me, ever since I had to leave our *Heimatstadt* Liegnitz."[83] So it is understandable that reflections by the dying or obituaries for the dead in the first postwar years demonstrate the widespread belief that, in death, the departed attained a heavenly Silesia no longer graspable in the physical world, and if the living remained faithful, not only to God, but also to the memory of the *Heimat*, they could one day attain it too.

Some of the more famed deaths at the time of the *Heimat*'s demise served as models for this "ascension" to the heavenly *Heimat*. Breslau Archbishop Adolf Cardinal Bertram died at age eighty-six exiled in his Silesian summer palace at Jauernig on July 6, 1945. As his private secretary reflected shortly after his death, Bertram was blessed to have died when he did, to be

[80] Siegfried Preuß, "Flüchtlingslied," *Schlesischer Gottesfreund. Kirchenblatt der evangelischen Heimatvertriebenen* (April 1950), 10.
[81] Leo Machinek, *Rundbrief* 5, Early October 1948, BAK Z 18/218, 14.
[82] Rudolf Czerny, *Bielitzer Rundbrief* 3, May 1947, EZA Z 1.142, 17.
[83] Martha Krüger, letter in *Das katholische Liegnitz*, Seelsorgebrief, April 1949, BAK Z 18/222, 3.

spared the need of separating memory and reality.[84] The bishop's counselor wrote to a colleague that he would not rebuild his church, St. Carolus in Breslau, "because it would cost too much and because it lays in the middle of uninhabitable ruins." With this conviction that the physical past was already, hopelessly dead, and with nothing left for himself in the present, he trudged West and then died on July 20, 1947.[85] The Graf von Schaffgotsch also had the misfortune of living a couple years after the war. At his eulogy on May 29, 1947, Albert Schmitt, abbot of the famed Silesian monastery at Grüssau, expounded at length about how recent events had hit the honorable count particularly hard. His life had been "filled with days of a beautiful, rich past, but filled as well most especially at the end with the suffering of recent times, with the harsh pain of need and unhappiness that has not failed to leave its mark on this life." Schmitt concluded that the count's yearning for return to the *Heimat* could never be fulfilled, but "instead of this, the Lord of life and death gave him now the eternal *Heimat*, of peace and calm after the agitation of this earthly existence."[86] Stories abound about the last days of the great Silesian poet Gerhard Hauptmann, who witnessed the firebombing of Dresden and returned to his Silesian mountain estate a broken, confused old man just in time to be overtaken by the invading Russian forces. His famous last words, "am I still in my house?" were reprinted in hundreds of publications after the war and commemorated in an eyewitness account that passed through many editions, even in English translation.[87] Hauptmann died in the *Heimat* oblivious to all except the memories of *Heimat* that compelled him to remain, memories to which he yearned to return. Six years later, a Silesian "capturing" the *Heimat* in an idyllic picture book commemorated him with conviction

[84] Walter Münch, "Die letzten Lebenstage des Fürstbischofs von Breslau, Adolf Kardinal Bertram," in *Erinnerungen an Adolf Kardinal Bertram, Fürstbischof von Breslau*, ed. Johannes Kaps, 61-69 (Munich, 1948), 69.
[85] Johannes Pelz, *Rundbrief*, August 15, 1947, BAK Z 18/218, 2-3.
[86] Albert Schmitt, *Zur Erinnerung an Friedrich Reichsgraf Schaffgotsch geboren Schloss Warmbrunn 18. Februar 1883 gestorben Schloss Ellingen 26. Mai 1947* (Munich: Münchner Graphische Kunstanstalten GmbH, 1947), 16-17.

that he was "born in Silesia and returned home to the *Heimat*."[88] The *Heimat* could never resurrect in reality, but the dead could resurrect to the imagined world that they had inhabited in their minds.

4. Fantasies of a Real *Heimkehr* to Silesia

What did it mean when an expellee clung to the idea of actually returning to Silesia *in spite of* the two, ever-diverging images of *Heimat*? Usually, it was only the dream they felt they needed to retain their sanity in their dismal exile. As Elisabeth Pfeil observed in the late 1940s, when material deprivation and the recent trauma of expulsion were most keenly felt, the dream of a "restoration" (*Wiederherstellung*) of former circumstances offered a psychological crutch that prevented suicide. As a distraction from the grim everyday, she saw how each expellee "makes plans about what one would do after *Rückkehr*, how one would newly construct the old *Heimat*. In countless minds, the world of the *Heimat* is restored."[89] It was this fantasy that gave them hope in the face of reality, the *Begegnung mit dem Nichts* that the physical *Heimat* was already lost forever. Though they "tenaciously" held on to the idea of return, "nonetheless, they fret and at times the fear overcomes them that the expulsion could be permanent."[90] I will begin with the mild cases, in which some expellees understandably considered return probable not long after the war, prepared for return, and then within a few years accepted the impossibility of restoring what they had known. From here, the analysis will progress to harsher examples, to that spiteful, embittered, and always diminishing minority outside the leadership which kept

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[87] Gerhart Pohl, *Bin ich noch in meinem Haus? Die letzten Tage Gerhart Hauptmanns* (Berlin: Lettner Verlag), 1953.
[88] Glaeser, *Heimat Schlesien*, photo 63.
[89] Pfeil, *Der Flüchtling*, 71-72.
[90] Ibid., 74.

demanding border revision and population movement, regardless of their own awareness of the inherent contradiction between the two images of *Heimat*.

Wilfried von Rekowski, who had spent the end of the war as a POW in an American camp and thus did not experience the *Heimat*'s destruction, spent the years before 1951 studying agriculture with plans to return and rebuild. But these hopes faded, and "it steadily became unthinkable to return back to Silesia."[91] He accepted the expulsion's permanence, but never lost his interest in the *Heimat*. Via a connection with the Quakers, he managed to visit Silesia again in 1958, now a guest in a former *Heimat* rich in memories that had become part of the new Poland.[92] This next phase in an expellee's journey of confronting loss, the painful and healing experience of actual return as a "homesick tourist," will be featured in chapter six.

Going a step further, some were occasionally inspired by their imaginary journeys to the *Heimat of memory* to consider the fantasy of actual return to magically restored memory landscapes in the physical Silesia. In his imaginary journey through the uninhabited streets of Bunzlau in 1957, H. K. envisioned a ghostlike world frozen under the ethereal gaze of the moon and pretended that this in fact represented the town's contemporary appearance.

> Bells tone from the towers of the city. After little side trips, we eventually come through the little church alley to St. Mary's. Holy figures stand around the old gothic church, and we can recognize their contours clearly in the light of the moon. Our glance wanders upwards from the enormous gothic structure to the tower and then to the heavens. Countless stars twinkle and glow off the city between the hills and heath. Slowly we move onward. Once again, we use the old, crooked alley with its wonderful gables which dream in the moonlight just as though they wait for the master to paint them.[93]

H. K. didn't care that, in the aftermath of Soviet arson in 1945, the Polish authorities had chosen to rip down all of the buildings in front of St. Mary's, including the quaint alley. At the end of his tour, he gathered his imagined readers around at the statue of Bunzlau's most famous son, the early-modern poet Martin Opitz, and recited verses promising sunshine after rain as "assurance

[91] Wilfried von Rekowski to Andrew Demshuk, January 16, 2008.
[92] Idem., Unpublished Travel Report (1958).

for the future" that one day they would "finally, finally be able to return home again."[94] Detached from any real circumstances, *Heimkehr* became even more quixotic; but H.K. was not alone in imagining it in this way. Though she acknowledged the *Heimat transformed*, Dora Lehmann refused to internalize it, demanding a "miracle" to magically restore all as it had been.[95] Otto Zimmer went so far as to depict a return to the *Heimat of memory* as an *escape* from foreignness; he wanted "to travel to my *Heimat* and see nothing more of foreign spaces." In his heart, he knew that he might well never "reach" his Silesian mountains again, "damned to eternal wandering," but he vowed nonetheless to continue his imagined journey back to the real *Heimat*, "quietly under the star of the wise men unto death."[96] Fearing the painful reality that return was impossible, expellees such as these demanded return to a place whose present condition could never be explicitly addressed.

Some pastors took a step further from such armchair musings and preached the imminence of return. While as shown above most pastors demonstrated in their memoirs a steady confrontation with loss, a few of them refused to give up the idea of taking back the old church in the East. Lektor Rauhut, the manager for a Protestant relief committee, declared to the exiled flocks in 1949 that, because of their good behavior as suffering Christians, God was obligated to restore the *Heimat*; return of the *Heimat* was not simply "in God's hands," but rather the experience of detaching from material goods meant that "perhaps, when we are really mature for it, then the Lord God would also give back what we both, you and I, yearn for with all our hearts, our beloved Silesian *Heimat*."[97] Pastor G. Röchling of Namslau kept using his *Rundbrief* as a

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[93] H. K., "Kleine Liebe zu Bunzlau," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no. 6 (1957), 8.
[94] Ibid., 8. Similarly, H. Müssigbrodt narrated a lengthy armchair history of his tiny village, avoiding any hint at what it had become, and summoning prayers that God would give them back the *Heimat* he remembered. H. Müssigbrodt, "Schwiebendorf und seine Einwohner," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no 10 (1957), 6.
[95] Dora Lehmann, "Gruß an mein Seifersdorf," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 7, no. 6 (1958), 5-6.
[96] Otto Zimmer, "Wanderschaft in die Heimat," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 5, no. 1 (January 1956), 2.
[97] Rauhut, "Wo sind unsere Schlesier heute?" *Kirchenblatt für Evangelische aus Schlesien* 5, May 1949, 4.

platform for urging political action until arthritis finally forced him to stop after 1966.[98] Pastors who retained a strongly revanchist stance tended to lose the support and interest of their congregations. Having organized a Pentecost gathering in 1948, Vikar Hahnel's calls for "*Sendung*" (a "mission," such as the "issuing forth" of the apostles) became very political. Songs at his gathering squarely blamed Poles for the *Heimat*'s decline and demanded it back before it was too late, even if it meant expelling the Poles who had settled there. Former members of Hahnel's Breslau Holy Cross congregation voted against this rhetoric with their feet. Roughly a hundred came in 1948. Only twenty came in 1949, and Hahnel was so strapped for financial support that they had to meet in his apartment (he pleaded with all subscribers of the *Rundbrief* to send at least 1 DM apiece). Perhaps fearing that further extremism might cost him even this smaller number of followers, he limited activities at the second gathering to gazing at pristine images of the old church ten years earlier, singing old church hymns, and imagining that they were back "visiting" the spaces of the past.[99] Reprieve was temporary, however, as Hahnel later expanded his revanchist agenda, severely contorting the evidence in Franz Otto Jerrig's 1949 presentation of Wrocław as a changed city to somehow convey Breslau as a city *unchanged*, reconstructed by nameless agents (Poles), who had made the city ready for their return.[100] Interest fell off sharply after this, so that by January 1950 he had to request that his readers return a postcard with their own stamp before March, or he would remove them from his mailing list.[101] The *Rundbrief* ended in February.

Moving further from pulpit pounding toward outright *Heimkehr*, a less common approach involved focusing on some present scene in the *Heimat transformed* through a very narrow and

[98] G. Röchling, *Namslauer Rundbrief* 28, February 1966, EZA Z 1073, 1.
[99] Vikar Hahnel, *Rundbrief* 39/40, July/August 1949, BAK Z 18/214, 41.
[100] Idem., *Rundbrief* 42, October 1949, BAK Z 18/214, 44. Franz Otto Jerrig, *Aus Breslau wurde Wroclaw* (Hannover: Verlag Wolfgang Kwiecinski, 1949).

distorted lens to pretend as though it was somehow similar to the *Heimat of memory* and thus redeemable. On Easter in 1950, Elfriede Hoppe dreamed of walking through the old Wohlau [Wołów] cemetery in its pristine glory, then sought to soften her description of its contemporary circumstances. In this dwelling place of German ancestors, "a thick blanket of grass lays over all the graves on which countless flowers bloom in summer," the entry gate (featured in a prewar photo on the cover of her husband's pastoral *Rundbrief*) was still intact, the cemetery chapel appeared "unchanged" (the stolen benches and smashed stained glass window could be replaced), and graves were still recognizable (damaged gravestones could be repaired). For Hoppe, the wildness and decay became romantic, and the *Heimat transformed* became deceptively reclaimable, because she sanitized away all foreignness (most notably the Polish settlers), and limited her gaze to the interior of an overgrown German cemetery. Physical return to such an easily restorable *Heimat* prompted her to express hope that God "might help us to rebuild the cities of Silesia, that we might live there ourselves and possess them, and pass them on to our descendants and be able to remain there."[102] By contrast, accounts that actually acknowledged the devastated state of cemeteries amid the foreignness and ruin tended to yearn for *Heimkehr* only as a temporary visit: to find closure by mourning the graves and other intimate sites left behind.[103]

Finally, occasional accounts expressed total awareness that traces speaking to a German history were fading, replaced by a foreign culture usually depicted as implicitly inferior, and *despite this*, indeed at times *because* of it, they insisted on returning to take possession of their rightful, if ravaged *Heimat*, indifferent to how they would survive once they got there. In May

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[101] Vikar Hahnel, *Rundbrief* 45, January 1950, BAK Z 18/214, 47.
[102] Elfriede Hoppe, *Wohlauer Rundbrief* 11, Easter 1950, EZA Z 1004, 2-4.
[103] Albert Sauer, *Zum Gedenken an Adolf Kardinal Bertram* (Limburg an der Lahn: Verlag der "Königsteiner Rufe," 1950), 34.

1949, an expellee composed a poem asserting his fervent desire to return "over there" to his *Heimat*, the only place where he could be "at home," even though he was well aware that it was "no longer what it once was":

> I yearn for the dreary, abandoned spaces, for the overgrown bushes and trees, for the garden in which little flowers no longer bloom, for the paths hemmed with weeds, for the fields that stand like a steppe, I want to go over there nonetheless: over there, yes over there with my pain, because over here [in the West] my heart is breaking.[104]

It was an irrational, an unfeasible plan to go back and probably perish in the wide open "steppes" of the *Heimat transformed*. Bitter and inconsolable, he imagined the most dystopic, orientalized reality possible, reminiscent of past German racist visions of the East, and promised to love it as his *Heimat* in spite of it all. Such an outlook works counter to the trend shown in most expellee writing at the time; as illustrated in previous sections, the fantastic imagining of a ruined *Heimat transformed* usually prompted the opposite response, a growing sense of alienation and lack of desire for return.

5. Two Heimat Paper Editors and the Process of Coping with Loss

To grant further chronological depth to the arguments in this chapter, I wish to narrow in for a moment to assess how the process of coping with loss unfolded over the course of two lifetimes. From the late 1940s onward, G. Weber (1923-2002) and Erika Hoffmann-Rehmie (1906-1979) regularly published their reflections in the *Heimat* papers which they edited and circulated for their fellow Silesians from Liegnitz and Lüben [Lubin]. As the years passed, each gradually confronted the insurmountable division between the *Heimat* that was and the *Heimat* as it had become. Their vocation for printing *Heimat* materials demonstrated a particular attachment to the spaces they had lost, and, like many other editors, they tended to cling to the fantasy of return longer. This being said, Weber's dreams of return were increasingly mired in

[104] "Drüben ist meine Heimat," in *Das katholische Liegnitz*, Seelsorgebrief, March 1949, BAK Z 18/222, 15.

doubt, bitterness, and withdrawal from reality (later society in general), and Hoffmann-Rehmie steadily realized that the Lüben she loved no longer existed in Polish Lubin, that indeed Lubin, far from backward or depopulated, had become a modern and dear *Heimat* for the Poles that lived there now.

Born as Gerhard Weber in Liegnitz in 1923, the first editor had hopes of becoming a teacher of German, history, and geology until he was drafted to France for military service in 1941. After the war, an uncle who was a bookstore owner in the western partition zones apprenticed him to a publishing house in Lorch. By seeking out addresses and information about interested expellees, he quickly became self-sufficient as a publisher in his own right, establishing the *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* (March 1949) and the Gerhard Weber publishing company, both of which were solely devoted to disseminating material to an expellee audience that had come from Liegnitz and the surrounding area.[105] By January 1950, over 2500 Silesians subscribed to the paper, many of them in the DDR.[106] Liegnitz itself possessed a particularly multicultural character after the war: designated as the Soviet military headquarters in Poland (for the Northern Group of Forces), the city was partitioned between a sealed Soviet and Polish sector. In the early years, a comparatively large Jewish population settled in the city from former Nazi concentration camps, while a German minority serviced the Soviet forces.[107]

Unlike some editors (such as Hoffmann-Rehmie), Weber focused more on making a living from his publishing business than on a leadership role within the *Heimat* community itself. That he was comparatively more unyielding in his demands for *Heimkehr* demonstrates that

[105] Gerhard Kaske and O.-H. Paetzold, "Gerhard Weber 60 Jahre," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* (April/May 1983): 29. Among other duties, Weber later published the annual issues of the Liegnitz Historical Society after it was founded on May 9, 1970. Other *Heimat* paper editors, such as Karl Wiechmann with the *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung*, had a prewar history as the lost eastern city's former newspaper editor.
[106] Sending copies to the DDR grew increasingly difficult and ended entirely by 1952.
[107] The Soviets were tolerant by comparison with Polish authorities. Liegnitz was home to one of Lower Silesia's only German schools and Protestant ministers.

personal character and outlook could hinder coping with loss more than active leadership duties. In the name of "justice" and "objectivity," Weber sought to nourish interest in "recovering" the lost *Heimat*, but his goal of return contradicted strongly with the shocking images and personal captions of an irredeemable *Heimat transformed*, which he himself printed with obsessive regularity. A report in Weber's paper from Liegnitz in September 1950 lamented that Germans in Silesia were overworked, nervous, and without hope: "The *Heimat* is no more. There is no street where houses aren't missing. We can't hold onto our *Heimat*." From this and similar evocative images of an irredeemable *Heimat transformed*, Weber concluded that expellees in the West must not forget the victims still in Silesia who "stayed at their posts." Expellees renounced revenge and retaliation, as dictated in the 1950 Charter of the Expellees, but not "truth and justice" for the "right to our *Heimat*."[108] When in March 1951 the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* emphasized the desolation of the Oder-Neisse territories by claiming that wolves were once again native there, Weber denounced it as sensationalism, but by printing his rebuttal, unwittingly spread the depressing rumor.[109] Thus, while the reports and images he printed sowed the idea of a lost *Heimat*, Weber struggled to retain his conviction that, so long as any Germans remained there, it could be recovered.

The contradiction inherent in Weber's obsessive printing of dismal photos alongside his own "optimistic" commentaries became particularly strained when a Silesian emigrating to West Germany in May 1958 mailed him his first glimpse of his childhood home in Liegnitz's old town.[110] At first, the gray rubble pile cause him to reminisce about the thriving markets that had filled the street and adjoining marketplace on Fridays and Tuesdays, making it "one of the most

[108] Gerhard Weber, "Auf verlorenen Posten?" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 2, no. 15 (End of September 1950): 2-3.
[109] Idem., "Wölfe?" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 3, no. 5 (May 1951): 39.
[110] Photos with captioned commentary appeared regularly in many *Heimat* papers, such as those distributed for Bunzlau, Reichenbach, and Glogau.

beloved commercial streets in Liegnitz's inner city." But in the end, he mourned the "decay" (*Verwahrlosung*) which overtook the region after plunder and destruction in 1945:

> the 'ulica Srodkowa' [sic. Polish for *middle street*], as the Polish now call it, has hardly anything in common with our intimate old, beloved *Mittelstraße* [German for *middle street*], where the house of my parents has also sunken in debris and ash, along with the path on which I walked to school for years.[111]

Obsessed with the need to prove beyond a doubt that his home was indeed gone, Weber printed still more images of the city's destruction, as well as a December 1959 letter from a German still in Liegnitz, who explicitly told him that "only the foundations" remained from Weber's house.[112] By 1965, Weber despaired at images of the empty train station and thriving, "foreign" black market near the old German cemetery, for they proved that "this is no longer our Liegnitz as we knew it from before– this is 'Legnica'."[113]

Weber reacted to this undeniable proof of division between the *Heimat of memory* and *Heimat transformed* by simultaneously embracing two, contradictory forms of *Heimkehr* which were outlined in the preceding section: "return" to the *Heimat of memory* (a place where time was rolled back in denial of reality); and return in the name of "justice" (so that expellees could sulk and die in the ruins). The irreconcilable contrast of these demands deepened Weber's depression that any actual return was a delusion. In one of his very first articles in 1949, Weber imagined walking through the devastated cemeteries of Liegnitz and protested that Germans still in Silesia (not to mention those thousands of kilometers away) were not allowed to enter and seek out the graves of their loved ones.[114] By 1952, he condoned the toothless interpretation of *Heimkehr* expressed in a letter to the editor: the desire to see the *Heimat* again in order to die

[111] Gerhard Weber, "Liegnitz nach 13 Jahren polnischer Verwaltung: Die Mittelstraße," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 11, no. 1 (January 10, 1959), 16.
[112] Excerpt from Letter, December 9, 1959, in "Bekanntes und Neues aus unserem Liegnitz," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 12, no. 1 (January 10, 1960), 20.
[113] "Liegnitz heute," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 17, no. 1 (January 10, 1965), 16.
[114] Gerhard Weber, "Unsere Toten," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* (November 1949): 1.

there.[115] Having not walked the among ruins himself, seldom printing anything written by those who mailed him pictures, and never mentioning Silesia's new Polish inhabitants, Weber still professed to his readers by 1960 that, though "we won't find our *Heimat* to be the same as what we envision in our memories," they should nonetheless retain a belief in *Heimkehr* to a Silesia where they could be "at home."[116] In the name of justice, expellees should return to die in the uninhabitable spaces of contemporary Silesia.

At the same time, the cruel reality of transformation stimulated a pitiful and desperate need to cringe, look away, and protest the inevitable fading of what they had known. In 1958, he protested that advertisements for "travel in Poland" were misleading, since travel in Silesia, East Prussia, or Pomerania did not involve *Poland*.[117] He decried Warsaw's production of Polish postage stamps for "German" cities and yearned to preserve pristine memories of landmarks such as the palace of the counts of Dohna.[118] By 1968, he despaired that expellees themselves, the keepers of the dissipating *Heimat of memory*, were becoming West Germans. When he heard of the 103rd birthday celebration of Hulda Geppert as Karlsrühe's "oldest citizen" (though born in Liegnitz, she had moved to Karlsrühe in 1902 at age thirty-seven), Weber demanded to know whether he himself, merely eighteen years old when he had left Liegnitz in 1941, was by default a citizen of Lorch in West Germany, where he had lived now for twenty-two years. For all his outrage that such a "way of thinking" served Soviet and Polish political objectives to retain the Oder-Neisse territories, his passionate rejection of the outwardly harmless festivities in Karlsrühe

[115] Idem., "Selbst im innern Brasiliens," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 4, no. 5 (May 1952), 47.
[116] Redaktion, "Schlesische Heimat im Bild der Erinnerung- und Heute," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 12, no. 3 (February 10, 1960), 52.
[117] Gerhard Weber, "'Reisen nach Polen. . .'," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 10, no. 21 (November 10, 1958), 327.
[118] Redaktion (Gerhard Weber), "Kotzenau: Unser Schloß," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 15, no. 10 (May 25, 1963), 159.

demonstrates that he was struggling with the inevitable fact that he, like other former Silesians, had become as West German as Geppert.[119]

When Bonn recognized the Oder-Neisse border in 1970, Weber released a last gasp of protest, then began a steady retreat from his newspaper and ultimately society in general. In 1972, he allowed the production of a new section in the *Heimat* paper called "the viaduct," devoted to encouraging German-Polish reconciliation. After the death of his wife in 1983, just before his sixtieth birthday, Weber had a sex change, becoming Gerda Weber, and seldom wrote at all anymore after a note in 1985 promising her "strength for the work" that might serve the beloved Silesian *Heimat*.[120] Certainly this was no longer the Silesia of reality; even when travel became comparably easy after 1970, Weber never returned to Liegnitz again after 1941. Totally isolated by the 1990s, Gerda Weber was cared for by one of her five daughters and died in 2002.[121] Though she still yearned for her Silesian homeland, it had long been beyond her reach.

After April 1952, Erika Hoffmann-Rehmie edited her Lüben paper as a separate section inside each issue of Weber's *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief*. It was certainly a marriage of convenience to combine communities from neighboring counties into one periodical: while Weber could market a longer paper to a larger circle of expellees, Hoffmann-Rehmie could reach expellees from a much smaller town, something that might not have been financially possible otherwise.[122] Until her death in 1979 at age 72, she was an active leader of the Lüben *Heimat* community,

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[119] Gerhard Weber, "Wie lange sind wir noch Liegnitzer?" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 20, no. 3 (February 1968), 5.
[120] Gerhard Kaske and O.-H. Paetzold, "Gerhard Weber 60 Jahre," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* (April/May 1983), 29; Gerda Weber, "Zum neuen Jahr," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 37, no. 1 (January/February 1985), 1.
[121] Hubert Unverricht, ed., *Liegnitzer Lebensbilder des Stadt- und Landkreises*, vol. 2 (Hofheim/Taunus: Henske-Neumann Verlag, 2003), 325.
[122] *Heimat* paper editors undertook a number of strategies to keep in print. The paper for Gleiwitz (established December 1950) was already bundled with Beuthen in January 1951 and then adopted former East-Upper Silesian Tarnowitz in May 1958. On average, the conservative Goldammer publishing company printed over a dozen *Heimat* papers through the decades after the expulsion; cover pages generally carried the publisher's politically oriented articles, while editors from the intimate *Heimat* communities customized the interiors. Other papers, such as those for Reichenbach and Brieg, managed to remain independent.

working to establish the *Patenschaft* with Nassau in West Germany and later leading the effort to construct a Lüben monument and *Heimatstube* there.[123] In the meantime, Lüben, unlike Liegnitz, suffered tremendous damage in the final months of the Second World War, and then, while much of Liegnitz decayed and was later razed, the discovery of copper near Lüben in 1957 transformed what was formerly a large German village into a Polish boom town, dominated by block apartment buildings well outside the former city limits. Having lived through the trauma of the firebombing of Dresden in the midst of her expulsion from Lüben, Hoffmann-Rehmie always retained the strong conviction that Germans should not be silent about the death of so many civilians in the war's closing months.[124] Though like Weber she yearned for the lost spaces of *Heimat*, she gradually discovered healing and hope through realizing that her former *Heimat* was being cared for by Poles who had suffered just as she had.

From the beginning, Hoffmann-Rehmie seldom mentioned physical return and focused instead on preserving the *Heimat of memory*. In November 1952, she commemorated deceased Silesians from Lüben– those in the distant, devastated graveyard, those who had perished in the flight, and those who had already died in exile.[125] A month later, she joined Weber in asserting that "we seek out the *Heimat* and we see our homeland before our eyes standing renewed as it was before,"[126] but while for Weber this had political implications, Hoffmann-Rehmie was already envisioning the *Heimat of memory* as a place of yearning, rather than as a physical destination. Reflecting on ten years since the expulsion in 1955, Hoffmann-Rehmie undertook an imaginary journey through the streets of Lüben, where everything was still, the arm of the windmill was motionless, and time was frozen by the trauma of expulsion. When she concluded

[123] Walther Bergmann, "Erika Hoffmann-Rehmie," *Liegniter Heimatbrief* 31, no. 2/3 (February/March 1979), 11.
[124] Erika Hoffmann-Rehmie, *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 27, no. 2 (February 1975), 8.
[125] EhoRe, "16. November 1952– Volkstrauertag," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 4, no. 11 (November 1952), 129.

that the loss of *Heimat* had to be passed on to the next generation, she never mentioned (much less demanded) physical *Heimkehr*, but rather asserted the need to remember "the great suffering that came over us and preserve our eastern German *Heimat* in [the children's] hearts."[127] Without mention of border revision, she instructed her readers in 1965 that the very character of the expellee was defined by the nonaggression expressed in the 1950 Charter; *justice* required above all broader recognition (at the very least in the German press) of what expellees had suffered.[128]

Depression overtook Hoffmann-Rehmie in the mid-1950s, the years of greatest decay and least reconstruction in the former Lüben; comparing an image of devastation in 1956 with a pristine prewar shot of the same street corner, she made her only explicit demand for the right to return to the *Heimat.*[129] But already in 1957 the images of devastation had reminded her that she was yearning for a former realm. Rather than make political demands, she merely yearned to walk again in the old spaces of *Heimat* to witness what they had become; after an imaginary stroll through the pristine *Heimat of memory*, taking her readers "back home again in our thoughts," she expressed her "sincere hope" that "we will all once again be able to walk this German soil, even if it is also the case that much which we report about here no longer stands."[130]

By 1964, repeated evidence in travel reports of reconstruction and thriving Polish life in Lüben strongly developed her image of the city: neither a ruin Germans should somehow repossess nor a German ghost town to be visited and mourned, Polish Lubin had become a living Polish city, in which intimate spaces from the past had become "animated and developed, the streets and plazas are formed by a different population." She narrated how, like German expellees, Polish settlers had come against their will with few possessions to a devastated,

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[126] Gerhard Weber and Erika Hoffmann-Rehmie, "Liebe Heimatfreunde!" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 4, no. 12 (December 1952), 145.
[127] EHoRe, "1945-1955," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 7, no. 2 (January 25, 1955), 23.
[128] Erika Hoffmann-Rehmie, "Ein bedeutsames Jahr!" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 17, no. 1 (January 10, 1965), 8.

foreign land. Hatred toward Germans was understandable, she continued, "because Poles had lost their lives in a war of extermination." So convinced was Hoffmann-Rehmie of the importance of contact between German travelers and Polish settlers that she emphasized the "truth" as related by a friend who had recently come back from a trip to Lüben: "you must become more active, otherwise you will be reduced to museum caregivers!"[131]

This, then, was the last phase in Hoffmann-Rehmie's process of dealing with loss. Inspired by the Polish life illustrated through travel accounts, she no longer bemoaned the *Heimat transformed* as a Polish wasteland, nor was she content to simply care for the "museum" of the German Lüben cherished in memory. In 1967, she featured a photograph of the modern block-hotel building next to the train station "so that the city should have an inviting affect."[132] This was Polish Lubin: a modern and lively little city built on the traces of a *Heimat* village still dear to expellees in memory. It was a place to be met on its own terms.

Conclusions

In his introduction to the 1969 picture book of "Breslau as it was," Günther Grundmann called for a "*Recht auf Erinnerung*" (right to memory). For twenty-four years, the prevalent expellee search for healing through memory had existed parallel to the blustering leadership's political drive for *Recht auf die Heimat*, and as the culture of German victimhood had faded in the early 1960s, a general misunderstanding had arisen that *Recht auf Erinnerung*, the merest mention of seven centuries of German history in Breslau, must imply revanchist intentions. Having himself renounced territorial revisionism long before, like many expellees, Grundmann

[129] EHoRe, "Ein Blick in die Heimat: Lüben–Breite Straße," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 8, no. 14 (July 25, 1956), 219.
[130] Idem., "Ein Gang durch Lüben," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 20 (November 10, 1957), 324.
[131] Redaktion (Erika Hoffmann-Rehmie), "Und was sagt uns ein Heimatbesuch?" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 16, no. 17 (September 10, 1964), 257.
[132] Erika Hoffmann-Rehmie, "Lüben- Sommer 1967!" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 19, no. 17 (September 10, 1967), 7.

wondered why it should be that "each memory of an eastern city that was German before 1945 is turned around into a secret declaration of war," when it was only "human" and to be expected that expellees should yearn to remember "the family house and its street, the way of life, the neighbors, the school, the places of work and amusement, the theater, the retreats in the surrounding area."[133] That same year, Klaus Schütz (SPD), mayor of West Berlin for a decade, wrote of how a great many expellees undertook "trips in their memories" to the old *Heimat* and years when they had been happy: "No one wants to wipe away these pictures of the past, no one can extinguish or forbid them. For millions of Germans, these memories belong in their consciousness, and they are a part of their identity, to which they have a right like anyone."[134] Schütz had no personal history with the Eastern Territories, but like Grundmann he could appreciate that twenty-four years of coping with loss, of indulging in imaginary journeys and idealized memories, had generally led expellees to find wholeness and stability in the West, rather than an undying thirst for territorial revisionism. It was with this insight into expellee resignation about the lost *Heimat* that he had just completed a trip to Poland in June 1969 to speak with Polish foreign minister Stefan Jedrychowski about the West German readiness for dialogue.

As will be discussed in chapter seven, years of coping with loss left a great many West German expellees with a sense of resignation by the time that Bonn ratified the Oder-Neisse border in 1970. Though never willing to "renounce" their *Heimat*, they clung to a *Heimat of memory*, rather than the *Heimat transformed* which had become quite alien indeed. Though the expellee political project faded into the background in the years that followed the 1970 treaty, the

[133] Günther Grundmann, Forward, in *Breslau so wie es war: ein Bildband*, by Ernst Scheyer, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1972), 6.
[134] "Artikel von Berlins Regierendem Bürgermeister, Klaus Schütz, in der *Zeit*: 'Unsere Politik gegenüber Polen,' 27. Juni 1969," in *Bonn-Warschau 1945-1991: Die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen, Analyse und Dokumentation*,

expellee process of dealing with loss continued. Even today, new picture books appear so long as expellees remain alive to compile them. When I spoke with Klaus K. in the fall of 2007 at the *Breslauer Sammlung* (a small archive devoted to the Silesian capital) in Cologne, the old man eagerly described to me his very detailed self-published book about the history of aviation in Silesia; page after page of black-and-white airplanes, zeppelins, and airfields recreated an idealized world before the rupture of 1945. With pride, he explained that the application of any sources dating after the expulsion could only disrupt the "authenticity" of his work.[135]

With the passage of time, memory (now almost always childhood memory) has grown even more idyllic and split from reality. At age 65 in 1987, Grebel D. continued to cherish romantic memories of snowy winters in her parents' cozy mountaintop inn in Schreiberhau [Szklarska Poręba]; she eagerly recounted stories that she and her parents and grandparents had once exchanged after the expulsion of "the glorious winter landscape in the *Riesengebirge* especially at Christmastime, the pine and spruce trees deeply covered with snow in our own garden, where the hoarfrost often glistened so gloriously between the blankets of snow. We thought, we thought, and were ever still there!"[136] Despite over four decades in exile, she declared that "my great and deep love for my Schreiberhau remains unshakeable. Awake and in dreams, the events from back then still move, animated past my eyes today, and once again I experience much with a churning heart." So many years later, she resided in memories of "the clean houses and groomed gardens" that she had left behind forever.[137]

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ed. Hans-Adolf Jacobsen and Mieczyslaw Tomala, 189-195 (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1992), 189-191.

[135] Andrew Demshuk, interview with Klaus K., September 3, 2007.

[136] Grebel D., "Schatten über der Heimat," 1987, HS BER0012, 11-12.

[137] Idem., 1.

CHAPTER 5

HEIMAT GATHERINGS:

RECREATING THE LOST EAST IN WEST GERMANY

When expellees from Bunzlau [Bołesławiec] met on June 5, 1960 in Siegburg, local *Heimat* leader Karl Springer declared in his keynote address that there was no place for romantic *Heimatliebe* (love of homeland) in a population that intended to return to its promised land; posing himself in the role of Moses, he asserted to hundreds of assembled Bunzlauer that "whoever merely dances around the golden calf isn't worthy to return back to the land of his fathers!"[1] Yet as the retired old high school teacher lectured the gathered expellees from his Lower Silesian *Heimat* about "our way back" through "negotiations," he stood before an intricate stage set of prewar Bunzlau that testified to an ardent *Heimatliebe* detached from physical return.[2] Built on the basis of old postcards, this *Bühnenbild* had been constructed by three Bunzlauer (a teacher, an electrician, and a chemist) in their free time as a means to help their friends live back again "in good old Bunzlau," a place to which those present generally knew there was no "way back."[3] Taken alone, the revanchist speeches common at expellee gatherings can generate the misconception that expellees only came together as foot soldiers for the territorial revisionism that their leaders demanded.[4] In fact, the intent to resettle was far from the

[1] "'Wir dürfen nicht müde werden.' Studienrat a.D. Springer sprach beim VI. Bunzlauer Bundesheimattreffen," *Kölnische Rundschau Lokalausgabe Siegburg* (June 8, 1960), 3; K[arl] W[eichmann], "Einweihung des Bunzlauer Meilensteins in Siegburg. Wie weit ist es in die Heimat. Die Festrede des Studienrats Karl Springers fand großen Widerhall. Das Heimattreffen in Siegburg war ein voller Erfolg," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 9, no. 13 (1960), 5-8, here 5-6. Springer also helped to produce some of the more incendiary passages of the Bunzlauer *Heimatbuch*.
[2] "Rede des Studienrats A.D. Karl Springer in der Feierstunde am 5. Juni 1960 beim sechsten Bundesheimattreffen der Bunzlauer in ihrer Patenstadt Siegburg," HB [Heimatgruppe Bunzlau] Wichtige Unterlagen aus Gründungsjahren ab 1953, 3.
[3] " Wir dürfen nicht müde werden," 3. This stage set had been partially financed by the city of Siegburg and the surrounding county. See below for more about this and other *Patenschaft* obligations.
[4] Many scholars share this assumption. Relying almost entirely on political articles from *Schlesier*, Julianne Haubold-Stolle emphasizes the high attendance at *Schlesiertreffen* in the early 1950s as proof that expellees were

minds of the Bunzlauer who gathered together once more in the cozy dining area of *Hotel zum Stern*. While listening to a recording of the bell from a Bunzlau church, they gazed upon wood and paper mockups of intimate landmarks such as the Bober river train viaduct, the Kutusow monument, the spires of the Catholic and Protestant churches, the city hall, and the smokestacks of a local pottery factory. They saw nothing wrong with the golden calf of *Heimatliebe*; seldom bothering with a speaker's demands, they used their gatherings to find old friends and share stories. Exchanging memories and gossiping about conditions in Poland, they internalized more and more that the promised land they yearned for was not to be found back in Silesia. They found it in each other, among the reproduced symbols of *Heimat* at their gatherings. Fashioning surrogate spaces of *Heimat* in the West, they came to terms with the loss of the East.

In the compressed space of a couple of days, expellees at *Heimattreffen* (homeland gatherings) collectively accelerated the coping with loss that they practiced in private. Rather than recount political speeches they had heard, they reflected after each gathering that they would gladly attend next time if only they could partake once more in two moving experiences: to reconnect and exchange memories with old friends and neighbors and to take in a surrogate representation of the old *Heimat* (such as a staged symbol like the *Bühnenbild* or a slide show of prewar photographs). Individual processes for coming to terms with loss outlined in chapters three, four, and six (stories about ordeals in the ruined *Heimat*, private reflections on loss, and, after 1956, tales and slides from travelers that visited Silesia) all entered into the fast-paced and emotional exchange at expellee gatherings and facilitated a collective therapy session which reinforced in their minds the permanent separation between the two images of *Heimat*. Communicative memories took place against the backdrop of cultural memories produced on-

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gathering behind the political demand for *Heimkehr*. *Mythos Oberschlesien. Der Kampf um die Erinnerung in Deutschland und in Polen* (Osnabrück: Fibre Verlag, 2008), 436-439.

site; no longer able to physically grasp what the *Heimat* had actually been, they fabricated new symbols and spaces of *Heimat* in the West, and to the frustration of some leaders, the general cycle of reflection and new meanings which resulted from *Heimattreffen* seldom had to do with territorial revisionism.[5] In the shadow of a paper town hall spire, Springer feared that his listeners might become "weary" and stop demanding their "right to self determination" to return and seize the stone spire of Bunzlau.[6] But much as his listeners generally agreed with the notion that they had suffered injustice, at the very same gatherings they were stricken with the dangerous knowledge about the drastic changes in contemporary Bołesławiec. In *Heimat* gatherings, they came to realize that the Bunzlau they loved could only be recaptured again by sharing memories beneath the static artifact of a stage set.

After an opening section introducing the origins, goals, and various forms of expellee gatherings, this chapter will show how the widespread establishment of surrogate *Heimat* spaces in the West facilitated and accelerated the healing process among those who gathered. In using the term "surrogate *Heimat* space," I am building on Pierre Nora's distinction between the *milieux* and *lieux de mémoire.* Even outside the context of mass population movement, Pierre Nora has observed how the forces of modernity break down traditional, living memories tied to spaces (*milieux de mémoire*), leaving only artifacts and traces (*lieux de mémoire*), whose very fragility and malleability stimulates a desire (and usually losing battle) to preserve them.[7] In the context of exile, the distinction between these two forms of memory could fade for a time. Cut off from the spaces of tradition in Silesia, expellees often tried to form new spaces of memory in the West, chief among them the spaces where they gathered to exchange memories. At first

[5] Jan Assmann has spoken of "communicative memory," through which live individuals actively exchange and contribute to memories, as contrasted to "cultural memory," when memory has ossified into systematized memories for consumption. At *Heimattreffen*, these two forms of memory entered into exchange. See "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (Spring-Summer 1995): 125-133.

constructed, and always filled with *lieux de mémoire,* with artifacts from a lost past, these sites had potential to become new milieus for the participants, containing new meanings and traditions with each gathering. With their deaths, even these exilic *milieux de mémoire* ossified into *lieux de mémoire*, without meaning for the surrounding communities, museum pieces from another age which have come under the critical scrutiny of historians.

This chapter will examine three integral spaces of memory in turn that comprised the surrogate *Heimat* in the West, formed by exiles traumatized with the knowledge that a different population had transformed their lost world and assigned its sites with new meanings. First, it will emphasize the importance of the *human Heimat*, those who gathered to memorialize some shared past (a village, high school, etc.), an act that enabled them to celebrate and reintegrate earlier parts of their identities in the land of their exile. This *milieu de mémoire*, a bond between the scattered remnant which symbolized the lost *Heimat* community itself, was preserved through each gathering but doomed to fade more and more with each fresh obituary. A second *milieu de mémoire* within the surrogate *Heimat* arose when attendees interacted with the specific *lieux de mémoire* of slideshows displaying prewar images and often the postwar reality in the *Heimat* (usually recalled as the highlight of the gathering). At the same time that they cherished pristine images together of a *Heimat* frozen in time, they had to cope with the drastic changes of the *Heimat transformed*, often narrated by those who had experienced it through travel. Finally, like the *Bühnenbild* mentioned above, participants assembled material symbols (streets with Silesian names, memorial stones, designated *Heimat* spaces, recovered artifacts, etc.), each one a *lieu de mémoire* representing some space in the real Silesia, to preserve a semblance of the old *Heimat* in their new milieus in the West. In the short term, each symbol helped expellees to feel

[6] "Rede des Studienrats A.D. Karl Springer. . .," 8.
[7] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7-24.

rootedness in their places of exile; in the long-term their significance proved fleeting, as expellees died and the special meanings they had tied to them passed away with their memories. Indeed, after a stint in the Siegburg city museum, the Bunzlauer *Bühnenbild* ended up in the trash, much as since 1970 the surrogate *Heimat* milieus themselves and all of the collected meanings they granted their artifacts have gradually disappeared into history.[8]

1. The Origins, Forms, and Goals of *Heimattreffen*

The June 1951 issue of the popular magazine *Revue* featured a photo of "the most beautiful Silesian woman" on its cover, followed by the commentary that Margot Scholz, the recent winner of the Miss Bavaria contest, couldn't wait for a reunion with friends from the old *Heimat* in Hannover, where a quarter million Silesians were about to converge.[9] The popular, essentially apolitical content of the early *Heimat* meetings is essential to keep in mind when one considers the often rightwing, revisionist declarations of the organizations that sponsored them. When Silesian expellees gathered together to wear antiquated costumes, eat traditional food, and attend religious services with regional dialects and decorations, the leadership made bold claims that hundreds, even hundreds of thousands were proclaiming their right to the *Heimat*.[10] As chapter two indicated, terms invoked at gatherings such as *Recht auf die Heimat* and *Heimkehr*, as well as regular citation from the 1950 Charter of the Expellees, conveyed different things to those assembled. Leaders tried to dominate meetings with their calls for territorial revisionism and "peaceful" population movements. Under the surface of this political revanchism, expellees

[8] Two manifestations of the Bunzlauer *Bühnenbild* appeared over time: at the sixth *Heimattreffen* in 1960 and (in simplified form) at the seventh *Heimattreffen* in 1962. Though they survived for some years in the Siegburg city museum, both have been lost in the meantime. Peter Börner to Andrew Demshuk, November 21, 2008.
[9] Stefan Eich, "Schau heimwärts Vertriebener! Ostdeutsche Heimat heute. Ein Bericht über Schlesien, Ost-Brandenburg, Pommern, Westpreußen Danzig und Ostpreußen," *Revue* 25 (June 21, 1952), 1.
[10] For more on how expellee leaders sought to use expellee gatherings and writings for their propaganda, see especially Christian Lotz, *Die Deutung des Verlusts. Erinnerungspolitische Kontroversen im geteilten Deutschland um Flucht, Vertreibung und die Ostgebiete (1948-1972)* (Cologne-Weimar-Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2007).

in general proved far more interested intimate reunions that allowed them to exchange memories. Proceeding from the strident political demands at big federal and state conventions to the smaller, comparably less politicized *Heimat* meetings, this section will show what the leaders intended in each format and sketch where this either connected or (more commonly) failed to connect with the needs and desires of the assembled expellees.

As soon as the Federal Republic of Germany formed in May 1949, the *Landsmannschaften* and various *Heimat* groups convened enormous rallies, which very often constituted the first chance for expellees to find each other (or at least try to) since their chaotic exodus from Silesia. From September 17-18, 1949, almost immediately after its founding, the Lower Saxon Land Association of the Silesian *Landsmannschaft* gathered together 80,000 Silesians from across Lower Saxony in Hannover. In the chief addresses, the state expellee minister Heinrich Albertz (SPD) declared the continued evacuation of Germans from Silesia "a new European scandal," while the federal expellee minister Hans Lukaschek proclaimed that integration in the West was impossible, and only *Rückkehr* to the *Heimat* would prevent "the rising pauperization of our countrymen."[11] Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was more measured in his language during the first annual "Silesian week of *Heimat*" in Cologne from October 8-15, 1950, expressing his hope that the gathering would "nourish feelings of *Heimat*" and so "give a foothold which alleviates for them the overcoming of the various difficulties of the new surroundings."[12] However, after Adenauer had spoken, the federal minister for all-German

[11] "Schlesiertreffen in Hannover," *Kirchenblatt für Evangelische aus Schlesien* 9/10, October/November 1949, 8-9; "Schlesiertreffen in Hannover!" 1949, EZA 47/76.
[12] Konrad Adenauer, Greeting, September 25, 1950, in "1. Bundestreffen der Schlesier der Landsmannschaft Schlesien für das Gebiet der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin" (Landsmannschaft Schlesien, 1950), 4.

questions promised the gathered thousands that, after Germany's successful resistance to Communism, the West would surely reward them with the return of the eastern territories.[13]

While one should have reservations about the Expellee Federation's (BdV) claim that over a million expellees per year had attended the federal conventions from 1953-55,[14] it is clear that a lot of people were thronging through the assembly halls at federal, state, and local events and listening to slogans and diatribes which, twisting old bigotries, contorted the former German East into a bulwark against a Communist, even Slavic threat that endangered Europe. Small wonder that the Polish press excoriated these meetings as revanchist, as also suited their own political objectives to contort the new Polish "recovered territories" into a bulwark against feared West German "militarism" or "fascism" which meant to embroil Europe in a new war. By the time of the federal convention of expellees in Hannover in 1961, Jerzy Kasprzycki reported in *Życie Warszawie* that Nazi criminals in the guise of politicians and pastors were rallying the 200,000 assembled Silesians. Yet it is telling how, for all of Kasprzycki's railing against this "largest and most dangerous event," his actual description of the Silesians assembled "from all corners of Germany" was hardly threatening: "A gallery of wrinkled old men and cranky old women that would unfortunately not desist from [discussing] their memories and looking at Silesian postcards," as well as young people "with standards, torches, and fanfares."[15] As Kasprzycki unintentionally illustrated, there tended to be a disconnect between the virulent tirades about *Heimkehr* at big conventions and the generally benign interaction among those assembled.

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[13] Jakob Kaiser, Greeting, September 1950, in "1. Bundestreffen der Schlesier der Landsmannschaft Schlesien für das Gebiet der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin" (Landsmannschaft Schlesien, 1950), 5.
[14] Hans Schoenberg, *Germans from the East: A Study of Their Migration, Resettlement, and Subsequent Group History Since 1945* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 38.
[15] Jerzy Kasprzycki, "'Von der Weichsel bis zur Mosel.' Die deutschen Revisionisten in Aktion," in *Die Polnische Presse zum Schlesiertreffen 1961*, ed. Freiherr von Braun, 10-12 (Göttingen: Göttinger Arbeitskreis Veröffentlicung Nr. 253, 1961), 10-12, originally *Życie Warszawy*, Warsaw, (June 10, 1961).

The political rhetoric common in speeches at the big assemblies led some expellees never to return again.[16] Some of the smaller gatherings which took place outside the venue of the sprawling *Landsmannschaft*-organized events went so far as to declare themselves explicitly apolitical. When the dentist Max Gürtler invited his fellow Bunzlauer to an intimate gathering on September 20, 1953 in Braunschweig, he and other organizers invited their friends "for a good and calm, for an apolitical expression of faithfulness to the *Heimat* (*einer unpolitischen Heimattreue*)." Together, they traded addresses, sang songs about the *Heimat*, and "the more the afternoon proceeded, the more meaningfully groups formed out of close acquaintances and friendships, which may perhaps be the bogey for a 'mass organizer', not however from the initiators of this gathering." The real treasure, which they all agreed they could never lose, was to have shared memories with each other and strengthened their common bond as Silesians; it was simply inconsequential if such goals failed to fit the leadership's political expectations.[17]

Expellees at Gürtler's apolitical meeting were very interested to learn from him about the recent establishment of a *Patenschaft* between their old Silesian hometown of Bunzlau and Siegburg in the Rhineland— a basis for gatherings that tended to prove less overtly political and more devoted to commemoration than the big conventions. Not to be confused with a *Partnerschaft*, which is analogous to a "sister-city" and involves two distinct populations in two real cities such as Paris and Frankfurt, a *Patenschaft*, best translated as a "sponsorship," involves only one physical town or region which is designated to care for the refugee population which came from a second, barred space. Siegburg's sponsorship of Bunzlau related almost entirely to the Bunzlau of memory and its expellee citizens, rather than to contemporary Bołesławiec and its predominantly Polish population. Derived from the word *Paten*, a *Patenschaft* conjures up sacred

[16] Interview with Wolfgang S., June 25, 2005; interview with Klaus Werner, October 7, 2007.

meanings traditionally associated with the baptismal bond taken up by a godparent to care for a godchild.[18] With financial and logistical backing at the state, county, and city level, *Patenschaften* arose for virtually every region and town in the old *Heimat*. Though at times *Heimat* leaders such as Karl Springer invested *Patenschaften* with politically charged meanings, each of them was first and foremost an attempt to carry on the name and (fading) memory of a Silesian town in a West German surrogate through the erection of small museums, archives, and monuments, through the changing of street and district names, and above all through the regular *Heimat* gatherings that each *Patenschaft* sponsored. Ideally meant to nourish and reinforce a sense of rootedness, they offered consolation to expellees that some place in the foreign stretches of the West carried on the name and traditions of their former home.

The first *Patenschaft* was realized on August 13, 1950 in Goslar when three thousand expellees met there to celebrate the 700th anniversary of Brieg [Brzeg], a town southeast of Breslau [Wrocław] on the Oder river.[19] As in most *Patenschaft* declarations, the new sponsorship was devoted, not toward border revision, but rather to give expellees from Brieg "an ideal *Heimat*" in sleepy medieval Goslar, situated in the West German half of the Harz mountains. "In this sense," the declaration concluded, "everything suitable should be done to unite Brieger scattered today across all four zones with Goslar as their new common *Heimat* city."[20] By 1954, the number of West German *Patenschaften* had grown to seventy-one (thirty-

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[17] Herbert Neugebauer, "Großes Bunzlauer Treffen in Braunschweig am Sonntag, 20. September," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 2, no. 10 (October 1953), 3.

[18] Alfons Perlick, *Das West-Ostdeutsche Patenschaftswerk in Nordrhein-Westfalen*, Schriftenreihe für Ost-West Begegnung Kulturheft 38 (Düsseldorf: Der Wegweiser, 1961), 7-8. Overseen by the state social ministry in North Rhine-Westphalia, this book offers the most complete look at West German towns with Patenschaften in 1961, with emphasis on the 74 Patenschaften active in Westphalia and the northern Rhineland. Never achieved was the goal that every one of the 96 city and land counties in the state would one day have a Patenschaft.

[19] "Goslar– Patenschaft für Brieg," *Die Welt* 188 (August 14, 1950). Cologne formed the second *Patenschaft* with Breslau on October 13, 1950. Federal states also established Patenschaften, as when North Rhine-Westphalia became sponsor for the expelled Siebenbürger Sachsen as of May 26, 1957.

[20] Oberstadtdirektor, Patenschaft Declaration of July 21, 1951, SaG-HBB [Stadtarchiv Goslar–Hauptamt–Betreuungsstelle Brieg]:1:1-5.

three of them Silesian), and by March 1965 eighty-six had come into being for Silesian towns, counties, and states alone.[21] Lower Saxony became the *Patenland* for all Silesians. Because of its historic Upper Silesian population and the ancestry of its mayor, Bottrop in the Ruhr industrial region and the surrounding county came to sponsor the city and county of Gleiwitz. Because of its nearly defunct pottery industry, Siegburg and the surrounding county came to sponsor Bunzlau, whose pottery tradition nevertheless failed to take root there. Other reasons for uniting a particular West German towns with a specific expellee community abounded and ranged in contrivance.

The manifold duties of a *Patenschaft* were devoted to giving expellees surrogate *Heimat* spaces in the West. The legacy of the renaming and monument construction can still be seen today across the spaces of the old *Bundesrepublik.* At times, their intended beneficiaries were more generic. A great rock in Marburg's largest cemetery is dedicated to all expellees, and the *Sudetenstraße* runs through one of Marburg's postwar block apartment districts where many expellees settled. Just as often, they were tied specifically to the *Patengemeinde*. Perhaps most famous is the *Breslauerplatz* directly behind the busy main train station in Cologne. Siegburg received a *Bunzlauer Straße* in September 1957 and *Martin-Opitz-Straße* in 1974, in honor of a famed sixteenth-century poet from Bunzlau. When the runway of an old air base near Goslar transformed into a main street for a new suburb (heavily populated by expellees), it took on the name *Brieger Weg* in 1957, by which time it was already lined by nineteen houses.[22] Most *Patenschaften* also supported the eventual creation of *Heimat* museums (*Heimatstuben*), to serve as dedicated commemorative spaces to the lost Eastern towns, and they financed the publication

[21] "Es begann mit Breslau. Im Westen gibt es 71 Patenschaften für Ostdeutschland," *Die Welt* 91 (April 20, 1954), i4. Bund der Vertriebenen, Vereinigte Landsmannschaften und Landesverbände, Bundesgeschäftsführung-Kulturreferat, "Bestehende west-ostdeutsche kommunale und Landespatenschaften Liste I, geordnet nach ostdeutschen Heimatgebieten. Stand: March 1965," BAK B 137/1273.

of *Heimat* books, through which expellees recounted their version of the lost town's history and cultural contributions.[23] By far the most important service rendered by a *Patenschaft* was the regular *Heimattreffen*, through which thousands of expellees could meet in the surrogate *Heimat* spaces of their *Patenstadt* to reestablish ties and exchange memories. The Bunzlauer first met in Siegburg in May 1953, yearly until 1958, then biannually thereafter.[24] Similar meetings carried strong meaning for other *Heimat* groups. As the old Brieg pastor Schmidt von Puskas reflected, "we can only meet in Goslar!"[25]

Though at times the leadership sought to invest *Patenschaft* meetings, publications, and monuments with political significance, the assembled expellees formed their own meanings out of the venues created for them (as will be shown in section four). Whether at the federal or *Patenschaft* level, *Heimattreffen* attendees certainly tended to agree with leadership demands for recognition of the injustice that they also felt they had suffered, just as they idealized what they also saw as the German contributions to the former East. They were also generally pleased to find official attention and advocacy behind their work to sustain the *Heimat of memory* in their foreign West German surroundings. Nevertheless, as will now be shown, rather than showing much interest in speeches calling for physical *Heimkehr*, expellees at *Heimattreffen* were obsessed with finding old relations, sharing stories, and working together to preserve the fading memories of what they had lost. And as they became rooted in these surrogate spaces of *Heimat*

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[22] Hans G. Uhl, *Lichtbildervortrag: Brieg, die Fürstenresidenz an der Oder*, 1957 Treffen, SaG-HBB:4:3, 3.
[23] For further examples of commemoration and an overview, see Kai Struve, "Vertreibung und Aussiedlung," in *Schlesische Erinnerungsorte: Gedächtnis und Identität einer mitteleuropäischen Region*, ed. Marek Czapliński and Tobias Weger, 281-305, Eine Veröffentlichung des Schlesischen Museums zu Görlitz, (Görlitz: Neiße Verlag, 2005), 291.
[24] Gert Fischer, "35 Jahre Patenschaft des Rhein-Sieg-Kreises mit dem Kreis Bunzlau und der Stadt Siegburg mit der Stadt Bunzlau 1953-1988. Begleitheft zur Ausstellung im Kreishaus Siegburg vom 20. Mai bis 19. Juni 1988," 39, 41.
[25] "Drittes Bundestreffen der Brieger. Goslar 1952," *Briegische Briefe. Schlesische Monatsschrift* 6, no. 9 (September, 1952), 233.

in the West, they gradually felt less convinced that they could only preserve their unique identities through a return to the increasingly Polish landscapes of the East.

2. The *Human Heimat*

Heimat meetings almost always ended in mourning. The gathered expellees mourned, not that they were unable to reconquer the lost provinces, but rather that they would all be separated again until the next meeting. *Heimattreffen* crystallized the idea of the *human Heimat*, something produced through human interchange and the sharing of communicative memories, rather than determined solely by a concrete physical location. Along with the chance to reconnect with their *human Heimat*, to compliment and embellish one another's private visions of the *Heimat of memory* (which they wanted somehow preserved for all time), gathered expellees also tended to broach discussion of irrevocable changes in the *Heimat transformed* that might have been too painful to confront in private. In this manner, existing in a self-contained atmosphere rooted in a timeless past and oblivious to the world just outside the door, the intimate world of the *human Heimat* had potential to serve as an intense therapy session with loss.

In the years before the founding of the Federal Republic (when the occupying powers expressly forbade political meetings), expellees went to church-sponsored meetings to find people, share memories, and cope with the very recent trauma of the *Heimat*'s loss.[26] When Protestant pastors arranged for a meeting of Silesians in Hannover, Hildesheim, and Detmold in 1949, the hundreds that participated found it "a great, shared joy to see each other and speak

[26] This helps to further clarify Frank Buscher's finding that expellees did not radicalize as the clergy had feared. His history of official church views looked to traditional economic arguments to explain the lack of expellee adherence to rightwing or leftwing movements. The examination in this chapter of interchange at church meetings reveals that, by discussing loss with each other, expellees found new bearings after their shared trauma. See "The Great Fear: The Catholic Church and the Anticipated Radicalization of Expellees and Refugees in Post-War Germany." *German History* 21, no. 2 (2003), 204-224, here 221.

again, and also to be able to exchange reflections on memories of shared times together."[27] Even so soon after flight and expulsion, the goal of territorial restitution often fell into the background. At a meeting of thousands of expellees from Wohlau [Wołów] and other areas of Silesia in July 1950, attendees rejoiced to find old friends, forged new ties, exchanged addresses, and shared rumors about what had changed in the *Heimat*. As one attendee recalled, the Silesian liturgy by their old Protestant pastor "awakened memory of the beautiful religious services in the *Heimat*," and after a procession, they enjoyed many hours of coffee and cakes, narrating memories and listening to their pastor discuss the current situation for the Silesian church. It was in the midst of this sunny, temperate day of pleasant *Wiedersehen* that a *Landsmannschaft* leader, school director Kluke, "informed us that *our goal* isn't exodus but rather *return* (*Rückkehr*) *to the old Heimat*."[28] In the newspaper report of the event, Kluke's suggestion appears as a startling break from the general atmosphere; without commentary, he vanished again from the account, which ended with great enthusiasm at the reunion. When one hundred expellees from Wohlau met again in 1951, political demands were entirely absent as "young and old found themselves together exchanging dear old memories."[29]

Church gatherings were not just an affair for the elderly and the dying; especially in the early years when so many were unemployed and without ties, some youth found a chance to share and make memories together on outings that also helped them to find joy after the trauma of expulsion. In August 1946, Silesian theology student Hans-Joachim Gaidetzka gathered together seven teenagers of both confessions and led them singing Silesian songs on a hike through the Bavarian forest. Sitting around the campfire, "we Silesians from all parts of our

[27] "Pastor Eitner in Hannover, Hildesheim und Detmold," circa 1949, EZA 47/76.
[28] Italics in original, H., "Treffen der Wohlauer in Marktleuthen/Obfr.," *Schlesischer Gottesfreund. Kirchenblatt der evangelischen Heimatvertriebenen* (October 1950), 76.
[29] "Treffen der Wohlauer in Bremen am 8. April 1951," *Wohlauer Rundbrief* 15, End of June 1951, EZA Z 1004, 3.

Heimat ate bread together for the first time far from the *Heimat*." For the aspiring Catholic theologian, it was not just a vacation but "the most beautiful days that I have experienced since leaving the *Heimat*."[30] The following April, they shared stories, pictures, and other memory tokens from Silesia, "especially pictures from trips."[31] Two of the twelve that met him at Fulda in June had come from the Soviet zone, and by Pentecost of 1948, twenty-six participants took part in "being together–joy–happy youthful faces–farewells"; for one of the youth present, it prompted the consolation that "in the dark everyday these memories look like a dream in the minds of all who were able to experience these days together."[32] Though in his final letter Gaidetzka denounced what he saw as the injustice of their expulsion and proclaimed that the victorious Allies could never deny them their "natural right" to the *Heimat*, he expressed thanksgiving that, through expulsion, they had been saved from coming under Communist rule. By 1949, as the youth ventured off into their new places of work and school, and as Gaidetzka himself resumed his theology studies at Königstein, the next youth meeting was cancelled.[33] Far more easily for youth than adults, life went on, and new connections and goals came to supersede their *human Heimat* in importance.

At this point, one might conjecture that church meetings or informal village gatherings were simply less prone to a presumably widespread sentiment of territorial revisionism at the big conventions or meetings arranged by *Patenshaften*. Even a cursory glance at the programs for these gatherings and the commentary of those that took part proves that meetings of every size were dominated by reunions and reminiscences, while political harangues were usually isolated

[30] Hans Joachim Gaidetzka, *Rundbrief*, September 1946, BAK Z 18/213, 31. It is noteworthy that even in this early year only seven of the twenty youth invited could attend due to lack of understanding from employers or in other cases financial difficulties.
[31] Idem., *Rundbrief*, April 1947, BAK Z 18/213, 41.
[32] Idem., *Rundbrief*, June 4, 1947, BAK Z 18/213, 43-45; Idem., *Rundbrief*, June 1948, BAK Z 18/213, 51; W. Steffens, "Menden 1948," Pentecost 1948, BAK Z 18/213, 54-66.
[33] Gaidetzka, *Rundbrief*, September 1949, BAK Z 18/213, 82.

and seldom talked about. The vast majority of the 1950 Silesian "week of *Heimat*" in Cologne was devoted to cultural events such as a concert by the Silesian mountain orchestra, poetry readings, Sunday religious services, and a soccer game between amateur Silesian and Cologne teams in the city stadium. Silesian businesses used the event as a means to market their products: insurance companies asked for patronage again, the Silesian newspapers for subscribers, and the Moritz Thienelt liquor company asked Silesians to buy their product and think of the *Heimat* with each sip.[34]

Because expellees tended to take part in meetings as a way to nourish memories and find friends, expellees tended to describe the big federal and state conventions as crowded and impersonal; they sought out more intimate gatherings that took place in smaller halls on-site. As a journalist at the first Lower Saxon meeting of Silesians in 1949 observed, the afternoon after Lukaschek's speech, when smaller *Heimat* groups clustered together, "many were happy to meet old friends and relatives again and many traveled back home with sadness, because they had looked in vain for acquaintances."[35] Silesians flocked to the big annual gathering in Cologne to attend the congress of Silesian jurists, the Silesian dentists' convention, Silesian journalist conferences, reunions for former classmates and veterans groups, and the assembly of many other past associations.[36] The seven former students from the Breslau King Frederick High School who met again for the first time at the 1959 Cologne Silesian convention vowed to maintain their old bond, not only to "keep alive memories of the lost *Heimat*," but also to

[34] "1. Bundestreffen der Schlesier der Landsmannschaft Schlesien für das Gebiet der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin" (Landsmannschaft Schlesien, 1950), 61-64. By the time of the 1952 *Bundestreffen*, almost the entire booklet devoted to the event consisted of ads. Landsmannschaft Schlesien, "3. Bundestreffen der Schlesier. Hannover 19.-22. Juni 1952" (Landsmannschaft Schlesien, 1952).
[35] "Schlesiertreffen in Hannover," *Kirchenblatt für Evangelische aus Schlesien* 9/10, October/November 1949, 8-9.
[36] Landsmannschaft Schlesien, "3. Bundestreffen der Schlesier. Hannover 19.-22. Juni 1952" (Landsmannschaft Schlesien, 1952); idem., "Freiheit für Schlesien. Deutschlandtreffen der Schlesier. Köln 26.-28. Juni 1959" (Groß-Denkte über Wolfenbttel: Grenzland-Druckerei Rock & Co, 1959).

"strengthen their just claim to the old *Heimat*."[37] However all political language was gone by the time of their second meeting the following year, when they envisioned their little community (now 22 former classmates) as a "surrogate" for "some of what was irrevocably lost through the consequences of the war." As their organizer reflected, "We cannot turn back the wheel of history, but from our common memory we can find joy. This way, we don't have to sacrifice anything, rather [memory becomes] something that we can live off of."[38] Until they lost touch in 1989, these former classmates, like those from other schools in the former East, communicated via newsletter and met periodically to commemorate a "lost" *Heimat* that only existed in memory.[39]

Patenschaft-facilitated gatherings offered a more intimate basis for gathering with less stage time for political speakers. While the huge 1954 Silesian convention in Frankfurt was saddled with revanchist speeches and choral songs such as the "prayer for the liberation of the *Heimat*," the Brieg gathering that same summer in Goslar featured dancing, dining occasions, and church music.[40] Like many such *Heimattreffen*, the annual Goslar gathering typically opened with a Saturday evening of reunions, proceeded on Sunday morning through religious services for both denominations, and then after a ceremony that tended to include the laying of wreaths and commemorative speeches, the gathered Brieger enjoyed slide shows about the old *Heimat*, a soccer game of "Goslar versus Brieg," an hour of organ music in the town church by the former

[37] Kurt Benkel, *Rundbrief der Vereinigung ehemaliger Lehrer und Schüler des König Friedrich-Gymnasiums zu Breslau* 1 (December 1959), 3.
[38] Günter Graumann, *Rundbrief der Vereinigung ehemaliger Lehrer und Schüler des König Friedrich-Gymnasiums zu Breslau* 4 (July 4, 1960), 7.
[39] For other examples of classmate circular letters and meetings, see for example the *Mitteilungsblatt des Matthesianer-Verbandes* as well as the circular letters collected in Juliane Braun, ed., *Ein Teil Heimat seid Ihr für mich. Rundbriefe einer Mädchenklasse, 1944-2000* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2002). At times, *Patenschaften* also sought to help classmates keep in touch. The Brieg *Heimat* community in Goslar continued to distribute the regular periodical for former classmates from Brieg high school as late as 1969. Betreuungsstelle Brieg to Der Kanzlei, "Zeitschriften, Gesetzesblätter pp.," January 1, 1969, SaG-HBB:1:1-5.
[40] "5. Bundestreffen der Breiger in der Patenstadt Goslar am 19.u.20.6.1954," SaG-HBB:2:5:1950-1959; "Schlesiertreffen 11.-18. Juli 1954 in Frankfurt/Main," SaG-HBB:2:5:1950-1959.

Brieg organist Max Drischner, and finally a "Silesian evening" of dancing and conversation in a rented hall.[41] Likewise, when 2500-3000 expellees from Liegnitz [Legnica] met in their *Patenstadt* Wuppertal in 1956, the *Westdeutsche Rundschau* emphasized how Liegnitzer rejoiced in a "hearty, joyful, melancholy atmosphere of reunions!"[42]

If *Patenschaft*-sponsored meetings had less to do with politics and more to do with reunions, informal meetings generally dispensed with any revisionist politics entirely and became a chance for fun and stories. Already in September 1948, medical doctor Edward Berger wrote to his pastor of how, after the trauma of watching the historic marketplace in Liegnitz collapse due to neglect, he had been ready to settle into a much happier life in West Berlin, where he had been able to start practicing again and meet regularly with a music historian and pharmacist he had known back in the old *Heimat*.[43] By January 14, 1961, Liegnitz exiles of all ages filled "Olga's bar" in Stuttgart and danced hard to everything from modern pop music to old polonaises. At the same time, "old memories emerged as Mrs. Fellendorf read a poem she had written in the form of lyrics for a folk dance (*Schnadahüpfeln*), and everyone sang along on the refrain. They parted excited about the next meeting in April.[44] As Alfons Teuber had already reflected in 1951 with respect to the great Silesian poets of past centuries, "so long as their songs

[41] Program "Brieger Heimattreffen in Goslar am 21. und 22. Juli 1951," SaG-HBB:2:5:1950-1959; "Programm des 3. Bundestreffens der Brieger aus dem Stadt- und Landkreis Brieg in der Patenstadt Goslar am 19. und 20. Juli 1952," *Briegische Briefe. Schlesische Monatsschrift* 6, no. 6 (June 10, 1952), 178. Similar programs predominated during other *Patenschaft* gatherings. See for instance *Festschrift zum 1. Bundestreffen der Bunzlauer anlässlich der Patenschaftsübernahe durch die Stadt Siegburg am 2. u. 3. Mai 1953*, HB Wichtige Unterlagen aus Gründungsjahren ab 1953. The emphasis was on finding relations and sharing memories, despite revanchist speeches by leaders such as Dr. Schmandt and P. Etzenbach. See Introduction, "Programm zum III. Heimattreffen der Landsleute aus Stadt und Kreis Bunzlau am 28., 29. und 30. Mai in der Patenstadt Siegburg," HB Wichtige Unterlagen aus Gründungsjahren ab 1953.

[42] "Weit über 2000 Liegnitzer trafen sich bei uns. Wiedersehen in der Patenstadt. Die ostdeutsche Heimat lebt, solange sie in den Herzen lebt," *Westdeutsche Rundschau* (September 17, 1956), 8.

[43] Edward Berger, letter in *Das katholische Liegnitz*, Seelsorgebrief, April 1949, BAK Z 18/222, 11.

[44] W.u.H.Fr, "Kappenabend der Heimatgruppe Stuttgart," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 13, no. 3 (February 10, 1961), 57-58.

and plays remain alive among us, Silesia is not dead." The *Heimat* lived on in the experiences of its exiled population.[45]

At the same time that *Heimattreffen* afforded the chance to commemorate the *Heimat of memory*, they also exposed expellees to vivid accounts about the *Heimat transformed*, and in this manner often compelled a need to cope with the physical *Heimat*'s permanent loss. However much narrations about the *Heimat transformed* may have depressed the listeners, newspaper accounts attest to the insatiable curiosity that attending expellees had about it. The June 1951 issue of the popular magazine *Revue* emphasized that, when a quarter million Silesians met together in Hannover: "their view at the time goes a hundred thousand times back into the old *Heimat*. Millions of expellees and natives are moved time and again by the question: how does it look today in Silesia, in East Brandenburg, in Pomerania, Danzig, [and] West and East Prussia?"[46] Old friends who had left the *Heimat transformed* in the late 1940s or mid-1950s and lived through the *Heimat*'s transformation (as discussed in chapter three), and those who had undertaken travel back to Silesia after 1956 to witness the drastic changes all at once (to be explored in chapter six) frequented *Heimattreffen*. Both in scheduled presentations and informal discussions, they "jogged" the collective memory to remember, not only idealized images of a past world, but also its apocalyptic ending and development into a foreign space.

Already at the first meeting of expellees from Liegnitz on August 27, 1949 in Cologne, thirty-five former townspeople listened to their old neighbor Albert Müller narrate "about his experiences and the current conditions in Liegnitz" before his departure in May.[47] By the time Georg Wasner spoke to old neighbors of his recent departure from Bunzlau at a meeting in

[45] Alfons Teuber, *Schlesisches Jugendbuch: ein Schatzkästlein angefüllt mit Kostbarkeiten aus der alten Heimat* (Munich: Verlag Volk und Heimat, 1951), 9-10, Anhang IV.
[46] Stefan Eich, "Schau heimwärts Vertriebener! Ostdeutsche Heimat heute. Ein Bericht über Schlesien, Ost-Brandenburg, Pommern, Westpreußen Danzig und Ostpreußen," *Revue* 25 (June 21, 1952), 1.

Braunschweig in 1957, he gave a "dense, shocking report" about his experiences, exhibited photos of the devastated city, and declared himself to have been the very last German that had still remained. This led one attendee to realize that "now not one of us is there! No one at all! Now the foreigners are by themselves, they can do what they want with everything we left behind. . . . Now, really, only the memory of the past remains to us!" Because "the last, toughest roots are now torn out," he despaired that there was no longer any way to "substantiate our claim, our right to the *Heimat*." In the name of "justice," he still believed that "the abandoned city of Bunzlau" belonged to him; but he knew that the city was not empty, agonized that even the *Heimat*'s soils "wed anyone who applies the right efficiency!" This expellee wasn't the only one forced to cope with the *Heimat transformed* and seriously consider that the loss was permanent. The other expellees present bombarded Wasner and his family with questions "about their personal property, streets, and neighborhoods," only to learn in each case that "the Poles let whole streets sink into rubble because of unbelievable carelessness and disorganization." Traditional anti-Polish bigotry and blinders to the postwar circumstances in the country Germany had destroyed did not prevent attending Bunzlauer from appreciating, however, that the Poles had "taken pains, for instance, to rebuild the houses around the marketplace to appear just as they had before the disaster in Bunzlau."[48] As the next section will demonstrate, the regular use of slideshows during *Heimattreffen* with up-to-date images of the *Heimat transformed*, such as those delivered by the Wasners, gave intense and regular impetus to expellees to reflect on the loss they had suffered and realize that, for all their continued sense of "injustice" and "right to the *Heimat*," the only space they truly yearned for existed in the photos of a pristine prewar world that no longer existed.

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[47] "Und in Köln," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* (Oktober 1949): 2.
[48] Neugebauer, "Georg Wasner berichtet aus Bunzlau," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no 15 (1957), 10.

3. Slideshows

When expellees left their gatherings, they usually recalled the slideshow presentations with as much emotion as their personal reunions. At the majority of gatherings, there came a moment when the lights dimmed, a slide projector brightened the room, and old friends and neighbors huddled together to watch imagery from the *Heimat of memory* stream before their eyes. In this bubble of timelessness, narrators put their own spin on history, as when Hans Uhl made certain to emphasize during his presentation at a 1957 Brieg *Heimattreffen* that Germans had built and vested everything with its true meaning, including the palace of the "Silesian" *Piast* (that is, Polish) princes who had reigned there.[49] Meanwhile, each expellee refreshed whatever memories he or she preferred, and they often made their own eager contributions, both during the show and with each other afterward. On one level, the slide show became a symbol of memory, a surrogate afterimage from a meaningful site in the old *Heimat*, which, as will be shown in the next section, only had meaning in the eyes of the expellee beholders. The photo of a tree, a house, or a road, perfectly ordinary and even generic to an outsider, stimulated cherished meanings and discussion for assembled expellees. On another level, the expellees were perfectly aware that the images did not conform to reality; this was reinforced when, very often, slide shows concluded with an exposition of images from contemporary Silesia, often narrated by an eye-witness. Shocked and horrified by the *Heimat transformed*, expellees went away perceiving that the *Heimat of memory* had truly died in physical reality. Though this was a painful experience, intense *curiosity* about present-day conditions in the *Heimat* made the prospect of up-to-date imagery irresistible; attendees were compelled to gawk at the changes and keep asking questions. For fear of disturbing delicate memories, many never dared return to Silesia

[49] Uhl, *Lichtbildervortrag*, 1957 Treffen, SaG-HBB:4:3, 1.

themselves, but sometimes the images prompted the opposite response: the need to go back, to see the changes in person (as shown in the next chapter), and then to return with still more pictures for future slideshows. Images even had potential to help those who stayed in the West to see that a new Polish Silesia had arisen as a real place on the site that had been their *Heimat*.

Though certainly with some melancholy, expellees were always delighted to see images from the past. Already in March 1949, Maria Schnesche received a letter from her son-in-law, who had been moved by a slideshow at an expellee church gathering. Describing his experience of having seen imagery from Trebnitz [Trzebnica], Breslau, Liegnitz, and other intimate spaces with his Hamburg "Hedwig club," he added, "you can imagine how it moved me and all the others to watch our *Heimat* pass before our eyes." This in addition to discussions with their old pastor led him to reflect that "they were hours of the most beautiful edification for all of us."[50] A report from a meeting of pastors at Lorch in 1950 demonstrated more activism. As Kurt Anders, now the town's Silesian bookseller, observed: "they left grateful that, thanks to a slide show of Silesia, "all have the *Heimat* firm in their memory. There were many loud and many quiet calls of joyful recognition. Woeful reflections mixed together." The experience led Anders to conclude: "joy for the *Heimat* and the pain of homelessness, both of these simply have to be."[51] As of 1952, the Catholic Eichendorff Guild was beginning to sell collected slides from the prewar *Heimat* to any interested party for use at *Heimattreffen* and even in private homes.[52]

Slideshows constantly defied any political interpretations by a presenter. The October 1956 Bunzlau meeting in Braunschweig was supposed to be devoted to the *Heimat of memory*: Bunzlauer assembled "to newly strengthen the consciousness and certainty that the old *Heimat* is

[50] Maria Schnesche, letter in *Das katholische Liegnitz*, Seelsorgebrief, June/July 1949, BAK Z 18/222, 12.
[51] Kurt Anders, "Schlesische Pfarrer in Lorch," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 2, no. 8 (June 1950): 2.
[52] Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Eichendorffgilden, ed., *Schlesien als Erbe und Aufgabe. Was ist und will die Eichendorffgilde? Grundsätze und Werkmaterial* (München: Selbstverlag, 1952).

a possession that cannot be lost" and show the youth the spaces "that they truly came from." The leader Neugebauer hoped that the dentist Max Gürtler's regular slide show would best ensure these goals; but after seeing aerial photos of the *Heimat* before the war, "some truly shocking images of Bunzlau were screened from recent times, partly taken from Polish newspapers, where they openly serve a totally different purpose." Though never stating what the Polish purpose was, it clearly was not the instilment of nostalgia in German expellees. Neugebauer tried to present the remaining German minority in the town as their "representatives" preserving their claim to the *Heimat*, but the last of these representatives were already leaving a *Heimat* that Neugebauer had to admit on the basis of the imagery to have become quite foreign, in which "whole streets, even whole neighborhoods have become bleak fields in the time since the expulsion."[53]

Year after year of voluntary subjection to slideshows dampened the fiery intentions of *Heimat* leaders and even prompted recognition that the old *Heimat* was taking on a more modern look for some other population. Based on years of picture collection, the forty-two-slide list and script for a 1967 presentation about "Brieg county after 1945" detailed every last major monument and street, describing, not only decay or destruction, but also modernization; the script completely ignored the Polish inhabitants that wandered around in the foreground. Around the market "modern functional buildings" had been constructed in place of the "prestigious structures," and the old "narrow and dark back courtyards of the old town have been cleaned up."[54] Without mentioning that the Piast palace had become quite run down in German times, the show described how the main entrance had been restored in recent years. In place of ruined

[53] Ngb.[Neugebauer], "Großes Bunzlauer-Treffen in Braunschweig," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 5, no. 21 (1956), 7.
[54] Dokumentarreihe "Brieg nach 1945 einschließlich Landkreis" Lichtbildervortrag 1967, SaG-HBB:4:3, 1.

buildings, green spaces now filled the city. Despite the obvious alterations to the city, the presentation ended with the hope "that we have brought you joy and awakened old memories."[55]

Because images from the *Heimat transformed* exhibited the clearest possible evidence that present-day Silesia was out of sync with memory, slideshows even prompted viewers to explicitly reject the political agenda for territorial revisionism as impractical as well as reprehensible. At a well-attended gathering of expellees from Liegnitz in Nuremberg in 1965, the participants undertook a "stroll through the Liegnitz of the present" amid much commentary and discussion. As one attendee recalled, the first image appeared, and everyone "hushed."

> From this tension, all the viewers then felt reflective and melancholic thoughts about the pictures. Reflective, because the slides relate the recognition that the picture of our *Heimat* city, which we carry inside of us, is truly faded in reality and has changed considerably, so that we are ever more reliant on the inner image in memory that we have taken with us from back home.

Precisely at this point, reflection on the slide show led the expellee to reflect upon the absurd political goals of territorial revisionism and to express that "this slide presentation, and especially the equally sober and atmospheric explanations, expressed in all forcefulness that we expellees are not revanchists. But no one can ever refuse us the right to speak about our *Heimat* and to think about it."[56] The *Recht auf die Heimat* became directly tied to the *Heimat of memory*, because the slides had shown clearly that the *Heimat transformed* was no longer theirs to possess.

When an expellee returned to the group to report of a travel experience in Silesia, slideshows had potential to become a new form of journey– no longer imaginary, but rather a vicarious tour via real pictures of what Silesia had become. When a woman from Liegnitz reported of her 1963 trip "home" to a group of exiled lady friends in Hamburg, an observer noted how they

[55] Ibid., 2.
[56] S. N., "'Liegnitz heute' in Nürnberg," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 17, no. 21 (November 10, 1965), 321-322.

> forgot much moving around, telephone discussions and room discussions shortly before the beginning. When the lights went out, the intimate chatting hushed and we started to walk around in Liegnitz, the city 'so far from here' in space and time. Just getting your bearings wasn't easy. You oriented yourself best via the beloved old towers.

With help from their "guide," they found great joy "that reconstruction work has been taken up at the castle, that the sight of ruins and gaping empty spaces had been ameliorated through flowerbeds and green spaces, that cleanliness ruled on the streets and squares." Though the bridges remained in bad condition, they had hopes that this might improve. Such restoration prompted some to sense that time had indeed passed, that the wounds of war had at least scarred over, and that the time had come for a new understanding between Germans and Poles. As one participant observed:

> it may please many *that slowly the horrors of the last, disastrous war are slowly starting to fade in our old Heimat, that Poles and Germans, both expellees, are speaking to each other and seeking to master their lives together*. That will soften the view of the many destroyed, damaged, and neglected cultural buildings and unforgettable family homes that we had so loved during our happy youth.

After the talk, the women were all invited to hear more about their friend's travel experience in another slideshow a few months later. "Then there were questions, memories, and exchanges in larger and smaller circles that never wanted to end. For many, the wish emerged to attempt such a trip as well sometime."[57] Doubtless, these new travelers would bring back their own stories.

When it became known to the Liegnitz *Heimat* group in Soest in 1965 that Rosemarie Bunk would be showing pictures from her recent trip to Silesia, the hall was thronged by an unusually high turnout, and viewers were so shocked by the changes but overjoyed to see traces from their memories that they clambered to undertake trips themselves, before everything they had known was gone. That Bunk offered commentary on tape pleased her assembled former neighbors, since, as one onlooker noted:

> otherwise one would have been able to recognize many of the streets and squares of our *Heimat* city only with effort or perhaps not at all. The ever progressing reconfiguration of Liegnitz's inner city appeared

[57] Italics in original, M. S., "Reisebericht von Liegnitz," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 15, no. 22 (November 25, 1963), 349.

> astonishing and at the same time somewhat depressing to those who have our old Liegnitz fixed in memory. Therefore, we understood the advice of our recorded guide: if you want to visit Liegnitz, you'd better do it soon; otherwise, you won't be able to recognize the inner city at all anymore.[58]

By the 1970s, when it became easier for West Germans to travel to Silesia, travel slide shows multiplied further, encouraging still more to undertake the powerful journey for themselves.[59]

4. Symbolic Sites: Pilgrimages, the Brieg Tower, and *Heimat* Bells

The Bunzlauer in Siegburg built a second, albeit less intricate *Bühnenbild* stage set in 1962, the same year that a youth group from Oppeln [Opole] assembled a model representation of their own Silesian *Heimat* just across the Rhine in Bonn.[60] Through support from churches, *Patenschaften*, and *Landsmannschaften*, as well as on their own initiative, expellees produced symbolic artifacts to convey the consoling notion that an afterimage from the *Heimat of memory* could materialize and become rooted in the tangible spaces of the contemporary West.[61] It was hoped that such physical traces might preserve the memory of lost spaces within the community and for future generations. In the short-term, these "surrogate" spaces of *Heimat* helped expellees to heal after the loss of Silesia; in the long-term the enduring meaningfulness of each space proved to be an illusion. The frailty of memory and ultimately the death of those that

[58] "Soest zeigte Bilder aus Liegnitz," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 17, no. 21 (November 10, 1965), 321.
[59] See for instance Günter and Margreth Dombrowski, "Heimatliche Botschaft," *Rundbrief der Vereinigung ehemaliger Lehrer und Schüler des König Friedrich-Gymnasiums zu Breslau* 47 (Christmas 1975), 43-51.
[60] This project was financially and logistically sponsored by the Oppeln *Patenschaft* and Upper Silesian *Landsmannschaft.* Bund der Oppelner to Bonn Städtische Kulturamt Patenstelle Oppeln, October 2, 1962, HO [Heimatstube Oppeln] 49-2 Oppeln nach 1945 Aufsätze und Zeitungsberichte.
[61] Polish settlers in Silesia also needed to forge symbols and meanings. To cope with their suffering under Nazism and their own uprootedness due to the loss of the Polish eastern territories and the destruction of the Polish heartland, they embraced the idea of a timeless Polish mythology for the German cities they inherited, pointing to twelfth-century *Piast* princes and "Polish-speaking" stones to identify a stable and usable history in surroundings that were so foreign to them and unstable. They invented Polish symbols so that they could feel at home, and also (with much less state support) tried to carry on some of their traditions from former places of residence. See for example Stanisław Lorentz, "Reconstruction of the Old Town Centers of Poland," in *Historic Preservation Today. Essays presented to the Seminar on Preservation and Restoration, Williamsburg, Virginia, September 8-11, 1963*, 43-72 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1966); Marek Zybura, *Der Umgang mit dem deutschen Kulturerbe in Schlesien nach 1945* (Görlitz: Senfkorn Verlag Alfred Theisen, 2005); Zbigniew Mazur, *Wspólne dziedzictwo? Ze studiów nad stosunkiem do spuścizny kulturowej na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych* [Joint Heirs? A Study on the Relation to the Cultural Heritage in the Western and Northern Lands] (Poznań, 2000).

imparted meaning to each sacred monument to the lost homeland fated each symbolic site to become just another marker at the side of the road, just another plaque affixed to some building.

This should not downplay the importance of such *lieux de mémoire* for those who first vested them with meaning. They became the *stage* on which expellees strove to cope with loss and find healing. Against the backdrop of a constructed cultural memory, they exchanged communicative memories, and though leaders told them what to make of it all, individual expellees took possession of the symbols and validated them with intimate meanings. Countless examples of such symbols of memory arose when expellees came together.[62] The first example to be explored here will be the pilgrimage sites that arose across West Germany immediately after the expulsion. With Silesian pilgrimage sites cut off by the iron curtain, expellees traveled to surrogate sites in the West that had previously possessed a very different meaning for the native inhabitants. Then, though from the outside it was little different from the rest of the city, the Brieg tower, given by the city of Goslar to its *Patengemeinde*, transplanted a fragment of the lost *Heimat* itself into a West German city and became a site for regular commemoration. And finally, though to most ears they sounded like any other bells, Silesian church bells salvaged in the West became emblems of the lost *Heimat* which expellees fought, at great expense and with considerable energy, to possess again for their communities. At the very least, they made sure at their gatherings to listen to recordings of their tolling *Heimatglocken*.

Pilgrimages

Symbols of memory easily became imbued with religious significance. As Elisabeth Fendl observes, though seldom of great material value, these "icons" to the lost East became

[62] Many such symbols were recently included as part of an exhibition at the Berlin Historical Museum (May-August 2006): pull-carts with which sparse belongings were brought from the East during the flight in January 1945, dolls that children brought with them, or the keys that expellees commonly took with them from their homes. http://www.dhm.de/ausstellungen/flucht-vertreibung/index.html

priceless for their sentimental value and facilitated integration in the West, even if the commemoration they encouraged often bore little resemblance to the culture of the old *Heimat*.[63] In this light, the Brieg tower can be taken as a "cathedral" to the old *Heimat*, filled with relics devoted to a deceased world and used as a sanctified space for *Heimat* ceremonies; even traditional Christian symbols such as church bells moved outside of their traditional role in religious service to serve the *Heimat* religion as well. However in perhaps the greatest turnaround of all, Christian practice itself became subordinated to reverence for the *Heimat* during pilgrimages. In the first years after the expulsion, when the occupiers forbade other forms of gathering, expellees (especially Catholics from Silesia and the Sudetenland) traveled to religious shrines across West Germany with the goal of finding each other again and celebrating Silesian traditions. As Dietmar Sauermann observes, "along with their religious purpose, pilgrimages offered the chance to meet relatives and acquaintances again, to feel good in the midst of a larger group of like-minded people, and to document this belonging together."[64] Vesting previously unimportant sites in the alien lands of their exile with Silesian meanings, expellees discovered a stage on which to continue their traditions and find a sense of rootedness.

By going on pilgrimage "as they always had," expellees were seeking to retain at least superficial continuity; but as in most surrogates for old memory spaces, the world had changed through the expulsion, and pilgrimages took on a different meaning, tied above all to coping with

[63] Elisabeth Fendl, "Zur Einführung," in *Zur Ikonographie des Heimwehs. Erinnerungskultur von Heimatvertriebenen*, ed. Idem., 7-10 (Freiburg: Johannes-Künzig-Institut für ostdeutsche Volkskunde, 2002), 7. Fendl has designated *Heimatstuben* as secularized religious spaces. See "Heimatstuben aus volkskundlicher Sicht," in *Dokumentation des Kolloquiums. Was wird aus den Heimatsammlungen? Zukunftsperspektiven für die historisch-ostdeutschen Heimatmuseen und Heimatstuben in Deutschland und die dort verwahrten Sammlungen und Archivsbestände*, ed. Bundesinstitut für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa, 51-58 (Oldenburg: December 11-12, 2006), 51.

[64] Dietmar Sauermann, *"Fern doch Treu." Lebenserinnerungen als Quellen zur Vertreibung und ihrer kulturellen Bewältigung, am Beispiel der Grafschaft Glatz* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 2004), 312.

the loss of *Heimat* through a common celebration of Silesian heritage.[65] As Georg Schroubek notes, "certainly the loss of old ties led a great many expellees to truly appreciate [such ties] for the first time [as well as] to grasp the full meaning of traditional forms, previously only externally fulfilled." So attentive did the pilgrims suddenly become to tradition that they sought out sites that had any sort of relationship to where they had gone before and demonstrated as much interest in folk traditions as the religious content implied in pilgrimage.[66] In a typical case, a June 1946 "pilgrimage of the homeless (*Heimatlosen*)" occurred at a Marian pilgrimage site in Altötting, Bavaria; before six thousand Silesian and Sudeten Germans, a Silesian pastor prayed that Mary would intercede for them as they struggled with the "injustice" of their homelessness; though he prayed for their "right to the *Heimat*," he concluded that God's will would be done.[67] Waves of pilgrimage likewise passed through Osnabrück, which pastors designated "a piece of the *Heimat*" in 1948.[68] Silesians from Frankenstein made their pilgrimage to Peine on July 26, 1949 to pray to their patron Saint Anna; sharing jokes, looking at old slides, and dancing together, the venue of the pilgrimage had less to do with a journey to God and more to do with a journey to find Silesia.[69]

Saint Hedwig, Silesia's patron saint, proved to be the most important religious figure for Silesian exiles and served to tie Christian piety to devotion to the old *Heimat*. As Kurt Dröge and

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[65] In a similar vein, the plentitude of religious calendars from the late 1940s onward gave expellees the chance to take note of the customs and traditions that they had once celebrated before and could seek to celebrate again. Despite this intent, however, the editor of one such calendar in 1949 warned that there would be change: "that which was already rotten and no longer lively will completely fall off and stop, but everything strong, genuine, and lively will live on." Many failed to renew the old traditions in the new *Heimat*, just as old flowers like the Glatzer rose were now absent; they "enjoyed taking part in new, unknown traditions, for example the Swabian procession '*Blutritt nach Weingarten*.'" From his perspective, combining old practices with traditions in the new *Heimat* had potential to revitalize the faith and traditions of both communities into a new, hybrid form of practice. Josef Brauner, *Schlesischer Volksbrauch im Kirchenjahr* (Ulm: Alois Luefke, 1949), 62-63.

[66] Georg Schroubek, *Wallfahrt und Heimatverlust. Ein Beitrag zur religiösen Volkskunde der Gegenwart* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1968), 242-243.

[67] Piekorz, *Rundbrief*, June 23, 1946, BAK Z 18/219, 6.

[68] Rudolf Kurnoth, "Hedwigsgruss an alle Gläubigen der katholischen Kirchengemeinden Frankenstein und Zadel, Schlesien," *Rundbrief* no. 14, April-September 1948, BAK Z 18/216, 55.

Daniela Stemmer observe, expellees transformed Hedwig into the "queen of charity from the German East" and were inspired to found many charity organizations.[70] With the traditional pilgrimage site to the monastery she had founded in the thirteenth century at Trebnitz barred by the new border, Silesian expellees traveled to her birthplace at Andechs in Bavaria and so granted a very poignant meaning to a site to which they had previously ascribed marginal importance at best. After a Mass in Munich celebrated by the bishop of Breslau (now centered in Görlitz), pilgrims ventured out on August 25, 1946 to the cloister church at Andechs. Again in October, so many Silesian pilgrims crowded through the sleepy Bavarian town that only clergymen were allowed to reserve rooms ahead.[71] After numbers peaked around 1950, attendance on expellee pilgrimages declined through the middle of the decade at the same time that the worst material need passed and political forces such as the *Landsmannschaften* increased their role at pilgrimage events.[72] Today Andechs is once again most famous as the burial place of the composer Carl Orff and tied to local Bavarian culture and history, rather than to a medieval saint that once traveled east to a place that few contemporary German visitors to Andechs care (or even know) about at all.[73] This should not downplay the importance that such symbolic sites had for expellees in the early years, nor the legacy they at times yielded through combining Christian virtues such as love and forgiveness with the idea of *Heimat*. Though Andechs itself steadily lost its importance as a Silesian pilgrimage site, St. Hedwig herself entered into the

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[69] Idem., *Rundbrief* no. 16, January-July 1949, BAK Z 18/216, 40.
[70] Kurt Dröge und Daniela Stemmer, "Bilder einer überforderten Kultfrau: St. Hedwig von Schlesien," in *Zur Ikonographie des Heimwehs. Erinnerungskultur von Heimatvertriebenen*, ed. Elisabeth Fendl, 127-159 (Freiburg: Johannes-Künzig-Institut für ostdeutsche Volkskunde, 2002), 133.
[71] "Der Schlesier Wallfahrt nach dem heiligen Berge Andechs der Geburtsstätte der hl. Hedwig," October 13, 1946, BAK Z 18/109, 28.
[72] Schroubek, *Wallfahrt und Heimatverlust*, 320.
[73] Germans in general have little awareness or interest in Silesia's history, let alone St. Hedwig. One need only surf the internet under the search terms "Wallfahrt" and "Andechs" to discover that Hedwig is never mentioned in most any church group advertisement or report about a trip; general tourism pages rarely mention the saint; and though Hedwig receives mention on the official monastery webpage, her most important ministry (to Silesia) never receives

dialogue between German and Polish clergy through the 1960s as a symbol of reconciliation; because both Poles and Germans claimed her as a hero who had fought their common enemy (historically the Mongols, now implicitly the Soviets), she became a common reference point for a shared history of peaceful interchange in the letters of the German and Polish Catholic bishops at the Second Vatican Council.[74]

The Brieg Tower

On July 20, 1952, the city of Goslar ceded the most noteworthy tower in its surviving ring of medieval fortifications to the sponsored expellee community from Goslar. Henceforth, the *Breites Tor* (Wide Gate) also became known as the *Briegerturm* (Brieg Tower). It became a patch of the lost *Heimat* now physically restored well over five hundred kilometers away from the sites that it commemorated. A prominent sign in the tower said *Standort Brieg* (you are standing in Brieg), and the ever increasing collection of symbols in the tower testified to the fact that the *Briegerturm* had nothing to do with the Brzeg of the present, but rather the Brieg of the past. Like a tomb, the stone, cylindrical interior was dominated by memorial stones dedicated to the ever increasing number of those who had known German Brieg and since died.

Painstaking work went into designing the interior layout of the somber medieval tower, as though all the creative energies of Brieg's expellees should concentrate on that one confined tower that they could still claim as their common, physical *Heimat*. The Brieg chimneysweeper Hermann Schleder decorated the interior with German and Brieg flags and cast-iron torch

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mention. "Kloster Andechs," http://www.andechs.de/kloster/Andechser_Wallfahrt.html and "Die Geschichte des Klosters," http://www.andechs.de/kloster/geschichte/index.html (accessed May 10, 2009).

[74] *German-Polish Dialogue: Letters of the Polish and German Bishops and International Statements* (Bonn-Brussels-New York: Edition Atlantic Forum, 1966), 22. The German Silesian bishop likewise commemorated Hedwig's bravery for "saving" both the German and Polish peoples from the common Mongol threat in the thirteenth century: "Through her suffering, her prayers, and the massacre of her family, she rescued both Germany and Poland in warding off the attacking heathens. In this way, she became a bridge binding together both nations." Weihbischof A. Kindermann, "Bischofswort zum Hedwigsjahr 1967," in *Hedwigs Jahrbuch 1967 anläßlich der 700*

holders. A stone carver from nearby West German Sollingen carved a sandstone memorial "to the Brieg dead" which best resembled a gravestone.[75] Through coordination between Goslar mayor Hermann Pfaffendorf and Brieg's last mayor Waldemar Reche, it was decided to fill the tower with other memorials produced by old residents of Brieg.[76] Wreaths, ribbons, coats of arms, crosses, and figurines all followed. Later on, a second stone was placed at an angle from the floor to even more accurately mimic a grave. In 1955, lights were added to cast haunting shadows up the rugged medieval walls.[77] Already by then, the tower's import had further broadened when the town of Löwen [Lewin Brzeski] (near Brieg) was added to the Goslar *Patenschaft*, and in 1954 an iron gate was installed at the tower entrance featuring the coats of arms from both cities. In 1958, on the occasion of Löwen's 700th anniversary, a Silesian stonecutter forged a tombstone-shaped monument that matched the one for Brieg so that visiting Löwener could commemorate their own dead.[78] By 1960, the community expended 850 marks on the creation of a stained-glass window featuring an eagle over the coats of arms for Löwen and Brieg.[79] As the material need of expellees waned and it became even harder to send care packages to Brieger in the DDR, the early 1960s saw the tower persist as an exceptionally high funding priority for the community.[80]

Into this once-austere space now increasingly overwrought with symbols, Silesians from Brieg county gathered for their annual *Heimattreffen* with speeches and songs, often followed by coffee klatches, soccer games, readings of Silesian poetry, and tours around the historic imperial

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Jahrfeier der Heilsprechung der Herzogin Hedwig von Schlesien im Jahre 1267 durch Papst Klemens IV, by Msgr. Johannes Smaczny, (Osnabrück: St. Hedwigs-Werk, 1967), 4.

[75] Uhl, *Lichtbildervortrag*, 1957 *Treffen*, SaG-HBB:4:3, 3.

[76] "Drittes Bundestreffen der Brieger. Goslar 1952," *Briegische Briefe. Schlesische Monatsschrift* 6, no. 9 (September, 1952), 233.

[77] D.O.St., Vermerk, November 3, 1955, SaG-HBB:1:1-6:1950-1960.

[78] "Patenstadt Löwen 700 Jahre alt," SaG-HBB:2:5:1950-1959.

[79] Hauptverwaltung Patenschaft für die Stadt Brieg, Haushaltsansatz 1960, December 15, 1959, SaG-HBB:1:1-6:1950-1960.

city and the surrounding forests.[81] The tower itself was "consecrated" in 1952 as attendees sang the German classic "*Nun danket alle Gott*."[82] In 1958, two thousand guests from across West Germany (one even from the United States) were moved to see "the flags of the *Patenstadt* Goslar and the cities of Brieg and Löwen [fluttering] from the wide gate on the Brieg tower." Amid the usual events inside the tower, they also enjoyed a concert from the costumed Goslar miners' brass band and finally a political speech from the Silesian *Landsmannschaft* chairman Herbert Hupka.[83]

Time froze inside of this sanctified pocket of *Heimat*. Though the people aged, they wore the same archaic costumes and were known by the idealized roles they had possessed in the old *Heimat*, rather than what they had become since; most visibly, Waldemar Reche was still honored as Brieg's mayor in 1958.[84] This was also the case in other communities, as when against the static image of the Bunzlauer *Bühnenbild*, Maria Siemianowski had welcomed her guests as the widow of the town's last mayor; indeed, she took things further than Reche, actively leading her community for two decades, as though, because time stood still, the community's leadership position should be handled through succession rather than election. This timelessness, expressed in the symbolic space of the *Heimattreffen*, then also translated into articles about old churches or schools in the *Heimat* paper, and above all in the town history presented in the *Heimat* book, wherein the physical *Heimat* had died for all intents and purposes in 1945, and all that remained was commemoration.

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[80] Idem., Haushaltsansatz 1963, July 15, 1962, SaG-HBB:1:1-6:1961-1964.
[81] "Endgültiges Program des 3. Bundestreffen der Brieger aus dem Stadt und Landkreis Brieg in der Patenstadt Goslar am 19. und 20. Juli 1952," SaG-HBB:2:5:1950-1959.
[82] "Feierstunde anläßlich der Übergabe der Gr. Jenkwitzer Glocke im Brieger Gedächtnisturm am 19. Juli 1952," SaG-HBB:2:5:1950-1959.
[83] Untitled, 1958 Treffen der Brieger und Löwener in Goslar, SaG-HBB:2:5:1950-1959, 1, 3.
[84] Ibid., 3.

Brieg's exiles gave regular expression to their devotion, even possessiveness of this surrogate *Heimat* space. Unable to make it to the *Heimattreffen* in 1952, two expellees made the journey ten days later in their VW with the expressed desire to satisfy their "yearning to stand in the Brieg Tower, to abide in silent prayer by the cenotaph and to lay down the flowers that we had brought from our garden onto the [memorial] stone." Despite these high hopes, no one could get them the keys to the tower when they arrived in town, and they ran into three other Brieg pilgrims who had suffered the same fate. To make matters worse, they found no evidence that the *Heimattreffen* had ever occurred just over a week before: all of the flags and signs were already gone. This prompted bitterness against the leadership of the Brieg community in Goslar, whose rhetoric about "giving us strength and hope" through the *Patenstadt* needed to be "actualized" for those coming from outside of town. The new "*Heimat*" represented by Goslar and anchored in the little tower had to be geared toward the Brieger as "a big family," since, charming though local Brieg activities in Goslar might be, for those forced to travel "the coziness (*Gemütlichkeit*) ends when one travels through Goslar [and] as a Brieger one cannot visit the Brieg Tower!"[85] Another form of possessiveness appeared in the loving labor of two exiled Brieg women in Goslar, who worked regularly throughout the 1960s, at times with some financial help from the city, to take care of the Brieg Tower.[86] They devoted their lives to caring for the *Heimat*.

The Brieg tower still features its impressive iron gate with the names and coats of arms for lost Silesian cities, but these days the doors are almost always locked, and one can easily envision architectural purists seeking in a couple of decades to "restore" the tower back to its imagined medieval past. This is simply how symbolic sites shift in meaning– when yellowed books remain the only narrators for a *lieu de mémoire*, then the site itself has lost all but a

[85] Walter Schulz, "Nachdenkliche Reise nach Goslar," Neue Brieger Zeitung 8, no. 7 (July 1954), 1-3.

museum's purpose. Though sadly, if in fact a future "preservationist" were to "clean out" the Brieg Tower and so "restore" it back into the Wide Gate, it would erase the last traces left by an exile community that has itself virtually disappeared. Meanwhile, the original sites of memory in Silesia itself have been inherited by Polish descendents of settlers who came in the wake of the population upheaval stimulated by the Nazi war. As they assign their own meanings to the formerly "German" spaces, they also show increasing interest in the heritage that expellees had commemorated fifty years ago when they had imagined that Brieg itself only survived inside a medieval tower in Goslar.

Heimat Bells

The same day that the Brieg community consecrated their tower in 1952, they all paid their respects to the man-sized bell that had once hung in a village called Gross Jenkwitz in Brieg county. At the 1955 *Heimattreffen*, by which time the bell had rung from the steeple in a new church in a Goslar suburb for almost three years, the gathered Brieger listened to a recording of the bell's tone echo off the Brieg Tower's medieval walls.[87] To any other ears, there was nothing remarkable in the ringing of the bell, but to the gathered Brieger, this was the "sound" of the *Heimat*. As David Lowenthal has generally observed, a human being's "interest in the past causally connects with threats to its survival. The bulldozer of change enhances the scarcity value of antiquities."[88] For Silesian expellees, bells from the East which survived through a bizarre set of circumstances in the West represented the most scarce and precious sign that their lost *Heimat* survived in the lands around them. Though according to the Federal Republic's official political jargon, the bells were only "on loan" until Germany ended "Polish

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[86] For just one example, see D.O.St., "Sammel-Auszahlungs-Anordnung über DM 60,– H.H.St. 362.823," December 4, 1967, SaG-HBB:1:1-6:1967-1969.

[87] "Feier im Brieger Turm," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 9, no. 8 (August 1955), 231. This was common for many other communities. A recording from a Bunzlau bell rang out at that community's 1960 gathering in Siegburg.

administration" of territories inside the 1937 borders, expellees fought aggressively to secure them as symbols of memory in the towers of their churches, often against the indifference, even incomprehension of the church itself, thereby demonstrating their ever-growing inner conviction that it was better to salvage something from the old *Heimat* for the new *Heimat*, because the old *Heimat* was transformed and lost.

Roughly 80,000 European bells (roughly half from areas of postwar West Germany) were destroyed during World War II, when the Nazis seized bells from across the areas they had occupied and shipped them to Hamburg to be melted down for the arms industry; however, because the bombing campaigns damaged the city industries, most of the bells spent the war in storage by the harbor. Once considered the *Glockenfriedhof* (bell cemetery) by German communities traumatized to have lost their bells (allegedly to keep receiving butter), it was often referred to instead as the *Glockensammellagerstelle* after the war, rehabilitated now as a "collection site" for bells that could be redistributed to churches across West Germany, many of which had been heavily damaged.

For the forming expellee communities in the early 1950s, the happenstance that they had lost most of their possessions but somehow preserved the bells they had long thought lost stimulated a strong attachment to the bells, and in some cases an obsession to have them shipped to churches in the *Patenstadt*, to new districts where many expellees had been settled, and to churches now administrated by the exiled pastor. To take an example, the former Brieg pastor Schmidt von Puskas put tireless effort into his 1952 campaign to recover the five bells from Brieg county reported to be in Hamburg for the principle churches in Goslar; his quest faced opposition both from Goslar and from church authorities. Citing as a precedent the placement of

[88] David Lowenthal, "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory," *Geographical Review* 65, no. 1 (Jan 1975): 33.

bells from Danzig in a church tower in the *Patenstadt* Lübeck,[89] the Brieg community petitioned Goslar for permission to do the same in their *Patenstadt*, only to learn that the city had already been able to reacquire and install all of its original bells. Thus the Brieg bells would have to be sent to other sites, to von Puskas's new community in Cornberg and a new Goslar suburb heavily populated by expellees.[90] The Protestant chancery office also resisted the move of the bells, for it foresaw chaos if bells already promised to communities that needed them for their towers should now be redistributed to expellees.[91] Puskas responded by ignoring them and negotiating directly with the authorities in Hamburg, which turned out to be most amenable especially to surrendering the Gross Jenkwitz bell, as it was undergoing repair for a crack and hadn't yet been promised to anyone.[92] So it was that, on Pentecost Sunday 1953, with the last mayor from Gross Jenkwitz present, the patched, fourteenth-century bell was consecrated for the new church.[93]

The whole experience vividly exposed the emotional attachment that the expellees placed on their bells. Schmidt von Puskas went so far as to scold the Bell Transport Commission in Hamburg for even thinking of sending the bells elsewhere and reprimanded the Goslar city manager: "you should also know that the Brieger wouldn't understand it if one made decisions about their bells without consulting the wishes of the owners (*Besitzer*)."[94] This sense of "ownership" for property once abandoned to the Nazi war effort was given softer tones in the Goslar press: "the spiritual value of the bells from the Polish-occupied territories is especially

[89] Walter Schulz to the city of Goslar, January 17, 1952, SaG-HBB:4:7.
[90] Hans Uhl to Walter Schulz, January 18, 1952, SaG-HBB:4:7.
[91] Oberkirchenrat von Harling to the city administration of Goslar, March 18, 1952, SaG-HBB:4:7.
[92] F. Severin to Superintendent Schmidt von Puskas, March 25, 1952, SaG-HBB:4:7.
[93] Pressestelle der Stadt Goslar, "Schicksale Brieger Kirchenglocken. Zum Kirchentag für Stadt und Landkreis Brieg 11.-13. Juni 1955 Goslar/Harz," SaG-HBB:4:7, 5-6; "Schlesische Glocken für Goslar," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 9, 1952; Program "Die Wiederweihe der Groß Jenkwitzer Glocke," May 23, 1953, SaG-HBB:4:7; Uhl, *Lichtbildervortrag*, 1957 *Treffen*, SaG-HBB:4:3, 3.
[94] Schmidt von Puskas to Oberstadtdirektor der Stadt Goslar, February 28, 1952, SaG-HBB:4:7.

great. For the expellees here, they are a piece of their *Heimat*."[95] As soon as expellees learned of the final resting place of their old bells, they started to plan pilgrimages so that they could hear them again. In 1952, fifty Brieger who had settled in Münchenberg traveled one hundred kilometers by bus to visit the newly installed bell at Neukirchen, and when they reached the village entrance, they were surprised to find Neukirchen school children, many villagers, and the mayor waiting to greet them. Together, as the bell from the old *Heimat* rang from the seven-hundred-year-old village chapel, they sang songs and then crowded into the little church for a service filled with tears.[96]

Much as the church may have struggled to prevent the "chaos" of bell migration, expellees proved their new devotion to the *Patenschaft* as an *Ersatzheimat* through campaigns that made the fight from Puskas over the five Brieg bells look mild. As late as 1962, two years before his death at age eighty-three, Ernst Berger, the old mayor of Oppeln and president of the Silesian Church Council, used his influence to transfer a bell that had already been installed in St. Peter's church in Düsseldorf to another church in the Oppen *Patenstadt* Bonn. The Düsseldorf community was in fact about to replace the bell (from Krappitz in Oppeln county) with a larger one, and so heeded Berger's plea that, for the many expellees from Krappitz in Bonn, "it would bring great consolation and joy to their hearts to be able to hear the familiar tone of their bell again."[97] Thus, from Krappitz to Hamburg to Düsseldorf to Bonn, the 830 kilogram bell finally ended in Bonn's new St. Hedwig's church for a large Silesian expellee congregation.

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[95] Pressestelle der Stadt Goslar, "Schicksale Brieger Kirchenglocken. Zum Kirchentag für Stadt und Landkreis Brieg 11.-13. Juni 1955 Goslar/Harz," SaG-HBB:4:7, 5.
[96] "Die Münchberger Brieger besuchten 'ihre' Glocke. Herzliche Aufnahme der Brieger in Neukirchen," *Briegische Briefe. Schlesische Monatsschrift* 6, no. 6 (June 10, 1952), 168-170.
[97] Ernst Berger to Bischöfliche Ordinariat der Erzdiözese Köln, "Überlassung einer Kirchenglocke," February 2, 1962, Bund der Oppelner to Bonn Städtische Kulturamt Patenstelle Oppeln, October 2, 1962, HO 49-4 Kreis Oppeln, Krappitz.

Today the history of the *Heimatglocken* is generally forgotten, the bells ring anonymously from their towers as they always had before the consequences of Nazism had displaced them and the populations they served. This is the lifecycle of the symbolic sites of memory: something quite ordinary raised to extreme importance and then forgotten. Perhaps the best way to conclude is to unravel the particularly tangled memory saga of a Silesian artifact that has known only the extremes of this process. The metal statue of Hans Georg von Arnim, a military commander during Thirty Years' War, had probably been long forgotten by all who passed by in prewar Liegnitz. While statues of the Kaiser and other more recent heroes stayed on their pedestals (for the time being), poor Arnim was shipped off for destruction in at the bell cemetery in August 1943. Ten years later, the *Patenschaft* for Liegnitz/Wuppertal discovered its existence in the courtyard of a Hamburg refinery. Suddenly, Arnim was elevated to the status of city emblem: because of the statue's unwitting survival, the exile community gloated, "Liegnitz may well be the only city in the German East that has rescued a monument from the *Heimat* city by accident, and the Arnim monument at that." Suddenly prized again, not for its original meaning but because of its tie to the old *Heimat*, the statue of Arnim was to return "in trust into the custody of the Liegnitz *Patenstadt* Wuppertal."[98] First set up on the front yard of a Liegnitz resident who lived in Hamburg (money was lacking to ship it), it was installed on the quiet residential *Görlitzerplatz* in Wuppertal amid great ceremony in 1962, then steadily forgotten again, so that today it appears to have as little or even less significance as in 1943. Though the *Heimat* bells will continue to ring until one day they crack, Arnim will stand far from the place where he fought his battles, far from the *Heimat* that a nearly extinct exile community once mourned, ultimately serving very little purpose at all, except for the many children who run

[98] Br. Enders u. Schneider, "Wuppertal/Stadt—Liegnitz/Stadt und Kreis ohne die Stadt Parchwitz (Schlesien)," in *Das West-Ostdeutsche Patenschaftswerk in Nordrhein-Westfalen*, ed. Alfons Perlick, 140-142 (Düsseldorf: Der

around the large playground recently built nearby. They enjoy jumping up on Armin's pedestal to chase around his oxidized green legs. Perhaps when they grow older, they will think back with fondness on the nameless old statue with the funny hat and sword, having fashioned memories that Wuppertal's exiles from Liegnitz would have never anticipated.

Conclusions: Reflections at the End of an Era

When I toured the various *Heimat* museums and spoke with their aged supporters, it felt at times as though I were an anthropologist in some remote corner of the world. I had discovered the last, dying remnant of a civilization that had once possessed unique cultural practices with encoded meanings. I had to write as quickly as possible, copy down their stores of material, before these last translators vanished, and what remained was the work of archeology. A few other scholars also catalogue what they can from the memory-laden expellee civilization in its sinking archipelago of deserted commemorative sites. A recent conference in Görlitz devoted itself to discussion of how to save the rich source material in these installations before they dissipate into obscure regional archives, cellars, or even the trash.[99] But the task may simply be impossible due to the very speed with which the last members of the expellee community are vanishing away.

So it is that the *milieux de mémoire* from the surrogate *Heimat* have entered into the final stages of dissolution. An old man whom I met at the 29th Bunzlauer *Heimattreffen* on May 31, 2008 assured me that his family still looked forward to these gatherings more than Christmas or Easter, but he is in the dwindling minority. The Silesian bakery in Goslar still makes treats from

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Wegweiser, 1961), 142.

[99] Bundesinstitut für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa, ed., *Dokumentation des Kolloquiums. Was wird aus den Heimatsammlungen? Zukunftsperspektiven für die historisch-ostdeutschen Heimatmuseen und Heimatstuben in Deutschland und die dort verwahrten Sammlungen und Archivsbestände* (Oldenburg: December 11-12, 2006). Though she had no recommendations about how to save expellee collections,

the old *Heimat*, but neither the active bakers nor most of the clientele have any memory of Silesia as a German space– the commemorative role of this bakery and the city's *Patenschaft* served their purpose for the generations that needed a surrogate Silesian milieu in which they could meet and cope with loss. It was a crucial process for the sake of stability in Europe, and as will also be shown in chapter 7, by 1970 even some of the leadership had begun straying from active territorial revisionist rhetoric, especially at smaller gatherings. The expellees they "served" had already generally given up what revisionist plans they might ever have had over the preceding decades. For them, *Heimat* gatherings had formed a communal aspect in their healing process after the loss of the East, and now as the expellees die out, this process draws to a close. The milieus pass away along with the context of healing, leaving only artifacts. As recently as June 2006, Elisabeth Lenz could no longer bear to plan any further gatherings for her old expellee friends, which she had been helping to organize since 1971. "Many of our villagers are actually dead or couldn't make the long trip anymore," she reflected, "so I've given it up."[100]

Elisabeth Fendl emphasized that those which yet survived should receive extensive documentation as "important evidence of the memory culture of the expellees." See her "Heimatstuben aus volkskundlicher Sicht," in ibid., 58.

[100] Elisabeth Lenz to Andrew Demshuk, January 21, 2008.

CHAPTER 6

TRAVEL TO THE LAND OF MEMORY:

HOMESICK TOURISTS IN POLISH SILESIA

On November 16, 1956, newspaper reporters from across West Germany flocked to the Bavarian town of Amberg: six busses were setting off on the very first official tourist expedition to the former German eastern territories.[1] Amid a thaw in the Cold War, the Upper Silesian-born travel company owner Leo Linzer had encountered a representative from Poland's state-run Orbis travel company during his visit to Prague in 1955, and, through negotiations with the Polish government, the Orbis personnel had secured permission for the Linzer travel company to begin organizing group excursions to Poland.[2] Acting as a correspondent for his father's *Heimat* paper in Warendorf, Manfred Ludwig managed to climb aboard one of the packed busses for the historic, seven-day journey back to lands he had last seen as a youth. He was as keen as the other Silesian expellee participants who filled the busses to witness firsthand how the intimate spaces of *Heimat* had changed.[3] After lunch in Wrocław at the Hotel Monopol, the participants scattered to the sites of their old *Heimat* to spend the majority of their stay with relatives and acquaintances that they hadn't seen in over a decade.[4] Excitement gave way to sadness, however, when Ludwig finally reached his Silesian hometown of Reichenbach [Dzierżoniów]. Here he

[1] Limited official tourism to Poland from the DDR had already begun after East Berlin recognized the border in 1950. For an official trip typically dominated by the SED political position, see a visit of nine representatives from the Free German Trade Union (FDGB). Günther Erxleben, *Über die Grenzen hinweg: Deutsche Aktivisten sahen das neue Polen* (Berlin: Die Freie Gewerkschaft Verlagsgesellschaft, 1950). Alongside other international cultural leaders, some German intellectuals had also been allowed to visit Wrocław in August 1948 for the International Congress of Intellectuals in Defense of Freedom.

[2] Detlef Linzer, interview with Andrew Demshuk, June 20, 2008. Detlef Linzer, ten years old in 1956, learned from his father about the first excursion, accompanied later trips, and succeeded as head of the company. He continues to facilitate German travel to Poland and many other regions around the world.

[3] Editorial staff, "Nach über 10 Jahren besuchsweise in Reichenbach," *Hohe Eule. Heimatblatt für Stadt und Kreis Reichenbach (Eulengebirge)* 5, no. 52 (December 1956), 3.

[4] Linzer's busses reached Poland via Czechoslovakia. Each traveler received a Polish picture I.D during lunch in Wrocław. Ibid., 4.

experienced an "eerie sensation" (*ein unheimliches Gefühl*). Though "the silhouette of the city doesn't betray any changes," a stroll along the streets of the *Heimat transformed* revealed a drastic alteration: storefronts alive in memory appeared decayed and were incomprehensible due to Polish inscriptions, the streets were filled with foreigners who lived in a different world.[5] For Ludwig as well as other travelers, "homesick tourism" (*Heimwehtourismus*) both alleviated and aggravated their gnawing curiosity and profound sense of displacement. They catalogued the current state of the old *Heimat* with painstaking detail, and the changes proved to them the futility of laying physical claim on their former homes. As the expellee leadership was well aware (and feared), travel facilitated a confrontation with loss through the most tangible proof possible: the homesick tourists witnessed real people building up Polish Silesia on the fading traces that remained of the *Heimat of memory*.

It is the goal of this chapter to show how and why homesick tourism became the most intense and ultimately effective means of dislodging lingering fantasies about return. By widening the gulf between the *Heimat of memory* and *Heimat transformed* in the minds of most travelers, the emotionally demanding journeys back to Silesia brought homesick tourists to a new point of maturity in their lifelong search to heal their sense of loss. In general, they were already aware before debarking that the *Heimat* had transformed with the passage of time; however, nothing could prepare them for the actual experience, which shattered any remaining illusions and forced them to digest the reality that Silesia could never again be what they remembered. Indeed, travel even had potential to help them to attain a new threshold: the desire to explore the new meanings in Polish Silesia, to come to know the new residents, to take part in Silesia as guests in a world that could never be theirs again but somehow remained their homeland.

[5] Manfred Ludwig, "Das ist unsere Heimat heute," *Hohe Eule. Heimatblatt für Stadt und Kreis Reichenbach (Eulengebirge)* 5, no. 52 (December 1956), 6.

Active interaction with the painful past became the defining characteristic for homesick tourists.[6] When they walked through the changed surroundings of their former *Heimat*, expellees valued sites in personal ways that were often indifferent, even hostile to the politicized interests of the Polish leadership (which reinvented Silesia as an eternally Polish province with timeless Polish meanings), as well as those of the German expellee leadership (which wanted travel to inspire revisionism rather than mourning over intimate traces). This is in keeping with Michel de Certeau's more general theory that, when modern observers look past what those in power expect from physical sites, "what is seen can also designate what is no longer there, only lived in memory. The absences only hint at what is a very personal memory, known 'just between you and me.'"[7] By envisioning the spaces of the old *Heimat* in intimate ways and rejecting the meanings that leading myth-makers on both sides proposed, expellees behaved in a manner that speaks to the recent turn toward assessing tourists in general as active individuals rather than units in a passive group of consumers.[8] In the context of the East Bloc, scholars have recently shown that, while communist regimes meant for tourism to reinforce meanings that served the civic and national state, "there were limits to the capacity of these regimes to control what

[6] Homesick tourism contrasted with conventional West German tourism to sunny escapes along the Mediterranean, which in many respects meant a flight from the past. However even here, Alon Confino shows that escape tourism had potential to facilitate a means of touching on the past, as when *Wehrmacht* officers showed their wives the sites where they had served during the war or when tourism brought back memories of "good times" during the Third Reich. See "Traveling as a Culture of Remembrance: Traces of National Socialism in West Germany, 1945-1960," *History and Memory* 12 (2000): 92-121.

[7] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Randall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 108.

[8] See for instance Rudy Koshar's attack in *German Travel Cultures* (Oxford, Berg Publishers, 2000) against John Urry, who hypothesizes in *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London, Sage Publications, 1990) that tourists are merely pleasure-seekers trying to escape the everyday, looking for new novelties. Diane Koenker demonstrates that, even in the Stalinist Soviet Union, a lack of consensus about normative tourism by the regime's institutional activists gave proletarian tourists space to form their own meanings, to follow their own routes, and so undercut state intentions. See her "The Proletarian Tourist in the 1930s," *Turizm. The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism*, ed. Idem. and Anne Gorsuch, 119-140 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 120.

tourists did and what meanings they took from their travels."[9] Indeed, though early expellee tour groups were supposed to be led by a Polish guide and observed by the secret police, travelers tended to find surprising freedom to venture off on their own and revisit the places they had come from.

Forging meanings outside of what official narrators intended, independent travelers had potential to translate a new system of knowledge, presenting their interpretations of "the transformed *Heimat*" through stories and photographs that helped to fashion a different image of the region in the minds of expellee audiences back home.[10] It should be borne in mind that this often took on shades of meaning derived from older stereotypes about the East. As Larry Wolff has shown, travelers' negative depictions of the East as exotic, dirty, and inferior to the West date back well into the time of the Enlightenment.[11] Because expellees usually ignored both the legacy of German atrocities (notably against Silesia's former Jewish population) and the role of the German-led war in devastating the East and uprooting the Polish settlers who later arrived in Silesia, they often relied on old bigotries when first interpreting how the old *Heimat* had changed. But over the course of the trip itself many expellees began to confront this mindset.

Surprisingly little has been done to assess the dramatic transnational importance of the West German expellee passage over two barriers (the DDR and Polish borders) during the most tense years of the Cold War to roam the lands they had once inhabited; indeed, apart from Mateusz Hartwich's forthcoming dissertation about the history of tourism in the Lower-Silesian

[9] Diane Koenker and Anne Gorsuch, Introduction, in *Turizm*, 14.
[10] This bears similarity to how European travelers in early-modern times conveyed their interpretations of distant corners of the world. For more on how such systems of knowledge were translated and conveyed through travel in earlier contexts, see Harry Liebersohn, *The Traveler's World: Europe to the Pacific* (Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press, 2006) and Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
[11] Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 6.

Riesengebirge region,[12] virtually all analysis has constrained itself to a few widely published travel reports (usually disseminated with the blessing of politically motivated leaders). Markus Krzoska breaks ground on the subject by comparing a few of the heavily published accounts; but one must revise and expand upon his simple conclusion that the travelers were merely very different from one another and evinced unsatisfactory engagement with Poles.[13] From a broad source base of *Heimat* periodicals, small published accounts, archival materials, and private journals, this chapter will show that in fact homesick tourists tended to share comparable stages in a process of dealing with loss, in which Poles often played an important role.

Our journey with the homesick tourists will set off by exploring the early desire among exiles to tour the lands of memory when the border was hermetically sealed. Unshakeable curiosity about lost spaces during the early 1950s stimulated some to undertake the journey later on, no matter how painful the experience might be, and despite the tremendous hassles and fears that often barred any venture for years. This will bring us to the middle section, the very heart of the chapter, where we will engage in a thematic analysis of how the compressed experience of travel facilitated the process of coping with loss during the fifteen years before the signing of the 1970 Warsaw treaty. Though expellees of diverse backgrounds ventured back into the old *Heimat*, and though conditions in both West Germany and western Poland changed significantly over time, the travelers' common history in a province now Polish tended to yield comparable points of reflection which steadily built up the healing realization that the old *Heimat* no longer existed in Silesia. This led the way to an emotional moment before departure when expellees

[12] Mateusz Hartwich, "Wahrnehmung und Erfahrung der Riesengebirgsregion. Eine Untersuchung zur deutsch-polnischen Beziehungs- und Verflechtungsgeschichte anhand von touristischen Publikationen nach 1945," www.hartwich.pl (accessed July 24, 2009).
[13] Markus Krzoska, "Das deutsche Bild von den ehemaligen Ostgebieten und von Polen in Reiseberichten der fünfziger und frühen sechziger Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Die Quarantäne. Deutsche und österreichische Literatur der fünfziger Jahre zwischen Kontinuität und Neubeginn*, ed. Edward Białek and Leszek Żyliński, 355-375 (Wrocław: ATUT, 2004).

often wished a formal farewell to the lands that had grown so different from the *Heimat* in which they still resided in memory.

After our excursion through Silesia, we will return with the homesick tourists to their new *Heimat* in the West and witness the profound influence which their tales exercised on the larger expellee community. As some travelers could attest, the travel reports they heard in the West inspired them to undertake the transformative experience for themselves (something which yielded many thousands of journeys when the border became more porous after 1970). Manfred Ludwig returned many times over the coming months, and many who read his reports felt prompted to follow. Just as often, the grim imagery common in travel reports discouraged expellees from ever going back to a place that could disturb their pleasant memories. Both responses helped to prepare expellees to react with resignation when at last the West German regime recognized the Oder-Neisse border in 1970, a result that the expellee leadership had feared and tried without success to prevent by discouraging travel or manipulating what they saw as the lesson to be learned from the reports. We will conclude then by sketching the snowball effect that travel reports had on inspiring further journeys after 1970, when loosened restrictions allowed many more expellees to set off on their own as homesick tourists in Silesia.

1. Travel Interest among West German Expellees before the mid-1950s

"What would you do if you had a magic hat?" When a West German elementary school teacher asked her twelve-year-old students to respond to this question in 1952, she expected them to write about stealing a leprechaun's pot of gold, and indeed some of the cockier students wrote of how they would use their magic powers to "annoy all the people on the street, and none of them could do anything to me." But while reading the usual fantasies of native West German

children, the teacher was shaken by the vivid desires among expellees. A boy from Silesia reenacted his flight seven years before in reverse, writing:

> I would put on the magic hat so that I would be invisible. Then I would travel to Berlin and then to Görlitz. In Görlitz I would go over the border and travel to Hirschberg. Here I would look upon my *Heimatstadt*, go into the *Riesengebirge* mountains and look for other sites from my memory.

For another expellee student, yearning for lost traces also meant interest in the changed *Heimat*'s contemporary culture: "First I would want to go into our home and see what is still inside, if the Poles are still there and how they live (*wie sie hausen*). Then I would go to my grandparents' farm. Above all, I'd like to see if the beautiful horses are still there."[14] Exercising their imaginations, expellee children dreamed of finding closure through a very specific excursion that could satisfy their gnawing curiosity about what the *Heimat* had become. At the height of Cold-War Stalinism, when stringent border controls prohibited any physical connection with the old *Heimat*, they looked to the East and set their goals.

The preceding three chapters have shown that expellees often shared their intimate knowledge of Silesia's destruction; a pervasive yearning for further information fueled the great lengths that expellees went to after 1956 in order to realize the dream of returning to the old *Heimat*. While children dreamed of returning to the land of childhood, adults yearned to walk the fields they had plowed, to wander the marketplace where once they had met friends and earned a livelihood. As the editors of the popular bimonthly magazine *Revue* observed at the time, expellees wanted to know whether "the linden tree still stands at the edge of the village pond," whether "the image of great-grandfather still hangs in the church." In essence, each expellee wanted "to hear something that has to do with his personal *Heimat*." Far from comprising a nationalized, far-reaching terrain, this *Heimat* usually proved to be "a territory often not larger than a pair of square kilometers, not further than a child can see from the roof of the local

church."[15] With this expectation, *Revue* sent undercover reporters into Silesia in 1952 and, also drawing from hundreds of collected letters from Germans still in the old *Heimat* and interviews with those that had recently left, produced a half-year-long series of reports describing the present state of the lost East. An unanticipated flood of response mail testified to the overwhelming interest. With apparent frustration, the editors complained that, "for the life of us, it's not possible to answer all these individual questions," be it one of the countless inquiries of whether *Revue* would also report about the reader's own home village, or a more specific request such as whether "the Jesuit church in Glogau is still standing."[16] More than the paper editors had fathomed, expellees still felt ties to the intimate spaces of the past and wanted answers about what the *Heimat* had become.

For all their curiosity, expellees knew on some level that greater knowledge of the *Heimat*'s transformation would prove painful. For one thing, they anticipated sadness should they ever enter the memory-laden spaces that they were barred from inhabiting again. When an expellee received a greeting card from a friend who had managed to travel to Görlitz in 1950 and mount the *Landeskrone*, a great hill on the DDR's border with Poland, he imagined looking out with him onto the forests, fields, and hills of the old *Heimat*: "taking leave (*Abschied*) of this image would hit us hard," he realized, to the point that he might well "become sad and disheartened at the sight of the homeland whose regions we cannot access."[17] Compounding this sense of alienation, as *Revue* observed, was the fact that expellees already knew that their *Heimat* was

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[14] Stefan Eich, "Schau heimwärts Vertriebener! Ostdeutsche Heimat heute. Ein Bericht über Schlesien, Ost-Brandenburg, Pommern, Westpreußen Danzig und Ostpreußen," *Revue* 25 (June 21, 1952), 2.
[15] Idem., "Schau heimwärts Vertriebener! Schauprozeß der Frauen," *Revue* 33 (August 14, 1952), 14.
[16] "Ostdeutsche Heimat-heute," *Revue* 30 (July 26, 1952), 2.
[17] E., "Ein Gruß von der Görlitzer Landeskrone," *Schlesischer Gottesfreund. Kirchenblatt der evangelischen Heimatvertriebenen* (June 1950), 29.

> dead, demolished, smashed, deformed by new ideas. Perhaps couch grasses really grow on the fields of the *Heimat*. Perhaps a *Sowchos* rose up where the village once stood. . . . Perhaps an oil derrick, a massive administration building, a blast furnace, a barracks camp, a state combine rise up on the place around which he continues to entwine such tender memories.

The editors concluded that this physical transformation of dear spaces comprised "the true tragedy of the expellees."[18] It prompted Franz Bollmann from Baden to write to *Revue*: "the image that you represent is so shocking that we ask ourselves how one day it could ever be restored again."[19] By 1956, an expellee who had published a serialized, nostalgic account of his hikes through the countryside of prewar Silesia in the *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* concluded in despair that "unfortunately the catastrophe of our German East, which we experienced in 1945, destroyed much that had been dear to us. Today we still don't know how we will find [what was] once our *Heimat*, but much of what was destroyed remains irretrievable forever!"[20] That same year, limited travel to Silesia started to bring such anxious readers vivid evidence of how "destroyed" the former, now imagined world had become in the years since they had last seen it.

Aware that the *Heimat* was changed, some expellees went so far as to take measures into their own hands to acquire knowledge of personal spaces, however painful it might be. On March 15, 1947, Georg Basler wrote to the Poles now living in his house in Wrocław, pressing them to convey

> how my beautiful house looks, and my beautiful garden, and everything else too. My beloved wife put all her efficiency into my property, she worked from dawn to dusk so that everything would be beautiful. Could you tell me if the house is damaged?[21]

Could the Poles please tell him if everything was still as pristine as he remembered it? Could they please reassure him that, despite his own better sense, time could possibly have stood still?

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[18] Couch grasses are an invasive weed, which farmers knew were hard to uproot. A *Sowchos* was a mass farm run by the state, symbolic of the new Communist order. Eich, "Schau heimwärts Vertriebener!" *Revue* 33 (August 14, 1952), 14.
[19] Franz Bollmann, "Ich könnte immer weinen...," *Revue* 30 (July 26, 1952), 24.
[20] L. R., "Meine Wanderungen im Kreis Lüben," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 8, no. 16 (August 25, 1956), 252.
[21] Georg Basler to Herr Kurnitza, March 15, 1947, Beuel am Rhein, in "Breslau: Materialsammlung," ed. Herbert Geisler (Stiftung Schlesisches Museum zu Görlitz. 2005-125), 250.

If Basler did receive a response to his letter, it surely revealed that all was not as he had left it, that indeed it was now owned and shaped by the Poles to whom he wrote. However much expellees treasured and yearned to preserve the *Heimat of memory*, their common urge to hunt down knowledge of its state in reality before 1956 presaged the much broader coping with loss that resulted when travel became possible. As the first handful realized the long-held dream to travel back to the land of their roots, a wide pool of expellees toured the *Heimat* vicariously by listening to stories and reading reports. The thirst for knowledge about the lost *Heimat* continued to increase.

2. Methods of Coming to Terms with Loss through Travel, 1955-1970

"Everything is permitted, you're just not allowed to get caught!"[22] This was the "tested travel tip" which the 1957 issue of *Heimat und Glaube* gave its readers for visits to Silesia. Though disrespectful of the current inhabitants, this blithe "advice" points to the general enthusiasm that arose when, by the mid-1950s, a thaw in the bipolar world order gave West German expellees their first real chance to experience contemporary Silesia. "When you go walking in Breslau," the travel tips continued, "pay attention on the sidewalks not to fall over debris from buildings or ruins or [to fall] into covered holes over sewers!"[23] Through such morbid humor, the tips foreshadowed the changes that awaited each potential traveler as, from 1956 onward, tens of thousands of expellees found themselves immersed in surroundings that compelled the painful realization that what had been was no more.

Though the period after 1970 involved far greater travel opportunities, the earlier phase is of much greater relevance to this study's cultural response to the political question of why West German expellees integrated into their new environment rather than actively seek to move back

[22] R. G., "Reisetips für Touristenreisen nach Schlesien," *Heimat und Glaube* 9, no. 10 (October 1957), 4.

to the lands that had once been theirs. Lack of clarity about the border's future before 1970 had potential to color each travel experience with a political meaning. Was it not reasonable to believe that those who showed enough energy to travel back might also have possessed the energy and devotion needed to colonize as well? That almost every traveler took on a sense of resignation and ultimately bid farewell to the old *Heimat* amid their excursion, and that readers back home showed similar resignation, conveys a trend of dramatic political importance in an era when revisionist demands by the expellee leadership singularly failed to foment an active desire to return to the lands that expellees still yearned for in their memories.

Two profound changes altered the flow of information from Silesia in the mid-1950s. First, as discussed at the end of chapter three, about half of the roughly 300,000 Germans remaining in the former eastern territories ultimately left for the two German states. Until then, dejected experiential accounts from the minority still living in the former *Heimat* had offered expellees in the West the majority of information about the world they had left behind. Though the events of 1956 alleviated the stifling polonization campaign that had sought to eradicate all German language and culture in the region, Germans in Silesia still tended to feel imprisoned in intimate spaces that had grown foreign around them; ceaselessly demanding the right to leave, the German remnant was abandoning the old *Heimat*. When in July 1957 the last German family left a Silesian village, Erwin Heller shared some final images of decay and foreignness with his former neighbors and bemoaned that "no one will ever be able to report to us about our old Jeschkendorf again."[24] In fact, as these on-site accounts dwindled, they were rapidly replaced by travel reports, which constituted the second new development. Driven by homesickness, curiosity, and the ardent desire to see acquaintances, West Germans entered into a convoluted

[23] Ibid., 4.

application process that just might facilitate a privileged return to the "soils of *Heimat*" after at least a decade's absence. Unlike the perception of those that had experienced gradual change in Silesia, returning travelers were usually shocked by changes and more likely to notice and be noticed by Silesia's Polish settlers.

There is a general perception in Germany today that travel to Poland was uncommon in the 1970s, to say nothing of the 1950s. Indeed, when I started my research, I was often warned that travel reports would be hard to find. Nothing could be further from the truth. While a veritable flood of expellees crossed over into the old *Heimat* after 1970, a surprising multitude showed enough tact and tenacity (not to mention luck) to get into Silesia during the fifteen years before the Treaty of Warsaw.[25] The consulate division of the Polish military mission at 42 *Schlüterstraße* in West Berlin (which in the absence of a formal consulate handled West German entry visas) received over nine thousand visa requests in 1956.[26] The Polish state travel company Orbis expected 24,000 foreign visitors for the 1957 travel season, 3,000 of whom were to be West Germans traveling to the eastern German territories (exceeding even the 2,000 exiled Poles in the United States who wished to visit their acquaintances).[27] As one *Heimat* paper editor reflected amid the excitement surrounding the first trip in November 1956, "there is a general,

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[24] Erwin Heller, "Die letzte Erinnerung an Jeschkendorf," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 21 (November 10, 1957), 335.

[25] Even the Polish prime minister Cyrankiewicz retrospectively told West German television interviewers directly after the signing of the Warsaw Treaty in 1970 that "before now there was tourism, even if not to a great extent. . . . Doubtless it has already often occurred that guests from the Federal Republic of Germany came to us in the Western Territories" in order to visit their former houses or property. Cyrankiewicz also used his interview for the politically useful purpose of warning Germans and Poles of the alleged dangers of West German revanchism: allegedly expellees were using their visits as an opportunity to scope out their former property and plan for their return; despite this mistaken impression of expellee motives, it is noteworthy that he explicitly recognized the previous importance of prior travel. See "8. Dezember 1970. Interview von Ministerpräsident Cyrankiewicz mit dem Deutschen Fernsehen," in *Die Verträge der Bundesrepublik Deutschland mit der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken vom 12. August 1970 und mit der Volksrepublik Polen vom 7. Dezember 1970* (Bonn: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, March 1971), 312-313.

[26] Rudolf Heinrich Appel, "Reise in die alte Heimat," *Zeit und Bild: Frankfurter Rundschau am Wochenende* (December 8, 1956).

[27] "Dreitausend Deutsche reisen nach Ostdeutschland," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no. 7 (1957), 4.

primordial *Heimat*-feeling in each person to see their *Heimat* again after so many years, that piece of earth from their childhood," and this, he reasoned, would lead many expellees to book passage on the next group trips.[28] That same month, Elfriede Hoppe expressed excitement in her husband's pastoral letter, alerting the faithful that, for 250 DM per week, it was now possible to visit Silesia via tour bus and even "in your own car," and she ended offering that "whoever wants to know anything else should contact us."[29] As Hoppe observed, expellees had a variety of methods for travel at their disposal after 1956; we will now examine what such travel required and how it functioned before assessing how travel facilitated coping with loss.

Group excursions organized by West German travel companies offered expellees the easiest means to tour the old *Heimat*. After the first, week-long venture in November 1956, Leo Linzer organized two-week group tours of the former German eastern territories at a cost of 320 DM per person (including room and board in addition to a nineteen DM visa fee) every two to three weeks, at times sending special trains filled with expellees.[30] By February 1957, travel companies were regularly sending hundreds of expellees into Poland, many seeing their old homes and speaking with Polish residents.[31] Each trip required a travel passport and five photos, and the application deadline came four weeks before the beginning of each trip.[32] Due to his preexisting ties with the Czech tourist industry, Linzer's busses always traveled through Czechoslovakia to reach Wrocław for lunch on the second day. From here, expellees were then allowed to disperse to visit with relatives and acquaintances from the third through the twelfth days. The whole group usually met to tour Kraków on the thirteenth day before departing from

[28] Editorial staff, "Nach über 10 Jahren besuchsweise in Reichenbach," *Hohe Eule. Heimatblatt für Stadt und Kreis Reichenbach (Eulengebirge)* 5, no. 52 (December 1956), 3.
[29] Elfriede Hoppe, *Wohlauer Rundbrief* 32, November 1956, EZA Z 1004, 5.
[30] Detlef Linzer to Andrew Demshuk, April 29, 2008.
[31] Regierungsoberamtmann Günther, Paßkontrolldirektion to Bundesminister des Innern Referat VI B 5, "Touristenreisen in die Ostblockstaaten," Koblenz, February 7, 1957, BAK B 137/1298.

Wrocław for Czechoslovakia on the fourteenth day.[33] Linzer advertised heavily in *Heimat* periodicals and on the covers of published travel accounts, thereby expanding awareness of the travel opportunity to interested expellees across West Germany.[34] As will be discussed in this chapter's third section, though the ads for travel were usually well-received, certain *Heimat* paper editors sought to suppress or even write against them, fearing that travel was diminishing desire for territorial restitution. Such opposition could not hinder the spread of travel prospectuses to the former German East among competing companies in Munich, Warendorf, Essen, and Hannover by 1957, a trend that had expanded still further by 1967. In some instances, it even became possible for travelers to follow busses in their cars and then travel to their own destination upon crossing the Czech-Polish border.[35]

Three forms of justification could allow expellees to return for private, relatively uninhibited journeys: visiting acquaintances, tourism, and business trips. In addition to the often laborious and unsuccessful attempt to secure an entry visa through the Polish military mission in West Berlin, travelers always needed a transit visa for Czechoslovakia or (what was often harder to obtain) the DDR. Of course, circumstances changed over time. As of 1967, receipt of a Polish entry visa also required the purchase of a hotel certificate for thirty DM per day, though travelers

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[32] Editorial staff, "Nach über 10 Jahren besuchsweise in Reichenbach," *Hohe Eule. Heimatblatt für Stadt und Kreis Reichenbach (Eulengebirge)* 5, no. 52 (December 1956), 3.
[33] "Reisen nach Schlesien und Oberschlesien," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no. 3 (1957), 3.
[34] Taking just the example of the Bunzlau *Heimat* paper, see Advertisement, *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no. 3 (1957), 14; Reisedienst Leo Linzer Amberg/Opf, "Reisen mit Bus," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no. 5 (1957), 16; Reisebüro Leo Linzer, "Reisen in die Tschechoslowakei und Polen," "Reisen in die Heimat. Was ist alles bei der Fahrt in die besetzten Ostgebiete zu beachten?" *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no. 6 (1957), 16; and so on in almost every issue. For a Linzer ad printed on a published travel account, see Karl Lerch, *Jenseits von Oder und Neiße: Wie sieht es im deutschen Osten aus? Bilder und Berichte aus Niederschlesien, Oberschlesien, Ostpreußen, Westpreußen, Danzig, und Pommern* (Tübingen: Verlag Südwest-Presse, 1957), cover advertisement.
[35] "Reisen in die Heimat," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no. 6 (1957), 14; "Reisen in die Heimat," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 16, no. 19 (1967), 4.

visiting acquaintances could exchange the certificate for Polish currency.[36] We will look at each of the three forms of justification in turn.

As early as 1955, it became possible for expellees to seek an invitation for travel from anyone still living in Silesia who could be construed as a relation; indeed, at times travelers manufactured acquaintances out of former neighbors who had very nearly been strangers. This was most common in Upper Silesia, since by the late 1950s the vast majority of the remaining pre-1945 population lived in this region. Having such connections also potentially eased practical considerations, as they could send a formal invitation (reducing the difficulty travelers faced in entering Poland), and they could register travelers with the local Polish militia so that they could receive a residence permit. Though this travel became relatively common, the Polish regime remained skeptical of travelers' motives and, for example, opposed alleviating heavy travel expenses for West Germans in 1964, because officially there were no Germans left in Polish Silesia for western relatives to visit.[37]

Ostensibly touristic purposes–such as hunting trips or stays at the Lower Silesian spas–gave many West Germans the excuse necessary to gain access to old *Heimat* spaces. Travel companies often helped individual expellees to arrange such trips and obtain the necessary paperwork. The 1956 Linzer trip included representatives from West German spa magazines. That same year, the Polish Orbis travel company sought to attract West Germans to visit the spas, and ten years later, in 1966, the Hessian press reported that Orbis had arranged half a dozen twelve-day tours to the spas around Kłodzko (formerly Glatz). As expellees on a spa tour

[36] Ibid., 4; "Reisen in die Heimat," *Grottkau-Falkenberger Heimatblatt* 19 (1967), 4. No mention was made of such a requirement in the detailed parameters that *Heimat* paper editors offered Upper Silesian readers in 1958. "Besuchsreisen nach Schlesien. Wegweiser für Einzelreisende," *Gleiwitzer und Beuthener Heimatblatt* 8, no. 1 (January 1958), 5.

[37] Rheker, Bundesminister für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und Kriegsgeschädigte to BMfG, "Besuchsreisen in die unter polnischer Verwaltung stehenden deutschen Ostgebiete. Verbilligung des Reiseaufenthalts nur für Deutsche, die dem Bund der Polen e.V. angehören," April 22, 1964, BAK B 137/1298.

lamented that decay that had overtaken the region, the Hessian press reporter knew that "the day will come when this beautiful piece of Silesian land fades in the memory of those who knew it, and it will hardly be identified by those who now see it for the first time."[38] Though Kłodzko later saw a great deal of renovation, especially after 1990, the reporter had prescient awareness of the special character of these early trips: old memories were still vivid, and more of the original traces remained that travelers might yet find familiar.

Individual travel was also possible when a Polish firm invited an expellee to come to Poland for professional duties. Most commonly, expellees used a visit to the international tradeshow in Poznań as a means to take the scenic route on the way back and see old *Heimat* spaces. Though attendance at Poznań usually required a convention identification card issued by a Polish trade representative, the prevalence of travel accounts made possible by the annual tradeshow demonstrate the relative ease with which expellees saw the *Heimat* once the event was over.[39] As further examples, Pastor Adolph Jesch was already able to return to the former German East in November 1955, due to his old connections with the Polish Protestant bishops Jan Szeruda and Karol Kotula.[40] The Upper Silesian-born reporter Rudolf Heinrich Appel managed to tour the old *Heimat* on the basis of his newspaper responsibilities before the end of 1956.[41] Wilfried von Rekowski traveled to Warsaw for a Quaker-sponsored conference in 1958 and managed to travel by train to see his hometown of Wohlau [Wołów] in Silesia on his first

[38] "Glatz, sein Bergland und seine Bäder: Zwölf Tage Aufenthalt in Bad Altheide, Wiedersehen mit der alten Heimat möglich," in *Heimat im Osten: Beilage der Oberhessischen Presse*, May 1966, BHI-PAS P0385 (Glatz before 1978). The sheer scale of travel to a place like Glatz continued to rise as the years passed. In 1970, 30,000 tourists, many of them expellees, visited the town's seventeenth-century fortress. *Die Welt* 32 Sept. 1970, BHI-PAS P0385 (Glatz before 1978).
[39] See for instance Dobimar von Kameke-Streckenhin, Travel Report for June 1957, November 1957, BAK B 137/1298, 1; Hans-Georg Schnee to BMgF, Lengerich, May 26, 1957, "Fahrt nach Westpreußen in der Zeit vom 6.6 - 22.6.57," BAK B 137/1298; Herbert Gröger to Andrew Demshuk (regarding his 1958 trip to Poznan and Silesia), December 3, 2007.
[40] Adolf Jesch to Oberkirchenrat Hanfried Krüger, December 14, 1955, EZA 6/7064.
[41] Appel, "Reise in die alte Heimat," *Zeit und Bild* (December 8, 1956).

free weekend.[42] Other professional duties allowed Rudi Kramer to report the condition of his old high school in Wrocław back to his former classmates in late 1959.[43] Particularly crafty expellees undertook travel via car to the USSR and used the requisite three-day transit visa for Poland as a means to see Silesia.[44]

Appel warned his fellow expellees that, though travel was now possible, they should "arm themselves with a little patience" if they wanted to cross the border into the old *Heimat*.[45] A cursory glance at background given in travel accounts and the pleas for help that reached the Federal Ministry for All-German Questions (*Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen*, BMgF), reveals that the costs, waiting times, and the border's openness varied widely from month to month and instance to instance. In the late 1950s, visa fees could range between three hundred złoty and three hundred DM, and waiting times could range between three and ten months, with outliers at both ends.[46] In an average case, an expellee interested in visiting relatives submitted a proposal stating his name, address, relation to those in Silesia, and reasons for the trip to the Polish military mission in 1957; after four weeks, he received three application forms with over twenty questions demanding further personal data, and after three more months he received permission to proceed to West Berlin to pick up a Polish visa that would be valid for

[42] Wilfried von Rekowski, Unpublished Travel Report (1958), 12; Wilfried von Rekowski to Andrew Demshuk, January 16, 2008.
[43] Günter Graumann, *Rundbrief der Vereinigung ehemaliger Lehrer und Schüler des König Friedrich-Gymnasiums zu Breslau* 2 (Easter 1960), 2.
[44] "Reisen in die Heimat," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 16, no. 19 (1967), 4.
[45] Appel, "Reise in die alte Heimat," *Zeit und Bild* (December 8, 1956).
[46] Bundesminister für gesamtdeutsche Fragen to Bundesminister des Innern and Bundesminister für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und Kriegsgeschädigte, "Paß- und Visumgebühren bei Reisen von Deutschen in die Ostgebiete des Deutschen Reiches z. Z. unter fremder Verwaltung, April 2, 1958, BAK B 137/1298; Anonymous, "Ein Blick in die Gebiete hinter Oder und Neiße," April 22, 1958, BAK B 137/1298, 4; "Reisen in die Heimat," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no. 6 (1957), 14. It is worth noting that this was less than Poles paid at the same time to travel overseas. When the Polish finance ministry increased the visa fee to 5000 zl for European lands and 7000 zl for overseas lands on January 19, 1958, there was a bitter reaction from the population and a week-long press campaign against it; finally the Interior Ministry lowered if back to 1000 zl for private travel from foreign lands and 500 zl for travel on economic and health grounds. "Polen vermindert die Paßgebühren," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 35 (February 11, 1958).

two months.[47] Sometimes, the capricious nature of border regulations demanded a sudden change in travel plans, as when a momentary ban on West German bus travel in July 1957 in the DDR and Czechoslovakia required some travelers to go to Poznań via train and then to Wrocław via a special bus.[48] In another instance, though Helmut and Irmgard Goebel had little difficulty with the Polish passport control officers, a seventy-five-year-old woman in the neighboring compartment had to empty her suitcase's contents onto the floor.[49] Whatever travail they met on the way, once they reached the old *Heimat* they could expect unfavorable prices, because the DM was usually given a 1:1 rather than a fair 1:5 rate of exchange with the złoty.[50]

Despite no shortage of difficulties, West German travel across the Oder-Neisse border continued to rise by 1960.[51] This trend was interrupted by the mid-1960s; though West German travel persisted, the Polish administration's obstructionism contributed to a decline in numbers.[52] The pause was only momentary, however: West German travel accelerated again through the late 1960s and then opened into a flood during and after the events of 1970. During travel, it was forbidden to photograph sensitive areas (such as military sites and railways); nonetheless travelers cumulatively took enough pictures for *Heimat* papers to begin reconstructing the

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[47] "Reisen nach Schlesien jetzt auch per Omnibus," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 2 (January 25, 1957), 32.
[48] West German traveler "Bericht über eine Reise nach Schlesien vom 23. Juli bis 1. August 1957," EZA 18/143.
[49] Helmut Goebel, "Bericht über meine 1. Heimfahrt nach dem Krieg," Unpublished Travel Report, September 4, 1959, 1.
[50] As of 1961, the currency exchange rate was 1 DM to 5 Zloty. Mulzer, Oberpolizeirat Präsidium der Bayerische Grenzpolizei to Bayersches Staatsministerium des Innern, Bayerisches Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz, Munich, "Mitteilungen von Reisenden," April 20, 1961, BAK B 137/1298. See also wst [Walter Stein], "Omnibusreisen nach Schlesien," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 5 (March 10, 1957), 69.
[51] "Reger Postverkehr über Oder-Neiße-Linie. Zahl der Pakete nimmt von Jahr zu Jahr zu," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 13, no. 2 (January 25, 1961), 22.
[52] However, at the same time, the SED's new ability to control population movement due to the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 actually made the border with Poland more permeable for DDR residents. Katharina Eisch, "'Doch die Erinnerung, die bleibt mir stets gewiß'. Bilder und Inszenierungen der verschlossenen Böhmerwald-*Heimat*," in *Zur Ikonographie des Heimwehs. Erinnerungskultur von Heimatvertriebenen*, ed. Elisabeth Fendl, 29-54 (Freiburg: Johannes-Künzig-Institut für ostdeutsche Volkskunde, 2002), 30-31; Dietmar Sauermann, *"Fern doch Treu." Lebenserinnerungen als Quellen zur Vertreibung und ihrer kulturellen Bewältigung, am Beispiel der Grafschaft Glatz* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 2004), 395; "Glatz, sein Bergland und seine Bäder: Zwölf Tage Aufenthalt in Bad Altheide, Wiedersehen mit der alten Heimat möglich," in *Heimat im Osten: Beilage der Oberhessischen Presse*, May 1966, BHI-PAS P0385 (Glatz before 1978).

contemporary appearance of whole towns. What one finds then is not a dearth of material about travel, but a staggering mass of information commensurate with the common expellee interest to learn of how Silesia had changed.

Each traveler's interpretation of loss was influenced by his or her unique life history and personal affiliation (political, religious, or otherwise), age, and the date of travel.[53] Past suffering as a Jewish victim or contemporary participation in rightwing territorial-revisionist movements naturally lent different shades to how expellees explained what had befallen the old *Heimat* and the ways in which travel influenced their shared need to cope with loss. And while the elderly were more likely to desire one last chance to see the old *Heimat*, expellee youth often felt inspired by their travel experience to undertake further visits, now more consciously as guests. To take as an example the presentiments of a geriatric, rightwing expellee interested in travel, it is instructive to look to the records of the BMgF, which became a clearing house to which old and embittered expellees alternately vented their grievances and begged for assistance so that they could travel back to see spaces that they still claimed as their own. At the same time that sixty-two-year-old Roman Gralla openly boasted to the BMgF that he was "certainly still legally the owner" of his old villa in his Upper Silesian *Heimat* Slawentzitz,[54] he also pleaded for financial and logistical help so that he might fulfill his "wish before I die to be able to sojourn once again in my rightful *Heimat.*" For all his nonchalance about past German imperialism and purported interest in reclaiming his lost property, he showed himself to be a wistful old man,

[53] My next major research project will devote more extensive analysis to the unique contributions afforded by the diverse backgrounds of travelers in postwar Silesia. An initial treatment has appeared in Andrew Demshuk, "'Wehmut und Trauer': Jewish travelers in Polish Silesia and the foreignness of *Heimat*," *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* (Dec. 2007): 311-335.

[54] The obvious Slavic roots in the name *Slawentzitz* had led the Nazis to rename it Ehrenforst, a name Gralla tried to favor in his letter, though he kept inadvertently using its traditional name.

desperate to find some sense of closure about the loss of his *Heimat* before he died.[55] In this way he was like many other aged territorial revisionists. As will be shown, once they had seen the *Heimat transformed* for themselves, even the most rancorous old expellees seldom made explicit plans to live there again.

The date of travel also influenced travelers' impressions, as they encountered Silesia at various stages of Polish reconstruction. The late 1940s had witnessed limited reconstruction of monuments, such as gothic churches in Wrocław that could be applied to attest to a much older, Polish past. Apart from heavy industrialization, the period of high Stalinism in the early 1950s had been dominated by neglect. As a result, over the first postwar decade, intact buildings had often been disassembled so that their bricks could be shipped out to aid in the reconstruction of Warsaw. At the same time that travel became possible in 1956, large-scale reconstruction work finally commenced to make the region feel more permanently Polish, a trend which accelerated as the 1960s progressed. So it is that, the later the date of travel, the more the travelers tended to take note of the Polish achievements in reconstructing the province as a Polish *Heimat*.

For all the differing personal and temporal circumstances that colored their interpretations, expellees responded to travel experiences in strongly comparable ways, because they all shared prior (if conflicting) knowledge of what Silesia had been before, and the mutual pain of its permanent transformation compelled a need to reconcile with loss. To chart how travel prompted dealing with loss, four common travel motifs will be emphasized which instilled the realization, even despair, that the *Heimat of memory* could never become reality in Silesia. First and foremost, painstaking documentation of physical change almost always provided the basis for coping with loss. The reflections this provoked were often taken to a new level through

[55] Roman Gralla to BMgF, November 22, 1964, BAK B 137/1298. Accustomed to such letters, the BMgF wrote back advising him to contact the Linzer travel company and limit political invectives in letters he wrote to relatives

interaction with the new Polish inhabitants or encounters with the remaining German minority. Finally, the previous moments (individually or in combination) had great potential to stimulate a final moment of bidding farewell to the old *Heimat* when the expellee returned "home" to the West. Through reflection at these specific junctures along the journey, expellees wrote of how the Silesia they had once known had been completely disrupted; reclamation (no matter what rhetoric the expellee leadership used about its necessity) was impossible, because the cherished artifact of memory could hardly be discerned in the changed reality.

Cataloguing Change and Continuity in Material Surroundings

Motivated by their devotion to the *Heimat of memory*, expellees trekked back to the holy sites of the family home, the town church, the cemetery, and other such intimate spaces that might provide continuity between the past and the present. In this manner, Georg Schroubek makes an apt analogy amid his examination of Catholic expellee religious sites when he reflects that a visit back to Silesia was like a "pilgrimage".[56] Those hoping to gaze upon the pristine sites still alive in their *Heimat of memory* quickly became disillusioned, however, for all that remained were trace relics from a bygone past. As Pierre Nora observes, and as the travelers themselves poignantly discovered, "illusions of eternity" once cherished at specific physical sites in Silesia could not withstand the drastic transformations of a turbulent time.[57] War and expulsion divorced memory sites from the traditions that had been given them by the original Silesian inhabitants; new settler communities at times invented new meanings for them, at times ignored them, and often removed them entirely. In the process of meticulously cataloguing the Polonization of father's shop or the gabled town square, in the midst of scrutinizing the ruins of a

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in Poland. Kanabas, Referat III b-1 to Roman Gralla, January 6, 1964, BAK B 137/1298.

[56] Georg Schroubek, *Wallfahrt und Heimatverlust. Ein Beitrag zur religiösen Volkskunde der Gegenwart* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1968), 249.

[57] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7-24.

familiar street corner, barn, or garden, travelers came to realize that the world they had known had slipped beyond their grasp; they internalized the reality that they were now strangers in what had once been an intimate *Heimat*. This sense of "*Fremd sein*", when they sensed their own status as "foreigners," became the foundation for coping with loss.

A West German passport official nicely summarized the scale of change that travelers confronted in 1957:

> many travelers examine their former property and converse with the contemporary residents. The inhabitants of the homes have most often changed many times, so that remnants of the earlier furnishings only seldom remain. Residential and commercial buildings are generally in bad condition, because there is no material for repair. New block apartment buildings are only found in the industrial regions, and these are admittedly solidly built even by Western standards.[58]

Eager to find the world they had known, expellees raced into Polish Silesia to find a world transformed. In their bitterness, expellees were seldom so quick as the detached official to attribute decay to a lack of materials, nor did they often admire the construction of modern buildings that had no tie to what they remembered. Although, as will be shown in the next section, interaction with contemporary residents could stimulate some empathy with circumstances in the new Poland (and this could bring a greater sense of closure and healing), expellees did not require a deeper understanding outside of their own narrow gaze in order to come to the first, startling realization that what they had known could never come back.

"For years one has waited for this moment," Herbert Schmidt wrote from his Polish train car in 1957, "now it is finally here." As was common in other expellee accounts, when the old Upper Silesian crossed over the Polish border in 1957, he was "overcome by impatience and nervousness": the altered names he saw at each station led him to wonder how his hometown would appear. He tried to remember the prewar names, but his memory failed him; before he

[58] Regierungsoberamtmann Günther, Paßkontrolldirektion to Bundesminister des Innern Referat VI B 5, "Touristenreisen in die Ostblockstaaten," Koblenz, February 7, 1957, BAK B 137/1298, 4-5.

ever reached his destination, he was starting to realize that the past was lost.[59] Helmut Goebel was so desperate to begin seeking for traces of continuity that, after reaching Wrocław via the evening train from Poznań, neither he nor his West German wife slept all night: they walked as many streets as they could, camera in hand.[60] In most accounts, the search for traces resulted in despair that so little remained which had once been familiar. In Upper Silesia, which had suffered less from destruction and population displacement at the end of the war, a traveler gave the typical description of change in the hometown in April 1956: the Poles had placed a "steel strip construction" of Warsaw's coat of arms on the pedestal that had once borne the monument for Frederick the Great (icons of Germanness had been replaced by Polishness), the Protestant church had become Catholic (the familiar confession had vanished), a technical school had moved into the old employment agency building (structures had shifted in their use), Gleiwitzer street had "a long gap between houses all the way to the town square," and the town hall was gone (many prominent buildings were irretrievably missing), so that there were now views of the city's church spires from neighborhoods where they once would have been blocked by buildings.[61]

If travelers to Upper Silesia found the shape of their *Heimat* entirely changed, how much more moving was the scene for expellees from Lower Silesia, which had suffered much severer destruction and depopulation. Change was so overwhelming for Renate Schortmann in 1962 that she entirely lost her bearings in her old *Heimat* village of Bernstadt [Bierutów]. The tower of the town hall stood alone, without a structure or peak, and all the surrounding buildings on the central square had vanished. Picking a street to walk away from the square, she found "only

[59] Herbert Schmidt, "'Ich war in Oberschlesierland, im schönen Heimatland.' So ist das heutige Gleiwitz– vor 700 Jahren von Deutschen gegründet," *Gleiwitzer und Beuthener Heimatblatt* 7, no. 8 (August 1957), 24-25.
[60] Helmut Goebel, "Bericht über meine 1. Heimfahrt nach dem Krieg," Unpublished Travel Report, September 4, 1959, 1.

cleared, empty sites in place of where homes once stood."[62] H.G. similarly reported in 1963 that, when she finally managed to fulfill her long-time wish to return to the Lower Silesian village of Ossig [Osiek], the change was so great that "I almost would have not recognized it again. . . . when we set off from home in 1947, twenty-seven buildings were destroyed. In the meantime, this has grown to forty-seven." Upon returning to West Germany, she needed consolation from her many *Heimat* friends, who helped to lighten their spirits, "because with the joy of seeing the *Heimat* comes a certain melancholy!"[63]

In addition to signs of absence and Polonization, travelers regularly lamented the "decay and filth" that, in their eyes, was representative of the changed, Polish culture which now governed the old *Heimat*'s fate (in place of what they fantasized as old Silesia's ostensibly "German" cleanliness and order). Writing to relatives who had left Lower-Silesian Liegnitz [Legnica] in 1950, an expellee who had traveled back in 1957 painted the image of a city utterly lost in "filth and more filth!" that had "actually gotten much worse." At the same time that whole neighborhoods fell down from chronic disrepair, he found that "cellars are filled with water, cellar windows are clogged with muck in summer and winter, the houses rot out from below and it rains in from above. The roofs and chimneys are all broken. The countryside is just like the city: everything is filthy."[64] This he wrote, apparently oblivious to the fact that, because the Russian military was headquartered in Legnica, the city had become divided along stark racial lines, which left the Polish districts particularly dilapidated due to the Polish distaste for living in the same city with the Russian occupiers. At roughly the same time, a traveler in Upper Silesia yearned to walk once again in the "beautiful" city of Oppeln [Opole] that "we have in our

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[61] "Eine Fahrt nach Beuthen OS. im April 1956," *Gleiwitzer und Beuthener Heimatblatt* 6, no. 9 (September 1956), 24.

[62] Renate Schortmann, "Bernstadt im Februar 1962," in *Geschichte der Stadt Bernstadt, 1266-1935, 1936-1965*, by Hermann Friedrich, expanded edition, 143-152 (Gelsenkirchen: H. Kunze oHG, 1965), 143, 152.

memory," but found instead that, because lack of funds prohibited the installation of filters on the surrounding smokestacks, the local cement factory had given "the surrounding area a gray, dirty, even dismal appearance," such that he concluded that "Oppeln is no longer the beautiful, green city of bridges on the Oder. . . . One strolls through the old streets as before, but the old friends are far away."[65] As more Poles moved into the city, as even the fence slats disappeared into "Polish" ovens, he feared that memories of Oppeln would dim, because the reality of Opole was dominated by absences that couldn't speak to the past, and because he feared expelled Oppelner living in West Germany might well forget the place they had come from as they were distracted by "the rays of sunshine in the economic miracle."[66] Even in "clean" natural landscapes, it was painful to witness change: on a group trip to the various Lower-Silesian spas in the mountains in the summer of 1959, T. K. observed: "we see familiar villages and cities. We are back home and yet not at home. 'One isn't allowed to think or feel,' said a voice near us, 'when one travels through the Silesian *Heimat*.'"[67]

Back in the once-familiar towns and villages, the overwhelming alien sensation was often accompanied by a sense of temporal displacement: time had gone backwards, and it was impossible to associate with a *Heimat* that remained trapped the primitive state that Germans were said to have left behind one hundred fifty years ago. It was hard enough for Max Cyrannek, now a postal worker in Hannover, to find that the "stately sandstone" post office in which he had apprenticed for two years in Lower Silesian Bunzlau [Bołesławiec] had been replaced by 1958 with a field and flowerbeds. Bunzlau had suffered a temporal reversion: the old school was

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[63] H.G., "Ein 'Ossiger' war jetzt daheim!" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 15, no. 23 (December 10, 1963), 361.
[64] "Unsere Heimat vertreckt und verkommt!" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 13 (July 10, 1957), 206.
[65] H. Bauer, "Meine Reiseeindrücke," HO 49-2 Oppeln nach 1945 Aufsätze und Zeitungsberichte, 1.
[66] Oppolonius, "Kreuz und quer durch das Opplen von 1957," HO 49-2 Oppeln nach 1945 Aufsätze und Zeitungsberichte, 2.

clogged with straw because it was now a barn, many homes had also become barns, the fields were fallow, and old decorations had been stripped away or turned to practical use. Roads that had been in good repair at the time of his grandparents were filled with holes, and the decorative wooden pump in front of his family home had been turned into the town well, a function it had not held in living memory. He left grateful to have seen the *Heimat* again, but also deeply disturbed by the realization that "under the current circumstances one could never have a sense of well-being again in the *Heimat*."[68] Such observations were not limited to Lower Silesia; a traveler in Upper Silesia in 1956 was shocked that the Poles were still using old busses "that would have been scrapped by us long ago,"[69] and travelers routinely showed amazement at the lack of traffic congestion on the roads.

Though they preferred to blame "Polishness," travelers occasionally also chose to identify communism as the cause for certain perceived problems in Silesia: high prices, inefficiency, and insecurity (most notably evinced by the bars which had appeared over many windows). In April 1956, the Upper Silesian traveler noted above wrote that in Beuthen [Bytom] only communist functionaries got to drive cars, and the market was regularly closed; few cars were to be seen, and a black market thrived on the streets. However, Polishness still received first-place for instigating change in this account, transforming Beuthen into an "ant hill" with unique districts for various Polish regional communities now settled there.[70] Communism (and what expellees saw as its inherent criminality) commonly received mention when travelers confronted an unmistakable icon from the Soviet Union. When the aforementioned traveler

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[67] T.K., "Tschechen und Polen fahren auf die Schneekoppe. In zwölf Minuten von Krummhübel auf die kleine Koppe. Im heißen Sommer 1959 wanderte man im Riesengebirge im Badekostüm," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 8, no. 19 (1959), 6.
[68] Max Cyrannek, "Im Taxi von Bunzlau nach Urbanstreben," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 8, no. 8 (1959), 5-6.
[69] "Eine Fahrt nach Beuthen OS. im April 1956," *Gleiwitzer und Beuthener Heimatblatt* 6, no. 9 (September 1956), 24.
[70] Ibid., 23, 24.

entered Beuthen's train station, he took notice that "two busts of Lenin and Stalin stood in the vestibule in front of red flags."[71] A year later, apparently oblivious to the recent anti-communist revolts in Poland, another traveler in Beuthen saw only a bust of Lenin in the station; never imagining that Stalin had recently been there as well, he attributed Lenin's presence before the red flags as part of an ongoing "year of Lenin," and associated the red color of the flags as cloth soaked in the blood of German martyrs during the Russian offensive of 1945.[72]

The pace of reconstruction increased in the 1960s, and the ruins were steadily cleared away. Though some cities (such as decimated Glogau [Głogów]) and many villages remained largely ruined and suffered ongoing decay, the Polish regime put sustained effort into restoring the historic heart of Wrocław and, to a lesser extent, some outlying towns; while travelers were irked by the Polish histories invented for the old buildings, they were also impressed by the Polish faithfulness to previous facades that they found lacking in West German reconstruction efforts, which sought modernity in place of recreating any historical feel. Meanwhile, high rises mushroomed at the periphery of industrial settlements, a trend comparable across much of the East Bloc. Entering into this atmosphere, expellees increasingly sensed that a foreign imprint had taken hold on once-dear spaces. By 1966, Annemarie Jelitto-Elbinger found that Breslau had become "a foreign city for those of us who knew this city before. Certainly in many ways rebuilt, it was depressing for us to find everything with Polish inscriptions."[73] In his 1967 photograph of Bunzlau, another expellee depicted an army of block apartments besieging the spire of the town's Catholic church; as the *Heimat* paper editor reflected, travelers visiting the old *Heimat* could no longer reminisce that these were "still the old streets, still the old houses," since "only

[71] Ibid., 26.
[72] J. M., Munich, "Beuthen OS. 1957. Reiseeindrücke," *Gleiwitzer und Beuthener Heimatblatt* 7, no. 9 (September 1957),
[73] "Falkenau Heute," *Grottkau-Falkenberger Heimatblatt* 23 (1966): 6.

the tower of the Catholic church still tells us that this is a photo of Bunzlau."[74] Frau Eberhard left Bunzlau and Liegnitz in 1964 with a similar sense that Polish settlers were giving new purposes to the spaces of memory. Even in her nearby home village, she discovered that "intimate houses and ways have vanished and been replaced by new, unknown ones." Site by site, she imagined how the contemporary Polish village contrasted with the rural idyll of her childhood:

> The estates of carpenter Hensel, Oskar Winter, Weinknecht, Blache's inn, Adelt's bakery, Trautmann, and Stielitz are gone. . . . Kügler is a collective bakery, barber Hänselt a shoe store. Beier's shop is an inn, Dr. Glatzel's is a Kindergarten, Hübner is a private bakery. The only meat shop is at Beer's. All the houses are inhabited, the fields are tilled, and even the gardens are ploughed up.

The Poles had taken possession of her former *Heimat*, driving an unbridgeable divide between the past and the present. Departing "with a heavy heart," she came to reflect: "I was in the old *Heimat* and yet also not, because a great deal has changed there."[75]

In so many accounts, the "leveling" of the cemetery proved one of the most incisive means through which expellees came to terms with the erasure, not only of the Silesia they had known, but also the Silesia which had been home to past generations. Annemarie Jelitto-Elbinger was "shaken" in 1966 to find the cemetery coated in weeds and bereft of tombstones.[76] With the soils vested with the bones of the ancestors lost to obscurity, nothing remained that could make her old *Heimat* what it had been before.

Entering into the changing atmosphere of Polish Silesia, an increasing number of travelers developed, not only a realization that the Poles were building over traces of the former Silesia, but also an interest in *what* the Polish settlers were building; they offered critiques and even praise for the new face of the old *Heimat*, and in so doing recognized that Silesia was fast becoming a Polish homeland, a place in which expellees could only take part as visitors. Despite his annoyance at Polish mythology about Oppeln's "thousand-year" Polish history and the

[74] "Blick von den 'Drei Kronen' in Richtung Marktplatz," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 16, no. 23 (1967), 6.
[75] Frau Eberhard, "Ein Besuch in Greulich," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 13, no. 5 (1964), 7-8.

removal of all German monuments, the expellee traveler "Oppolonius" was impressed by his hometown's new array of shops and restaurants. In his view, the town's remodeled theater even evinced a "exception wherein for once the Poles have achieved some good work. The interior is round and lined with balconies, the acoustics aren't bad." Indeed, the symphony orchestra and planned theater group impressed him greatly, not least as they planned to perform Schiller and Bernard Shaw in addition to Polish works.[77]

Returning to Lower Silesia in 1964, 1967, and 1969, the onetime anti-Nazi and active expellee-rights activist Günther Granicky was careful to differentiate between towns, emphasizing that, while war and expulsion had brought about great destruction, significant reconstruction was underway.[78] For example, he praised the transformation of Lüben [Lubin] from a sleepy county seat into a "modern industrial city" with copper factories:

> in the destroyed city center, numerous new residential and commercial buildings have been built, and at the edge of town, large construction sites give proof that here a new great residential quarter of the most modern (if also as in many other cities far too monotonous) form of construction is in the process of being built, which will serve to lodge the numerous new workers of this industrial region.[79]

Certainly he admired the rare occasion when the world of the past still shone through, as in Schweidnitz [Świdnica], which would appear unchanged "were it not for the Polish shop and street signs that color the facades of the old patrician houses around the market."[80] But though he asserted that "the evidence of centuries of German cultural and economic achievement cannot be

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[76] "Falkenau Heute," *Grottkau-Falkenberger Heimatblatt* 23 (1966): 6.
[77] Oppolonius, "Kreuz und quer durch das Opplen von 1957," HO 49-2 Oppeln nach 1945 Aufsätze und Zeitungsberichte, 1.
[78] Though born near Bonn in 1914, Günther Granicky spent his childhood and youth in Wohlau in Silesia. As a member of the SPD, he was labeled an "unsafe element" by the Nazi regime and was a low-level official in East Prussia until his expulsion, after which time he worked in West Germany as a government undersecretary (*Ministerialrat*), championed the rights of the expellees in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, and ultimately chaired an organization devoted to the integration of expellees and understanding with Poland. "Günther Granicky 75 Jahre," *Schlesischer Kulturspiegel* 3 (1989), BHI-PAS P0301. Granicky's predecessor as chairman of the *Ost- und Mitteleuropäischer Arbeitskreis* was the leading Social Democrat Wilhelm Matull, who undertook a trip of his own in 1975 to his native East Prussia. See his *Reise nach Ostpreußen, Westpreußen und Danzig* (Munich: Gräfe und Unzer, 1975).

obliterated from this land," it was nonetheless the case that "people of a different nation (*Volk*) live today in the cities and villages, a new generation already grows up, they give the land a new appearance, stamped from the German past and Polish present. Through achievement and fate (*Leistung und Schicksal*), Silesia has become *Heimat* for them, as it had been *Heimat* for us."[81] By observing the land's physical transformation, Granicky had come to realize that the old *Heimat* was buried in the past, built upon by a new Polish Silesia that would continue into the future.

Assessment of "what expellee travelers were looking for in the old *Heimat*" would not be complete without also examining what they were *not* looking for. Much as expellees almost always omitted the Nazi past and Jewish heritage from their *Heimat of memory*, so too did they return to Silesia at least outwardly oblivious to the atrocities which had saturated the region during the Third Reich, that is in the years which should have been freshest in each traveler's memory of the region.[82] Ubiquitous ruins and signs of decay were attributed to postwar destruction and neglect under foreign administration, and more occasionally "the war" (at times blaming Hitler as well, especially when war had caused German suffering). This skewed travel reports with a prevailing sense of German victimhood and, at least for many travelers in these early decades, it caused expellees to recognize the *Heimat*'s loss without much attention to German crimes that might have brought that loss about. Such blindness was presaged in 1950, when Alfons Paquet recounted a "travel" experience in Breslau in 1943. Featuring photographs

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[79] Günther Granicky, "Ein Reisebericht über *Schlesien—heute*," in *Schlesien Gestern und Heute: Eine Auswahl von Dichtungen und Berichten namhafter Autoren*, ed. Albrecht Baehr, 159-199 (Munich: Bogen Verlag, 1970), 165.
[80] Ibid., 188.
[81] Ibid., 199. Granicky was clearly more educated about Poland than most travelers, as for instance he recognized that the statue which had replaced Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm III on Wrocław's central square had previously stood in front of the Polish university in Lwów (now Ukrainian L'viv) and depicted Alexander Fredro, a famed Polish poet.
[82] Even when they leaned toward the right, Jewish reports were an exception to the prevailing blindness to Nazism. See Erwin Hirschberg, *Unser Schlesien heute: eine Reise in die Heimat* (Aachen: E. Hirschberg, 1955). After 1970, travelers steadily grew more willing to look at the German crimes.

of SA troops marching in their tall boots through the streets of his *Heimat*, and conspicuously silent about the ongoing tragedy of the Holocaust and other racial atrocities just over the border, Paquet presented himself as a harmless tour guide leading a visiting (Vichy) French soldier on a leisurely stroll through the placid metropolis, pointing out the gabled house that had belonged to his ancestors.[83] Nazism had no place in Paquet's 1950 reminiscences of travel in Breslau.

Sometimes the rare allusions to the Nazi era in travel accounts after 1956 arose as a way to revive old territorial claims. Though the rightwing expellee traveler Ulrich Blank claimed that discussion of the "Oder-Neiße problem" should never be viewed through "feelings of revenge, national superiority, and resentment," he regularly imbibed in casual nostalgia for the German imperialist past during his trip into "the German eastern territories and Poland" in 1957.[84] Ignoring the Nazi agency behind the ubiquitous signs of destruction, he felt no compunction against referring to outdated German border designations; in Schwerin [Skierzyna], he had arrived on the old "*Reichsgrenze*" from 1918, and he nonchalantly commented at one point that he was passing through *Wartheland* (the Nazi designation for a part of Poland annexed and brutalized in 1939).[85] There were even exceptional cases in which expellee travelers attributed Nazi crimes to Poles in order to demand that Germany should receive back the lost territories as compensation for the wrongs Poles had supposedly inflicted on poor Germans. Due to her "autochthonous" classification, Olga Pietrek only left Upper Silesia in July 1946, after what she remembered as terrible suffering; three trips back to the *Heimat* (1957, 1958, 1960) only strengthened her desire to punish the Poles. Using government ministers at the BMgF as an audience, she detailed how she had "traveled through these lands with open eyes and ears to raise

[83] Alfons Paquet, "Mein letzter Besuch, 1943," *Merian* 3, no. 3 (1950): 16.
[84] Blank published his account with support from the Lower Saxon minister for expellees, refugees, and war casualties in the service of revisionist political agendas. Ulrich Blank, *Zwischen Breslau und Danzig: Deutsche Heimat im Osten Heute* (Hanover: Fackelträger Verlag, 1958), 5-6, 7.

a sole plea for help."[86] Anxious to downplay Nazi crimes that had motivated the Polish response after the war, she demanded to know

> if murder is still murder when committed by a Pole. In Nuremberg, the Nazi criminals were judged. Who will judge the Polish murderers? . . . Has one forgotten the Germans murdered in concentration camps, the eastern Germans murdered in Polish concentration camps. The Poles, who call themselves Catholic, murdered, plundered, and robbed with the rosary in their hands and the name of God on their lips. For me as a Catholic this was terrible. There is no people that have offended God as the Poles, because they cover every injustice under the cover of alleged piety.[87]

Not even twenty years after the horrors of Nazism, a vindictive Upper Silesian with a Polish name extolled German politicians to take back the German East from Polish perpetrators in the name of German victimhood.

By contrast to Blank's explicit nostalgia or Pietrek's hate-filled inversion of history, allusions to the Third Reich in travel more often surfaced in apolitical comments which one would expect regarding an era so near to the past which had affected every German life. As a representative example, when Helmut Goebel visited a "very filthy and broken-down" Silesian village called Simsdorf [Szymanów], he made an offhand comment that of course this had been the place where he had guarded French prisoners after he was wounded as a soldier.[88] Another group of travelers noted that the Nazi barracks in Liegnitz were now in use by the Red Army.[89] As will be shown, by far the most regular demonstration of common knowledge about the Nazi past among travelers in pre-1970 accounts emerged when they interacted with the Polish settlers

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[85] Ibid., 10.

[86] The West German government ministers who helped to facilitate travel were themselves often implicated in Nazi crimes. Before taking on his postwar position as the federal minister for all-German questions (BMgF), Ottokar Chyla had been a member of the Heinlein SS and Sudeten-German Nazi party (SdP), eventually a Nazi bureaucrat in the Sudetenland and Bavaria. Because Chyla represented a government office pushing for a revision of the Oder-Neisse border, it was also natural that right-leaning travel narratives ended up on his desk, often sent by individuals with clear Nazi pasts. When the Upper Silesian Fritz Neukamm wrote to Chyla of his desire to travel in 1960, he made an offhanded remark that he had been "deputized" as a teacher in the conquered regions of East Upper Silesia during the war. Dr. Fritz Neukamm to Ottokar Chyla, Bundesminister für Gesamtdeutsche Fragen, "Urlaubsreisen nach Polen," June 4, 1960, BAK B 137/1298.

[87] Olga Pietrek to Vizekanzler Erich Mende, Bundesminister für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, January 9, 1964, BAK B 137/1298.

[88] Helmut Goebel, "Bericht über meine 1. Heimfahrt nach dem Krieg," Unpublished Travel Report, September 4, 1959, 1.

themselves, for here it very quickly became apparent that many Poles had learned to speak German while working "in Germany" (that is as slave laborers) during the "war years." Out of these discussions, some travelers started to see at last that the Poles had been victims too. Silesia's new inhabitants finally acquired a human face.

Stranded in Śląsk: Contact with Polish Settlers in the Old *Heimat*

When assessing how expellees dealt with the memory of expulsion, Dietmar Sauermann expresses skepticism that travelers in the old *Heimat* had much contact with Poles, theorizing instead that most travelers were more interested in engaging with landscapes that reminded them of what the *Heimat* once was.[90] Markus Krzoska likewise claims that, before 1970, expellee travelers shared "distance toward those they encountered, who were sometimes spoken of openly, sometimes expressed between the lines."[91] He concludes that new understanding between Germans and Poles had to wait for the second generation, for famed writers like Horst Bienek and Günther Grass, who he argues (writing before Grass's recent biographical confessions about his Nazi past[92]) had not actively taken part in Nazism. Certainly it is true that expellee travelers almost always devoted their greatest interest toward the physical traces of the world they had lost. Aware that they had been "replaced" by strangers, it should also not be surprising that, when expellees ventured back, they were predisposed to feel little connection with the Polish inhabitants. As one Upper Silesian traveler reflected as his train approached the old *Heimat*, what could the Poles on his train "know of the memories of youth, yearning, and love of *Heimat*? They cannot look into our souls; and if they could, we would defend it from

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[89] Lerch, *Jenseits von Oder und Neiße*, 58.
[90] Sauermann, *"Fern doch Treu,"* 437.
[91] Markus Krzoska, "Das deutsche Bild von den ehemaligen Ostgebieten und von Polen in Reiseberichten der fünfziger und frühen sechziger Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts," 375.
[92] Günther Grass, *Beim Häuten der Zwiebel* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2006).

them so that these holy sentiments could not be dishonored."[93] For all these presentiments, it is nevertheless the case that, over the fifteen years before the Warsaw Treaty, German travelers regularly came to know and at times even befriend Silesia's Polish inhabitants. The racism and mistrust that filled the accounts tended to shift at the moment when expellees made personal contact with Poles, often on their old property. Usually undesired at first, this impromptu interchange introduced a healing, human element on soils that had recently known such interracial violence.

As shown in the previous section, perceptions of "the Poles" during travel often fell back on old stereotypes and racial slurs. Before they encountered a Polish inhabitant in person, expellees were more inclined to attribute the destruction, decay, and inefficiency they found to innate qualities of Polishness, seldom appreciating at first glance that poverty prevailed in Poland due to social factors often beyond the settlers' control, or that uprooted, traumatized Poles had inherited a ruined Silesia in the aftermath of intense devastation that had followed the Nazi destruction of Central and Eastern Europe. Some of the worst bigotry filled the letters that reached Chyla's desk at the BMgF, wherein writers at times even went so far as to demand return to a place that they well knew had become too transformed to claim; bigotry hindered coping with loss. After his three-week trip to see relatives in Lower and Upper Silesia, Josef Schulz wrote to the BMgF in October 1957 insisting that any reconstruction in Upper Silesia took place thanks to what he saw as the innate efficiency of the remaining Germans, who were most heavily concentrated there (he was apparently unaware of Warsaw's interest in financing Upper Silesia's industrial potential). As a matter of course, he then cited classic racist presumptions that "it is known everywhere that the average Pole can't take care of his affairs (*nicht wirtschaften kann*)

[93] Herbert Schmidt, "Ich war in Oberschlesierland, im schönen Heimatland," *Gleiwitzer und Beuthener Heimatblatt* 7, no. 8 (August 1957), 24-25.

and, when he is left alone to mind his affairs and work, he won't be responsible with his time." According to this logic, the Poles themselves must want the Germans to return and govern them, because they could not take care of themselves.[94] Ulrich Blank was similarly unwilling to recognize the loss of a *Heimat* whose contemporary ruin and decay he derided as "shockingly foreign, one might even say Slavic."[95] Throughout his account, the Polish inhabitants swarmed about his Volkswagen as faceless nuisances. When on one occasion a single inhabitant did enter his gaze, he chose merely to exchange propaganda; the Pole complained that Germans snooped around as though the land was theirs, and Blank responded by describing the region's eternal Germanness. Incredulous that any Pole could learn to speak proper German, he decided that the man must have been a "polonized German."[96] For Blank, a man who could speak and reason simply could not be a Pole.

For all the bitterness and propaganda that blinded a few travelers from truly interacting with the Polish inhabitants, and despite the fact that travelers in general were far more interested at first in cataloguing traces from the past than in "wasting time" with the current residents, they tended to respond positively after entering into conversation with the Poles that they met, and at the very least they left with the impression that their new acquaintances worked hard to survive under a difficult system. Taking as a departure point the profound change around them (which implied the loss of *Heimat*), interchange with the Polish residents could be a next step toward healing and finding some sort of closure; the negative portrayals of Poles that they had read about beforehand in works disseminated by the leadership did not coincide with what they actually found. At the very least, personal interaction helped travelers to humanize the individual Poles that they met, even if this could at times have limited effect on causing expellee travelers

[94] Josef Schulz to Bundesminister für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, November 9, 1957, BAK B 137/1298.
[95] Blank, *Zwischen Breslau und Danzig*, 87.

to think differently of Poles in general. On her "tour of inspection" in the old *Heimat* Waldau [Wykroty] with her husband and two grown sons, S.K. showed varied, conflicting impressions of the Polish inhabitants: from cold observation, to warm feeling and interest, to practiced disgust. On approach toward the familiar village silhouette, they turned off at "Gölfert's place at the little water house and first looked out from the main street onto the whole village with a telescope." Apparently unconcerned that someone else might own the property now, they spied the old *Heimat* from this safe distance in order to "discern that there was life in the place." Having thus reduced the inhabitants to faceless organisms, they set off, nervous about the changes they might encounter, most notably on their own property. Back and forth, they drove through the village, pointing out what had changed down to the slightest detail, never noting down how the Polish inhabitants were reacting to their obvious intrusion in a Western car. It was only upon entering their old house that the Poles acquired personality. From the start, they were highly impressed that the Polish settlers had not only repaired their old farm after years of decline as a "Russian collective farm," but also improved upon it, even giving the buildings fresh paint. They were "well and hospitably welcomed by the people and even received lunch." As in so many encounters, the travelers made offhand reference to the fact that many Poles spoke German because they had "worked in Germany during the war," perhaps naïve but probably consciously silent about just what that work had entailed. After a full tour and an exchange of gifts and pictures with their new Polish friends, they continued on to Liegnitz. Here, they suddenly forgot the Polish family so recently humanized and reverted back to describing the inhabitants in impersonal, even insulting terms. Appalled by the filth they observed in the city, they concluded that they had seen "something of the famed '*polnische Wirtschaft*.'"[97] Thus, while in this

[96] Ibid., 96.
[97] S.K., "Reise nach Waldau," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 17, no. 15 (August 10, 1965), 213.

instance it was clear that other people, even good people, would henceforth live in the intimate *Heimat*, the "Poles" in general were still seen through a chauvinist lens.

Many homesick tourists managed to move beyond a "telescope view" of Silesia's Polish inhabitants. In the midst of admiring the "beautiful" restoration of his old church by the Poles in Falkenau [Chróścina], Axel Nowak found himself invited over to the Polish priest's house for coffee, and then they were both called over for further refreshments at the nicely renovated house of a Pole who lived by the destroyed German cemetery. This, along with the contrast of some rough handling from the local Polish officials, led him to the novel realization that "Poles are so different" from one another. By the time he left, he had been so moved by the poverty suffered by the old *Heimat*'s new residents that he started mailing care packages so that his new acquaintances would "at least have what is necessary."[98]

Naturally, travelers' impressions of Poles also depended on Polish behavior toward them. While Helmut Goebel and his wife remembered their taxi driver as "nice" and "friendly," they gave a negative review of the Hotel Monopol staff, who "ransacked our luggage," stealing chocolate, lemon, and razor blades, even using the lipstick. All of these impressions passed to the margins, however, when they experienced the hospitality of the Urbanski family, which now lived at the old Goebel estate in Niederschwebeldorf:

> Everyone came hesitantly closer in the courtyard. The young Mrs. Stefania set the table and put out sausage, dry bread, and sour pickles. Along with this there was strong liqueur. We were a cheerful group without hate.[99]

The farmer Woitek spoke some German that he had learned from Helmut's father, who had remained until his expulsion in October 1946. Woitek even protected them from the police,

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[98] "Martha Nowak, geb. Winkler, schildert die Reise ihres Sohnes Axel (Alexander) mit Ehefrau und der Falkenauerin Erna Zimmermann, verh. Haupt, mit Ehemann nach Hause," Hamburg, 1967, in *Falkenauer Schrift*, vol. 2, ed. Waltraud Keiper-Gründel (Uelzen: Erich Winkler, 1997), 324.
[99] Helmut Goebel, "Bericht über meine 1. Heimfahrt nach dem Krieg," Unpublished Travel Report, September 4, 1959, 2.

helping them to reach a spa before officials could stop by to harass them.[100] This good impression then spread to other Poles that they met, who guided them through various homes they had known in the village; one Polish woman even bragged that her house was better cared for than that of a German still living in the village.[101] To take another of many examples, although H.G. learned upon his return to Ossig in 1963 that the Poles he had come to know on his property in the first months after the war had moved back into central Poland, he found that "the Poles who now live on our land welcomed us affably, hosted us, and were clearly disappointed that we couldn't stay longer." He spoke with many Poles in the village through a translator who had lived for thirty years in German Zittau.[102]

Polish hospitality, an exchange of gifts and stories, friendly tours of the old homestead, ample photography throughout the old village or neighborhood, and ultimately the sense that good people now lived in the transformed *Heimat*– all of these elements arose in travel reports throughout these early years.[103] And what of those cases when an expellee traveler could not bear to venture back into the old homestead? When travelers kept an open mind, the Polish inhabitants usually still proved just as eager to converse about both the present and the past. Step by step, Frau Bayer walked through once-familiar and now decayed and abandoned neighborhoods in the Lower Silesian village of Roym, where she had lived with her husband and children before the flight in 1945; standing before her "once so beautiful house" in 1957, she felt too pained by the missing windows and faded paint to enter the house again, "incomprehensible as this may appear to some." Haunted by the changes all around her, Bayer wandered into the overgrown cemetery on a futile hunt for graves, only to be confronted by a Pole who lived in an

[100] Ibid., 4.
[101] Ibid., 3.
[102] H.G., "Ein 'Ossiger' war jetzt daheim!" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 15, no. 23 (December 10, 1963), 361.

adjoining house and had been watching her with suspicion. "He wanted to know what I, as a former resident, thought of the place that the Poles now called 'Poczuntek'," which she was told translated as "order" (actually *Porządek*). Very carefully, she replied (with her accompanying relatives translating) "that a comparison between now and then would have to turn out unfavorably for his countrymen." Rather than the hostility she may have expected, Bayer recorded that her frank reply opened the way to an animated conversation, in which the Polish inhabitant proved extremely curious about the past German world (something that recurs in many accounts). This particular Pole "had previously been in a nearby place called Groß Läswitz [Lasowice Wielkie] and wanted very much to know more about the farmer on whose property he resided." In the midst of the discussion, she even reflected that this Pole "must have been an especially capable farmer." Like so many travelers, though Bayer felt compelled to press on and catalogue more of the change she found, she took that moment in her journey to connect with a Polish resident's interest in his new homeland's history.[104]

As West German expellee travelers steadily gave a "human face" to the old *Heimat*'s new residents, the conversations they shared had potential to give them (and their readers back home) insight into just why the *Heimat* had changed as it had, and what the Polish settlers really thought about it. When Krl. returned to Silesia in 1965, he consciously went, not only with the objective of taking in his physical surroundings (where change was drastic enough to convince him that there could be no return), but also to speak in private with the Poles, who he found to be "people

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[103] For both Upper and Lower Silesian case examples, see Herbert Schmidt, "Ich war in Oberschlesierland, im schönen Heimatland," *Gleiwitzer und Beuthener Heimatblatt* 7, no. 8 (August 1957), 26; and Max Cyrannek, "Im Taxi von Bunzlau nach Urbanstreben," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 8, no. 8 (1959), 5-6.

[104] Bayer, "Mein Besuch in Schlesien," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 15 (August 10, 1957), 237-238. Likewise, Max Cyrannek found that the Polish inhabitants inquired ceaselessly about the former German world. When seeking to loan out a bike, he was quizzed by the Polish shop owner, who wanted to know whether Cyrannek knew his home's former German inhabitants. As the first of the former residents to visit his old village again, he was inundated with requests for information: "One asked me how much forest had belonged to the neighbor's property. One Pole who

like us," caring "just as little for high politics" which had displaced German and Pole alike. Amid his many exchanges, he learned of the difficulties that the Polish inhabitants faced in their everyday lives: Liegnitz was run down due to burning and plundering at the end of the war, and many houses in the villages decayed because the children had to work in factories so that their families could survive. For all this, and despite the fact that the Poles felt that they had unjustly taken German property, he left convinced that the Poles would defend the lands they lived on now, and he encouraged his fellow expellees to visit as guests in a land that was now someone else's home. As they had already learned from other accounts, expellee travelers could expect wonderful Polish hospitality, for which Krl. insisted that they should show gratitude by bringing gifts for their Polish hosts.[105]

In no small part through growing familiarity with Polish Silesia and its new inhabitants, repeated visits to the old *Heimat* generally brought about an even greater sense of closure after the loss of *Heimat*. As mentioned earlier, Manfred Ludwig had to cope with the tremendous changes in his old hometown of Reichenbach during the first official tourist expedition to Silesia in November 1956. Already, Ludwig found himself surrounded by the town's curious Polish inhabitants as he took pictures, and they began questioning him as soon as they learned that he was West German: "Not spitefully, but rather filled with expectation, they listened in on my answers. My sense of security increased, and I could move around everywhere freely."[106] Leaving with this positive experience, he returned in his pod-shaped Isetta-300 the following month; like a spaceship dropped from the sky, the tiny car summoned crowds of Poles in each town, and this became a departure point for discussions about life in both countries. By his third

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had worked during the war in Stuttgart said it would have been better if he had not returned back to Poland after the war." See "Im Taxi von Bunzlau nach Urbanstreben," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 8, no. 8 (1959), 5-6.

[105] Krl., "Von daheim: Unterhaltungen mit polnischen Bürgern," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 17, no. 14 (July 25, 1965), 199-200.

trip in March 1957, he used the warmest terms possible to speak of Silesia's new residents, extolling their "openness" and "friendliness" to West Germans.[107]

Günther Granicky became so comfortable on each successive trip that he began advocating Poland's right to his old *Heimat*. Though upon first arriving in Silesia in 1964 he feared that the population might present problems for him or impede his freedom of movement, "for the most part we found open good will, occasionally also noticeable withdrawal, but only very seldom blatant hostility, which would only be understandable due to the experiences of the past." Each trip, Granicky was amazed by the frankness of the conversations he had with the impoverished settlers (always in German), and he took note that, despite the diversity of responses on most topics, the Poles virtually always expressed certainty that the Oder-Neisse border was permanent, not because they believed in Polish historical claims or in the idea that the land offered just compensation for the loss of Poland's eastern territories; rather, he learned that Germany had lost his homeland "as a compensation for the sacrifice and suffering which Poles experienced from the German *Reich* during the Second World War," including the forced expulsion of Poles from their homes.[108] Through his conversations in the old *Heimat*, Granicky came to appreciate that the lands would remain Polish

> not least because over the course of almost twenty years the Polish western territories have become a *Heimat* for millions of Poles, most of them already born there, and because they have worked with their own labor to clear the devastation and destruction of the war in order to create a new existence there.[109]

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[106] Manfred Ludwig, "Das ist unsere Heimat heute," *Hohe Eule. Heimatblatt für Stadt und Kreis Reichenbach (Eulengebirge)* 5, no. 52 (December 1956), 6.
[107] Manfred Ludwig, "Wieder in der Heimat," *Hohe Eule. Heimatblatt für Stadt und Kreis Reichenbach (Eulengebirge)* 6, no. 57 (May 1957), 2. A Western automobile often served as a departure-point for conversation: during his visit to Liegnitz in Summer 1957, another expellee found that his Mercedes Diesel quickly became an object of great astonishment as well as a means of making friends. When he unknowingly drove into an area by the palace where cars were not supposed to go, "We were only made aware at the very end, and in a friendly way, that passage with a car was actually forbidden. The Poles were generally all extraordinarily friendly and amiable." Fritz Trautmann, "Liegnitz im Sommer 1957," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 10, no. 1 (January 10, 1958), 16.
[108] Granicky, "Ein Reisebericht über *Schlesien—heute*," 161-162.
[109] Ibid., 163-164.

While Granicky's lofty reflections should be considered an extreme (much as Blank was extreme in his continued bigotry even after having interacted with the new inhabitants), they are also instructive: by the time of the Warsaw Treaty in 1970, conversations with Silesia's Poles had gone so far as to compel some expellees to actively take up the cause of defending Poland's right to Silesia.

Islands of *Heimat*: Finding Germans in Polish Silesia

"The German *Ordnung* can never be denied," an expellee traveler asserted in 1957. "In Upper Silesia, the ordering of the fields is a little better. One can tell here at once that a higher percentage of Germans still work here than in Lower Silesia," where in the absence of Germans "mournful circumstances" reigned.[110] At the outset of their travel, homesick tourists directed so much interest in the dwindling German minority that one would have thought they comprised the majority of the Silesian population. This contrasts with their ultimate interaction with the new Polish inhabitants, which as shown above was not usually intended from the outset, though it had potential to stimulate significant reflection. Already in 1952, *Revue* asserted that that millions of expellees wanted to know how "the 300,000 German brothers and sisters live behind the Oder-Neisse border, who are today prisoners in their own *Heimat*."[111] While the goal of visiting friends and relatives gave expellees an official reason to apply for a visa after 1956, the desire to meet Germans often transformed into an obsession. Using a common metaphor, Erwin Hirschberg declared with a meld of joy and despair during his 1954 journey that "Waldenburg [Wałbrzych] has become *the* island of Germandom and Silesiandom on the other side of the

[110] R. B., "Meine Schlesienreise 1957. Wir wollen sie nicht vergessen!" *Heimat und Glaube* 9, no. 10 (October 1957), 4.
[111] Stefan Eich, "Schau heimwärts Vertriebener! Ostdeutsche Heimat heute. Ein Bericht über Schlesien, Ost-Brandenburg, Pommern, Westpreußen Danzig und Ostpreußen," *Revue* 25 (June 21, 1952), 2-3.

Oder and Neisse!"[112] Homesick travelers sought out familiar islands of *Heimat* in what they perceived to be a sea of foreignness. Once there, however, travelers found that the islands were being washed away. As discussed in chapter three, trauma from the Second World War fostered a climate in Poland that was often hostile to German language and culture; travelers heard a constant desire to escape the foreign country that had once been *Heimat* and reach "Germany" in the West. So it was that they witnessed what they perceived as the unstoppable disappearance of the *Heimat of memory*'s last traces, because the dejected remnant of the former population seldom wished to stay and preserve *Heimat* for the benefit of West German visitors.

Long before travel became possible, West Germans knew that matters were grim for their neighbors who remained in Silesia. In 1952, a woman in Beuthen wrote to her former coworker now in West Germany of how, though she had work and automatic Polish citizenship (as of 1951), she and her fellow native Upper Silesians wanted to leave. She felt that her whole life was now taken up with a slave-like work routine, and she was brought to tears seeing once reputable people now begging at the church door. "Why must we suffer so?" she implored him. "The beautiful, good old times certainly won't come again. Really, one was so ungrateful." She had heard that West Germany was a land without beggars, where everything could be in German, a place she imagined must be truly "glorious."[113] With such sentiments, it is not hard to imagine why, when it became possible to leave in 1956, the native population in Upper Silesia declined significantly, while Germans in Lower Silesia became a vanishing vestige.

In Lower Silesia, travelers were depressed to find the German remnant severely diminished in number and exhausted with life in an economically poor region; interaction with the sparse network of remaining Germans made it clear very quickly that the German Silesia

[112] Italics in original, Hirschberg, *Unser Schlesien heute*, 97.
[113] Franz Bollmann, "Ich könnte immer weinen...," *Revue* 30 (July 26, 1952), 24.

they remembered was too far gone for retrieval. In an encounter that Blank remembered as "certainly the most bitter moment" in his 1957 journey, he spoke with a German woman in Schweidnitz [Świdnice]: poorly dressed and prematurely aged, the woman assured him that he "couldn't imagine how foreign the *Heimat* has become for us." Though born in the city, she lamented that "now it sometimes seems to me as though I have been banished in a land that I had never seen before." The whole experience led Blank to realize that the *Heimat* had changed its nationality; Germans in Silesia now lived in Poland.[114] In Waldenburg, the densest pocket of remaining Germans in Lower Silesia, the head of the German social and cultural society was even more explicit with homesick tourists in 1957: due to lack of funds and widespread depression, he declared, "the time for the fruitful spiritual and cultural work for the Germans in Poland is over with." Oh, perhaps five years ago, he continued, an injection of "material and cultural care" might have kept the Germans in Silesia "bound to their traditional *Heimat*," but now "the process of the internal alienation (*Entfremdung*) of these people from their *Heimat*" had progressed so far that his organization was merely helping the remaining Germans to emigrate.[115] This assessment was shared by other Germans they met in the area: workers felt that they had no future in the *Heimat*, however dear it might be, if they had to learn Polish to find employment; housewives were tired of the dark glances they received from Polish women when they went out to buy goods; the elderly felt isolated and even asserted repeatedly that "this place is no longer our *Heimat*."[116] When a West German Protestant pastor visited seventeen communities near Waldenburg that same year, he reflected that, "of the approximately twenty lecturers and church workers I spoke with, just about no one wanted to remain. All of them had already applied in some way to emigrate." It was even more urgent for families with children,

[114] Blank, *Zwischen Breslau und Danzig*, 7.
[115] He described his organization as merely an *Ausreisebetreuungsstelle*. Lerch, *Jenseits von Oder und Neiße*, 6.

"because they foresee the Polonization of the children despite German schools and cultural groups" (which were themselves only intermittently tolerated at a few sites in the province).[117] Though a Polish priest was kind enough to allow Protestants to use his church for their services, a lack of financial help from the Polish Protestant church and the ongoing flood of emigration meant that, in short order, Lower Silesia would be entirely Catholic and Polish, something that the traveler felt was small wonder as, after having toured the entire region, he concluded that "the Germans in Poland have no rights. . . only obligations."[118]

Like the pastor visiting Waldenburg, West German visitors to Lower Silesia always left depressed by a sense of powerlessness that the islands of Germanness were doomed to vanish, thereby reinforcing the sense of permanence surrounding the *Heimat*'s loss. After touring around Bunzlau in 1957, Emilie Thomas reflected that matters could only worsen: as "Germans are increasingly moved out, it is more and more lonesome for those who stay behind." Even the elderly, who were more likely to remain so that they could die in the old *Heimat*, would probably be forced to emigrate, because extremely low pensions and high prices threatened them with starvation.[119] Manfred Ludwig guessed that already in 1957 only three hundred Germans remained in all of Reichenbach county, and the extreme poverty he observed among them on his first trip led him to bring along gifts when he returned.[120] On his visit to the village of Germsdorf near Bunzlau in 1958, F.K. was horrified to find that old neighbors were transforming into Poles: "our contemporaries and those even younger can hardly speak proper German anymore, because of which their Polish is that much better. The children speak Polish to each other whenever they don't want their parents to understand them." This brought him to the sober reflection that "the

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[116] Ibid., 7-8.
[117] "Bericht über eine Reise nach Schlesien vom 23. Juli bis 1. August 1957," EZA 18/143, 6-7.
[118] Ibid., 20.
[119] Emilie Thomas, "So sah ich die Heimat wieder," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no 12 (1957), 5-6.

bitter truth often hides itself behind irony"; the irony that the remaining Germans were turning Polish led him to the bitter truth that the *Heimat* was indeed lost forever.[121] By 1965, the Bunzlau *Heimat* paper reported the last native residents had emigrated from what had once been a city of 22,000 Germans.[122] By 1966, when Annemarie Jelitto-Elbinger visited Grottkau [Grodków], the neighboring city to her birthplace Falkenau, she found that the native population was virtually extinct; a resident German was overjoyed to meet the German-speaking traveler on the streets and (as was often the case when expellees met their old neighbors) "invited us at once into her house in order to show hospitality." Conversation quickly revealed that only one German family remained in her hometown, and even this paltry remnant was a happy surprise.[123] Shortly afterward, Granicky reported that, across the whole of Lower Silesia, the remaining Germans now consisted of either old people or families that were experiencing "forced assimilation with the Polish population at school, work, and marriage, which in a few years will lead to the disappearance of the last remnants of the German portion of the population."[124] This was the cold truth travelers faced about the *Heimat transformed*.

By contrast with Lower Silesia, Upper Silesia still retained a sizeable native population. Due to the tricky question of Upper Silesian nationality, which has bedeviled policymakers in Upper Silesia since the nineteenth century, the estimated number of "Germans" in the region varied widely. When Josef Schulz guessed in 1957 that Upper Silesia's German minority consisted of "2 million if not more," a federal minister at the BMgF penned in the margin that

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[120] Manfred Ludwig, "Unsere zweite Fahrt in die Heimat. Geschenke an Bedürftige," *Hohe Eule. Heimatblatt für Stadt und Kreis Reichenbach (Eulengebirge)* 6, no. 53 (January 1957), 3.
[121] F.K., "Besuch in Germsdorf," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 7, no. 7 (1958), 5.
[122] K[arl] W[eichmann], "Die beiden Letzten aus Bunzlau. Wir besuchten Paul Wojciechowski und Frau Lotte im Durchgangslager Friedland," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 14, no. 22 (1965), 5.
[123] "Falkenau Heute," *Grottkau-Falkenberger Heimatblatt* 23 (1966): 6.
[124] Granicky, "Ein Reisebericht über *Schlesien—heute*," 170.

this was "certainly too high."[125] However, when another traveler guessed that the minority included only 120,000 Germans in 1961, a minister penned in that this should be "much larger."[126] The historic "Schlonzok" identity, which was neither German nor Polish but took attributes from both, generated empathy from many returning expellees. Though the ongoing Polonization and emigration depressed them, they expressed conviction that here, in this world now very distant from any German borders, they found sufficient remnants of a familiar regional, at times even German culture, that they could feel at least somewhat at home.

Already in late 1955, an Upper Silesian anxious to see the old *Heimat* again (having already applied with the Polish authorities in 1951) returned to visit with many of the same old acquaintances in his *Heimat* Kreuzburg [Kluczbork]. He was consoled to find pockets dominated by the regional Silesian population, as well as continuity in the region's traditional Catholicity. Sharing in religions celebrations across the region, he felt "security among people of the same mind, even if changed circumstances wanted to estrange me or not allow a homelike feeling to arise within me." Thus, though changed by "foreign influences," interaction with Upper Silesia's ethnically mixed, Catholic population allowed the old *Heimat* to retain "its motherly, healing powers" for him.[127] When he ventured back to Upper Silesia in 1959, Werner Marten similarly felt at home in Catholic churches and wherever he still heard German spoken. "It always especially moved me when I heard very small children speak German with their parents," he reflected, "in this manner it could sometimes appear to me as if absolutely nothing had changed–

[125] Josef Schulz to Bundesminister für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, November 9, 1957, BAK B 137/1298.
[126] Mulzer, Oberpolizeirat Präsidium der Bayerische Grenzpolizei to Bayersches Staatsministerium des Innern, Bayerisches Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz, Munich, "Mitteilungen von Reisenden," April 20, 1961, BAK B 137/1298.
[127] J.St., "Ich war in Oberschlesien. Ein Reisebericht aus unseren Tagen," *Heimat und Glaube* 7, no. 11 (November 1955), 4.

even if just for a moment."[128] For all this, it was especially among the native youth that he felt the infiltration of Polish culture most strongly, proving that the old *Heimat* had grown "almost unreachably far for us and becomes more and more foreign to us."[129] Despite their German-speaking parents and even ties to relatives in West Germany, the younger generation "showed themselves through their words and all appearances to be completely satisfied with their lives in the Polish state and wanting to remain in Poland and also become genuine Poles." Conversing with youth in schools and at athletic fields, he discovered authentic enthusiasm for study in Warsaw, rather than East Berlin, for exploring the beauty of Poland rather than Germany.[130] This sense of slippage even here, in what travelers regularly described as the strongest surviving remnant of the old *Heimat*, caused Herbert Schmidt to complain after his 1957 trip to Gleiwitz [Gliwice] that, due to the prevailing poverty and ongoing Polonization, he had "not spoken with anyone that wants to remain there!"[131] In desperate tones, he pleaded with other exiles in West Germany to mail medicine and other aid to their brethren in Upper Silesia.[132] Going even further, Marten declared that West German aid for Upper Silesians must be predicated on "good neighborly contact" with the Polish regime and population that would now determine the region's fate. If this failed, if West Germans could not send aid as a means to possibly convince Upper Silesians to quit their emigration, then even this "observable island of Germandom in the middle of contemporary Poland" was destined to erode away.[133]

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[128] Werner Marten, *Im oberschlesischen Industriegebiet: Deutschtum, Kreuz und Polenadler* (Hamburg: Marten, 1959), 15.
[129] Ibid., 7, 11.
[130] Ibid., 16-17.
[131] Herbert Schmidt, "Ich war in Oberschlesierland, im schönen Heimatland," *Gleiwitzer und Beuthener Heimatblatt* 7, no. 8 (August 1957), 26.
[132] Ibid., 26.
[133] Werner Marten, *Im oberschlesischen Industriegebiet: Deutschtum, Kreuz und Polenadler* (Hamburg: Marten, 1959), 15.

A look at the admissions of right-leaning expellees offers the greatest testimony to the fact that travel encounters with the German remnant generally forced homesick tourists to realize on some level that Germans could no longer survive in a Silesia that had become Polish. Though Ulrich Blank stubbornly refused to accept that the remaining Germans wanted to leave (and demanded the return of at least portions of the lost East), he had to admit that all the Germans he encountered felt "above all an inner alienation (*innere Entfremdung*) from the *Heimat*,"[134] as the *Heimat* became more and more Polish. Similarly, at the same time that Josef Schulz extolled supposed German achievements in Upper Silesia, he admitted that, as reconstruction accelerated, there were fewer and fewer Germans left to take part in it. For all his obstinate hopes of border revision, he bemoaned the decrease of the German language everywhere (despite the lifting of a ban on it after 1956), and concluded that Germans were losing the "ethnic struggle" (*Volkstumskampf*) in Upper Silesia: children under twenty had lost the ability to speak fluent German (if at all) and felt greater connection to Poland.[135] Unable to cope with loss due to their political orientation, rightists nonetheless knew on some level that the loss was permanent after their encounters with the remaining native minority.

Although most expellees were unable or unwilling to travel back to the old *Heimat* before 1970, it should not be supposed that they merely indulged in passive, idealized reminiscences and shuddered at reports of change. Already in 1952, *Revue* offered to disclose contact information to help readers send packages to Germans in the former eastern territories.[136]

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[134] Ulrich Blank, *Zwischen Breslau und Danzig: Deutsche Heimat im Osten Heute* (Hanover: Fackelträger Verlag, 1958), 105.

[135] Josef Schulz to Bundesminister für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, November 9, 1957, BAK B 137/1298. As a sign of the instability and back-and-forth contradiction especially apparent among rightwing travelers, Schulz protested to the BMgF after a second trip two years later that the Poles "knew" that German efficiency must prevail in handing the territories back to Germany one day. Josef Schulz to Lemmer, Bundesminister für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, September 30, 1959, BAK B 137/1298.

[136] Sibylle Bieker, "Päckchen nach Schlesien," *Revue* 37 (September 13, 1952), 32.

Though the native minority in Silesia dwindled after 1956, the easing of tensions expanded such possibilities; as a traveler noted in 1957,

> What joy is created here by gifts and wares from West Germany! Even when they are only coffee or cocoa, razor blades or nylons! And should one also bring clothing or wool or a wristwatch along, the jubilation will know no end. How thankful the Germans over there are for everything that they had to do without until a year ago. We only help them where we can. Should one be surprised under such circumstances when they beg imploringly that we should not forget them?![137]

Aid to Silesians was not limited just to the German remnant. Motivated by the dismal condition of beloved landmarks they read about in reports, expellees regularly called on the readers of *Heimat* papers and pastoral letters to donate money to aid in repairing or reconstructing prominent structures, especially churches, that were now used by the generally impoverished Polish population. For example, the *Grafschafter Boten* printed repeated calls in the 1960s for financial help to restore church buildings; in response, expellees from Lichenwald mailed in 125 DM, which yielded "a hearty letter of thanks from the current Polish pastor of Lichenwald. And in this way bridges can be built between peoples."[138] Indeed, by that time *Heimat* and church communities were mailing a great deal of support, even trucks with supplies, to the old *Heimat*,[139] despite opposition from some in the expellee leadership who opposed sending anything helpful to the Polish settlers who had "stolen" what they saw as rightfully theirs.[140]

Abschied*: Bidding Farewell to the old *Heimat

Homesick tourists usually ended their journeys through the old *Heimat* with a moment of *Abschied*, a moment of taking leave before they returned to the new *Heimat* where (to their relief) they now resided in the West. In a compressed instant in time, they gazed back upon the spaces that they had once called their own and reflected on how they had changed into Polish

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[137] R. B., "Meine Schlesienreise 1957. Wir wollen sie nicht vergessen!" *Heimat und Glaube* 9, no. 10 (October 1957), 4.
[138] *Grafschafter Boten* 17, no. 12 (1966), 6, quoted in Dietmar Sauermann, *"Fern doch Treu." Lebenserinnerungen als Quellen zur Vertreibung und ihrer kulturellen Bewältigung, am Beispiel der Grafschaft Glatz* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 2004), 427.

Silesia. At times, they felt cured of their curiosity about the old *Heimat*, yearned all the more to preserve memories of what had been, and, feeling great pain at the enormity of the loss, declared that they would never return. Other times, finding their curiosity stimulated, they planned future trips to seek out further fading traces from the past and explore what Silesia was becoming. In both cases, they nearly always felt that they were parting with a place that had once been physically theirs but would henceforth be inhabited by another population. They relinquished the idea of residing in the physical Silesia but clung to it as their abstract, spiritual *Heimat*.

Very often the moment of *Abschied* crystallized a recognition of loss that had been building cumulatively throughout the journey. For an Upper Silesian expellee, a return visit in April 1956 had steadily proven so "depressing" that at last she couldn't take it anymore. Though her visa would have allowed her to remain longer with her parents, she took her leave early, after only fourteen days. Out of breath and at a loss for words by the end, she left "possessed for the first time by the recognition that I have almost entirely lost the *Heimat*, despite my parents, despite the old streets and houses. It's as though a flood had hurtled down over the city, and the mud has remained."[141] Eight years later, Renate Schortmann ended her shocking tour of the devastated spaces of Bernstadt with a final glance up to the windows of her former apartment on Breslauer street. It was in this moment, as she bid farewell to the most intimate space of *Heimat*, that "a little girl looked down while I looked up filled with yearning. With melancholy in my heart, I was nevertheless glad that I didn't live there anymore." In this final moment before departing back home to the West, she realized that no familiar face would ever look down again

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[139] Sauermann, *"Fern doch Treu,"* 429.
[140] E. J., "Was zu erwarten stand. . .," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 10, no. 6 (March 25, 1958), 82.
[141] "Eine Fahrt nach Beuthen OS. im April 1956," *Gleiwitzer und Beuthener Heimatblatt* 6, no. 9 (September 1956), 22.

from the traces of the old city. "The intimate *Heimat* appears foreign," she reflected, because all of its "people are missing," too dispersed to ever return and make it *Heimat* again.[142]

The moment of departure inspired some travelers to enter into philosophical reflections which might help them to grapple with the conflicts they felt in their hearts because of the trauma of loss. In 1965, Friedrich Gelke gazed one more time upon his *Heimat* Warteberg, an ancient pilgrimage site, and tapped into his religious convictions to process the tremendous loss: "it is good to know that our Lord, who turns everything for the best, stands over our memories and over the sites of memory." Consoled by the belief that God would preserve his memories of a bygone world for all eternity, he surrendered the changed spaces of *Heimat* with the stoic and faithful resolve of Job: "the Lord has given it, the Lord has taken it away, blessed be the name of the Lord."[143] Likewise, as he left Upper Silesia in 1957, Herbert Schmidt came to recognize the great divide between his fantastic visions of an ideal world and the cruel reality he could never change. After repeated conversations with the Polish family that now lived in the crowded, transformed spaces of his parents' old house, he claimed to empathize with their exile from Poland's lost territories. Silesia's past and present inhabitants were "bound by the same fate," he declared, and all people had a right to their homeland. But though he conveniently blamed the disturbance of "the idyllic existence desired by God" onto a few "crazy, criminal politicians" (and so exculpated himself and other ordinary people from responsibility for the world's imperfect character),[144] he knew that his travel experience had shattered any notion that he could ever be "at home" in Silesia again. However unjust he might have seen his exile, he bid farewell to the *Heimat* fully aware that he was traveling "back home, which is so far from the *Heimat*!"

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[142] Renate Schortmann, "Bernstadt im Februar 1962," 152.
[143] Friedrich Gelke, "Warteberg 17.11.1965," EZA 47/449, 2.
[144] Herbert Schmidt, "Ich war in Oberschlesierland, im schönen Heimatland," *Gleiwitzer und Beuthener Heimatblatt* 7, no. 8 (August 1957), 26.

The moving experience of travel through the transformed *Heimat transformed* compelled him to accept that he lived in "a distorted world!" which barred the fulfillment of his fantasy that all peoples might live in the *Heimat* of their dreams.[145]

Some travelers were so intrigued by the changed world they had found that they planned for future visits. After his first return to Silesia in 1964, Günther Granicky reflected back on his expectations and sought to separate the Silesia of the past from what he had seen in the present: "A trip began which had been thought of fundamentally as a trip to the past; very soon it became a trip to the present, to a present that we would come to know better and better in later travels, and then not only in Silesia."[146] Despite the trauma of loss, Granicky was forming a new connection with a Polish Silesia which now existed on the soils of the old *Heimat*. Annemarie Jelitto-Elbinger was likewise drawn into a new connection with Silesia after her first trip back in 1966; when she organized an excursion in 1988 for anyone in the community interested in going back to celebrate her old *Heimat* Falkenau's 750th anniversary (now as a part of Poland), many expellees, their relatives, and even three Westfalian natives ultimately came along.[147]

It is important to note that a few travelers refused to surrender their delusions of *Heimkehr* at the end of their journeys, though the cumulative sense that the *Heimat of memory* had vanished into oblivion made them fully aware that their closing declarations were contradictory and hollow. Throughout her 1957 trip back to Tillendorf [Bołesławice] across the river from Bunzlau, Emilie Thomas had found herself immersed in a foreign world. The moment that the old woman had crossed the border, the ubiquity of incomprehensible words and inscriptions had led her to declare that she was "already in Poland." Her profound loneliness as

[145] Ibid., 30.
[146] Günther Granicky, "Ein Reisebericht über *Schlesien—heute*," 159.
[147] Annemarie Jelitto-Elbinger, "O, du Heimat lieb und traut. . . Ein Wiedersehen mit der Heimat, mit Falkenau!" *Grottkau-Falkenberger Heimatblatt* 4 (1989), 15.

she waited for her increasingly Polonized daughter at Bunzlau's once-familiar train station (now bustling with strangers) compelled her to speak to the mountain spirit Rübezahl; she had to conjure up an imaginary "German" in order to complain about the lack of Germanness she felt around her. In city after city across Lower Silesia, she was overwhelmed by "the same image: ruins, old houses, collapsed streets, building plots, sometimes a completed new house, many houses that are uninhabited and will be torn down." In Bunzlau itself, "everything was churned up inside of me. I simply could not believe how devastated I found the beloved *Heimatstadt* before me." All of this led Thomas to depart feeling even greater homesickness than before for a place she could no longer find in reality; to cope with loss, she took her leave by fantasizing that, if every Pole in Silesia magically disappeared and every German that had once lived there rematerialized where they had been, she might "experience how the *Heimat* would become beautiful again."[148] Only in this impossible reversal of history could she return. Martin Peschel's 1957 report likewise gave an exhaustive, village by village description of the *Heimat*'s transformation, forcing him to concede that "only memory remains to us from our *Heimat*." For all this, he stubbornly maintained that, because expellees had suffered injustice, they must never lose "the hope that our right to the *Heimat* might nonetheless one day prevail."[149]

Nonetheless, after some space for reflection, even the few who still clung to revisionist presentiments when they bid their *Abschied* steadily surrendered their delusions in the weeks to come and at times even revised their view. Like Thomas and Peschel, Ulrich Blank insisted to himself as he left Silesia that he had never been a "guest" in the old *Heimat*, that the German East was still his.[150] This he claimed, though the ruin and decay he had witnessed had compelled

[148] Emilie Thomas, "So sah ich die Heimat wieder," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no 12 (1957), 5-6.
[149] Martin Peschel, "Eine Fahrt über Land," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 12, no. 18 (September 25, 1960), 294.
[150] Blank, *Zwischen Breslau und Danzig*, 110.

him to admit that Silesia's capital had become "Wroclaw, no longer Breslau,"[151] and though, as he departed and "Silesia said goodbye to us," he mourned for landscapes that had become detached and intangible to him, "wrapped in cold and haze."[152] For all his outraged sense of injustice, strong impressions of change continued to nag at him; by the time he wrote further about the lost *Heimat* in 1962, memories of his 1957 journey forced him to further distinguish between the fond memories he and other expellees had of the former *Heimat* and the changed "reality" of "growing stony wastelands" under communism, which he now confessed had encouraged expellees "to seek out and find a new, second *Heimat*." Publishing other travel accounts about the *Heimat*'s transformation in his later work, he came to realize that "places where one staggered about at one time and where one remained for a while take on the *odium of Heimat*. One sees it again and turns back toward home. (*Sieht man sie wieder, kehrt man nach Hause zurück*)."[153] By 1962, Blank knew intimately well that, when the homesick tourist experienced how the old *Heimat* had changed, he found himself relieved to escape back to his second *Heimat* in the West.

3. Dissemination and Responses

Chapters four and five have shown how travel reports contributed a formative influence to both private and shared reflections of loss when transmitted back to the "many enthusiastic listeners and readers" in West Germany.[154] Pastors, *Heimat* paper editors, friends and relatives, and attendees at *Heimat* gatherings recounted the epic journeys with anticipation, curiosity, and despondence. Fearful that travel was inducing disillusionment about reconquering the East,

[151] Ibid., 86, 105.
[152] Ibid., 105.
[153] Italics added, Ulrich Blank, ed. *Wo Heute Fremde Wegweiser Stehen: Die deutschen Ostgebiete im Spiegel der westdeutschen Presse, 1959-1962* (Leer/Ostfriesland: Verlag Gerhard Rautenberg, 1962), 140.
[154] Dietmar Sauermann observes that there was widespread interest in travel reports in *"Fern doch Treu,"* 391.

expellee leaders often sought to manipulate reports for their own agendas and even to discourage travel altogether. After exploring the leadership's conflicting and paranoid response to travel, it will be shown that their fears were indeed justified: whether they convinced expellees to travel back or, more often, to stay at home in the West, travel reports provided significant impetus to each expellee reader's process of coping with loss.

The Official Response to Homesick Tourists

Perhaps in no other arena did the expellee leadership prove so conflicted as in its debates about what to do with homesick tourist accounts. Thinking more about debates in the halls of government than expellee sentiment, a few leaders felt certain that travel would further the cause of border revision by "proving" Polish inability to manage the German East; as D.R. decreed in 1957 in the *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung*, the more expellees gathered "authentic reports," the more they would be able to counteract journalist reporting that dared to present Poland in an optimistic light.[155] There was also a genuine humanitarian desire for travel to help expellees retain better ties with the struggling native minority still in Silesia. At the same time, as can be imagined, leaders were not pleased by the likelihood that grassroots interaction with Poland, especially through travel, could undermine the presumed expellee desire for territorial revision (which it did). To this end, they often reacted to travel with open hostility and an urgent need to manipulate expellee responses, though their methods gave rise to contradiction. How could they discourage travel to the land that they claimed was still theirs? When they sent in their own undercover reporters or amplified "evidence" in accounts that came their way as a means of highlighting an alleged Polish inability to manage the former East, were they not also illustrating a *Heimat transformed* that held very little appeal for settlement, especially when contrasted to the idyllic *Heimat* imagery that they commemorated? Aware that they could never control the

rising influx of travel, they even went so far as to implore travelers to keep the right "mindset" when traveling, lest the dangerous knowledge of Silesia's transformation lead to some unspoken ill effect that could serve Polish political purposes, namely a lack of will for German resettlement.

The lively debates in the government offices of the BMgF offer an excellent view into the sides leaders took in the fight over homesick tourism. Devoted to all questions relating to former territories of the *Reich* outside West Germany, the BMgF never ceased to support travel to the DDR as "part of Germany"; but the eastern territories proved controversial. Favoring the less political objective of supporting contact between Germans on both sides of the Iron Curtain, a minor official argued in 1964 that advertisements for travel to the former eastern territories should be suspended on the grounds that, though this was also "domestic" travel (that is, inside the 1937 borders that Bonn still recognized), such publicity could lend a political accent expellee journeys and lead the Polish government to break off issuance of entry visas.[156] Ottokar Chyla responded that ads should be written in discrete ways less likely to annoy the Polish government, but, for the sake of German claims to the East, their publication must continue, even if they led to a rise in visa fees. Should potential travelers beg the BMgF for financial help because of this, Chyla felt it would be of little matter: "human contacts must have more value than money."[157]

For all its inner conflicts, the BMgF tended to support travel in principle; but expellee *Landsmannschaft* organizations had no problem with the idea of stopping it. During the fluke imprisonment of Hans Machura (a Silesian *Landsmannschaft* member) in January 1961,

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[155] D. R., "Ein Wort zu Reiseberichten aus Schlesien," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no. 1 (1957), 14.
[156] BMgF Referat I 9 to Referat I 2, I 3, I 7, "Werbung für Reisen in die deutschen Ostgebiete," July 30, 1964, BAK B 137/1298. The BMgF tried to protect native minorities in western Poland. For example, they urged potential travelers not to put openly anti-Polish sentiments in the letters that they wrote to their relatives. Kanabas, Referat III b-1 to Roman Gralla, January 6, 1964, BAK B 137/1298; Bundesminister für gesamtdeutsche Fragen to Josef Kania, November 26, 1964, BAK B 137/1298.

ostensibly for attempting to bribe an official in Upper Silesia when he sought to extend his stay, the *Landsmannschaft* threatened the BMgF that, if something wasn't done to free their ally, they would spread the word "that travel to the Silesian *Heimat* territories isn't always without danger."[158] The federal minister wrote back strongly encouraging them to drop the idea of publishing such a warning, and the timely release of Machura ended the issue before either side acted.[159] Fully prepared to scare expellees into staying in the West, the *Landsmannschaft* had no concern that travel might stop; this is because it found travel to be generally unfavorable to its interests.

One of the *Landsmannschaft*'s clearest declarations of intent appeared in a 1957 issue of its mouthpiece *Der Schlesier*, which was reprinted in other major expellee periodicals such as the Catholic *Heimat und Glaube*. Here, in response to the first official tourist expedition sponsored by the Linzer travel company in 1956, the organization denounced the common reaction (attributed to non-expellee journalists, though as shown below the spokespeople knew it was shared by expellees) that the Oder-Neisse territories had "become Polish." The Poles must be to blame for such a mistaken impression, the leadership decided: "Whoever still didn't know about it before can now be told unmistakably why the Poles were so interested in bestowing official support upon these trips by eastern German expellees and West German journalists." By exposing the visitors to drastic change, such as Polish inscriptions and monuments, the Poles were subjecting poor West German visitors to "shock therapy" meant to induce "panic" that "everything has changed in the last years, which is why it is unavoidable to speak of Silesia as a

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[157] Ottokar Chyla to Referat I 9, "Werbung für Reisen in die deutschen Ostgebiete," August 5, 1964, BAK B 137/1298.
[158] Ortsgruppe Freudenstadt, Landsmannschaft Schlesien to Bundesleitung der Landsmannschaft Schlesien, January 28, 1961, BAK B 137/1298.
[159] Ottokar Chyla to Landsmannschaft Schlesien Nieder- und Oberschlesien e.V., "Reisen in die deutschen Ostgebiete," March 17, 1961, BAK B 137/1298; Dammmüller, Landsmannschaft Schlesien Bundesgeschäftsführung to BMgF, March 28, 1961, BAK B 137/1298.

land that has become Polish." They tried to implore future travelers to remember that, for all the "Polish facades of Breslau," its new "external appearance lies"; even if the new residents felt at home in a land they were rebuilding, expellees had to remember that it had been wrongfully stolen from them.

> We must confess, anyone who is now allowed to return back to Silesia for a few days finds it shocking. [Though he returns] with the image that he preserves in his heart, he finds a totally different image before him, an image that only coheres with what he knew because of geography and thanks to some buildings that remain intact. Whoever travels home must accept this shock without finding a place at home (*ohne ein Zuhause vorzufinden*). However it does not follow because of this that the claim to a right [to this land] must be given up, that therefore the contemporary residents of our *Heimat* are allowed to feel that they are the legal residents. Whoever undertakes travel to the *Heimat* should be attentive– don't let yourself be clouded! We do not allow ourselves to be deceived in our striving for return and the handing back of our stolen *Heimat* regions.[160]

In the plainest terms possible, the *Landsmannschaft* was afraid that travel was helping expellees to cope with the loss of *Heimat*.

Paranoid about their lack of control over the interpretations their constituents were taking from travel, spokespeople sought (usually in vain) to undertake travel themselves in order to translate and propagate the proper, political interpretation. In 1957, the East Prussian *Landsmannschaft* leader for North Rhine-Westphalia declared his intent "to come into contact somehow with Polish people" and planned a trip for himself and his *Landsmannschaft* board members to southern East Prussia.[161] Expellee leader Oskar Lipsius reacted with outrage "that for various reasons this planned *undertaking of the expellees* raised a lively sense of anxiety" from the Polish regime. Having presumed that a venture of expellee leaders would be an undertaking *in the name of all expellees*, he had the hypocrisy to attack Polish leaders for claiming to speak for all Poles in opposing the *Landsmannschaft* visit. Yet should Warsaw's response have been so surprising? Already predisposed to find that, if "expellees" met ordinary

[160] "Wir besuchen die Heimat und weinten. Besuchsfahrt nach Schlesien," *Heimat und Glaube* 9, no. 2 (February 1957), 1-2.
[161] Quoted in Oskar L. Lipsius "Wir müssen ins Gespräch kommen! Kontakte mit Polen," *Heimat und Glaube* 9, no. 8 (August 1957), 5.

Poles, they would surely hear them beg the Germans to return and manage the land, expellee spokespeople clearly planned to manage any information they gathered for their own political agendas.[162] For this reason, when travelers in the direct service of expellee spokespeople did manage to enter Poland, they faced a real chance of arrest. Herr Scharbatke, a traveler officially in the service of the Protestant Eastern Church Service, was arrested in Poland in 1966 for smuggling in packets of propaganda printed by expellee organizations. As of 1970, he had served four years of his term without any chance of release by West German authorities.[163]

Due to such difficulties in traveling back themselves, expellee spokespeople in *Landsmannschaften* and the government drew extensive material from widely-distributed, book-length accounts written by a handful of travelers. Usually politically conservative and painting a bleak picture of life in western Poland, the accounts were easily manipulated by *Ostforscher* and expellee politicians, who at times directly approved and disseminated them; they have also received most of the attention from the limited scholarly output that has referred to travel, resulting in a tendency to skew perspectives on early West German travel to the former East.[164] Particularly prominent in scholarship have been the travel books of Erwin Hirschberg, Willi Beutel, Charles Wassermann, and August Scholtis. Though because of his Jewish background

[162] Italics added, Ibid., 5.
[163] Protestant church leaders washed their hands of the matter, lest the Polish authorities conclude that they had backed Scharbatke's politically suspect behavior. The sentence for Keiper, another traveler-turned-prisoner (presumably also incarcerated for activities in Poland connected with expellee organizations) was reduced from nine to five years. Hermann Dembowski to Kirchliches Aussenamt, April 24, 1970, EZA 6/7067, 1-2; D. A. Wischmann to Staatssekretär G. F. Duckwitz, Auswärtiges Amt Bonn, May 5, 1970, EZA 6/7067; Hanfried Krüger, Kirchliches Aussenamt, to Dembowski, July 10, 1970, EZA 6/7067, 1-2.
[164] When Dieter Großmann sought to assess the condition of German monuments after 1945, he relied almost entirely on Hirschberg, Wassermann, and Beutel. See "Das Schicksal der Kunstdenkmäler in Niederschlesien seit 1945. Denkmalpflege und Museumwesen," in *Niederschlesien unter polnischer Verwaltung*, ed. Ernst Bahr and Kurt König, 305-384 (Frankfurt/M., Berlin: Metzner, 1967), 336. Only one travel report (by Wassermann) underpinned Bernhard Grund's analysis of the postwar German minority in Lower Silesia. See *Das Kulturelle Leben der Deutschen in Niederschlesien unter polnischer Verwaltung, 1947-1958* (Bonn and Berlin: BMgF, 1967). Contemporary imagery in Albert Scholz's book on *Silesia Yesterday and Today* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964) depended almost entirely on the Hirschberg and Wassermann travel accounts. *Der Spiegel* cited only one

Erwin Hirschberg managed to include a few valuable insights about Nazi responsibility for the expulsion, his 1954 account, supported by the federal minister of expellees Theodor Oberländer, presented western Poland in a dismal light and closed with a stark revanchist statement ("Silesia was, is and remains German"), probably inserted by an expellee leader like Oberländer as it was out of keeping with the immediately preceding sentences that expressed hope for German-Polish understanding.[165] Paradoxically, two prominent accounts were penned by outsiders who lacked the intimate connection to local *Heimat* regions that they visited; though a leader in the East Prussian *Landsmannschaft*, Willi Beutel produced in two thickly-illustrated volumes about his 1957 trip through Silesia.[166] His work was prefaced with a demand for territorial restitution by Georg Graf Henckel von Donnersmarck, president of the *Ostdeutscher Kulturrat*, all in the name of Beutel's "evidence" of Polish mismanagement, an objective Beutel also warmed to on several occasions in the account. Even more remote from Silesia was the Jewish, Austrian-born, Canadian journalist Charles Wassermann, whose 1957 travel book fixated on the devastation of a world he had never known but idealized using prewar photographs.[167]

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travel account, Wassermann, alongside international reports from *The Guardian*, as negative views of Poland that should be overcome. "Polen, Oder-Neisse Grenze: Das große Tabu," *Spiegel* 48 (22 November 1961), 60.

[165] Hirschberg, *Unser Schlesien heute*, 211. All 10,000 copies sold out within three months, prompting a second edition.

[166] Willi Michael Beutel, "Stadt zwischen Tod und Leben: Ein Bericht aus dem Breslau des Jahres 1957," in *Das Heutige Schlesien*, ed. Johannes Seipolt, vol 1: Breslau, ein Tatsachen und Reisebericht in Wort und Bild, 5-16 (Munich: Aufstieg-Verlag, 1957); Idem.,"1500 km durch Niederschlesien: ein Reisebericht," in *Das Heutige Schlesien*, ed. Johannes Seipolt, vol 2: Niederschlesien, ein Tatsachen und Reisebericht in Wort und Bild, 5-17 (Munich: Aufstieg-Verlag, 1957).

[167] Charles Wassermann, *Unter Polnischer Verwaltung. Tagebuch 1957* (Hamburg: Blüchert Verlag, 1958); idem., *Europe's Forgotten Territories* (Copenhagen: R. Roussell, 1960). In his useful biography of Wassermann, Helfried Seliger nonetheless comes to the mistaken conclusion that Wassermann and his wife were the first "Westerners to get permission to travel freely by car through the former eastern provinces of Germany which were now occupied by Poland." It is also questionable whether Wasserman, whose father had indeed been a "refugee from Nazism," truly applied knowledge of German crimes to "be as objective as possible in the face of what he witnessed" in the German Eastern territories. Likewise, while the book did find an "avid readership" in many expellee circles, it was certainly not "the first detailed assessment of the contemporary condition of the territories." Five years after his journey, Wassermann did express regret that expellee organizations had used his work as a political weapon aimed at territorial revisionism, though of course he had advocated the German political cause in the book. See "Charles Wassermann: Life and Oeuvre in the Service of Mutual Understanding", in *The Old World and the New. Literary*

By contrast to the other three, August Scholtis's 1962 trip received encouragement from the Polish government and was only seldom used by the expellee leadership, so that scholars tend to present it as a "good" response. Written much later, the account blamed Hitler for Germany's postwar losses and included hope for reconciliation with Germany's eastern neighbors. For all this, the famous writer still insisted that Poland recognize all of the traces of German achievements in the East, and his descriptions drew on bitterness from his interwar political campaigns to restore to Germany areas of Silesia (including his hometown) lost to Czechoslovakia and Poland after World War I.[168] Complicated in this way like so many other travel accounts, Scholtis's book should stand alongside the observations of thousands of his fellow expellee travelers, rather than stand out as a paragon of dealing with the past.[169]

In their drive to control knowledge-interpretation from the old *Heimat*, some expellee leaders belittled and even attacked the travel companies themselves. Gerhard Weber of the *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* sought to discourage grassroots expellee travel to the old *Heimat* through

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Perspectives of German-speaking Canadians, ed. by Walter E. Riedel, 124-143 (Toronto, Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 134.

[168] August Scholtis, *Reise nach Polen: Ein Bericht* (Munich: Biederstein Verlag, 1962).

[169] Scholtis is especially prominent in scholarly analysis. See Louis Ferdinand Helbig, *Das ungeheure Verlust: Flucht und Vertreibung in der deutschsprachigen Belletristik der Nachkriegszeit* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1988); Ernst-Edmund Keil, "Der Beitrag Ostdeutschlands zur deutschen Literatur," in *Flucht und Vertreibung in der Nachkriegsliteratur: Formen ostdeutscher Kulturförderung*, ed. Klaus Weigelt, 15-29 (Melle: Verlag Ernst Knoth, 1986); and Ludmiła Sługocka, *Die Deutsche Polenliteratur auf dem Gebiet der Deutschen Demotratischen Republik in der Zeit von 1945 bis 1960* (Poznań: Praca Wydana z Zasiłku Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1964), 137. Markus Krzoska's analysis of West German accounts is almost entirely devoted to Hirschberg, Beutel, Wassermann, and Scholtis, the last of whom he argues was alone as a "a different kind of travel account writer," as he was not subject to the views of expellee organizations and thus more interested in actually meeting Poles. See "Das deutsche Bild von den ehemaligen Ostgebieten und von Polen in Reiseberichten der fünfziger und frühen sechziger Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts," 369. Elżbieta Dzikowska goes so far as to claim that the book Günther Anders wrote about his 1966 visit to Breslau stood next to contemporary accounts by Walter Laqueur and August Scholtis as the most important travel accounts, a view that overlooks the sheer vastness of the travel literature. See "Günther Anders in Breslau," in *Eine Provinz in der Literatur. Schlesien zwischen Wirklichkeit und Imagination*, ed. Edward Białek, Robert Buczek, and Paweł Zimniak, 265-275 (Wrocław and Zielona Góra: ATVT, 2005), 281. Though she attempts to bring in more travelers, Anna Maria Sawko von Massow still remains limited to about a dozen writers and does not sufficiently distinguish between them or between the differing dates of their travel (most of which were after 1970). Her travelers include Wassermann, Laqueur, Anders, Bienek, Monika Taubitz, Heinrich Trierenberg, and Max Frisch. See her *Breslau. Geschichte und Geschichten einer Stadt in der Flucht- und Vertreibungsliteratur nach 1945* (Berlin: Verlag Dr. Köster, 2001).

his censure of the Linzer travel company advertisements, which started to appear in most *Heimat* papers after Linzer's November 1956 trip. The editing staff's first strategy was to dismiss the importance of travel, commenting that "it must be put to the reader himself whether he wants to put forth the effort of giving out a few hundred marks to visit our *Heimat* of origin after ten to twelve years as a 'tourist' for two weeks."[170] From here, as though rethinking such a passive strategy, the article directly dissuaded travel, asserting that the collective claim of expellees "to the *Heimat* will not satisfied when someone now invites us in a friendly way to visit our stolen *Heimatland*. *We demand a return to a free Silesia– we want to return there in peace, not as tourists and bringers of foreign currencies!*"[171] For all his claims that "Linzer is a private enterprise, which self-evidently also has the right to put a business ad in the *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief*," no Linzer advertisement appeared again in Weber's paper until after 1970. As if this were not enough, Weber extended another corrective a year later against anyone who dared to think that, when they traveled back to the old *Heimat*, they were entering Poland. Claiming that advertisements (apparently in other *Heimat* papers) were inviting expellees on "trips to Poland" (ironically this had never been the case in the Linzer ads he had censured, which invited expellees to visit the former eastern territories "as well as" Poland),[172] he asserted that all expellees must always remember that "according to human rights, Silesia, Upper Silesia, Pomerania, and Masuria belong now as ever to Germany and are only placed under temporary

[170] *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* editing staff, "Reisen nach Schlesien jetzt auch per Omnibus," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 2 (January 25, 1957), 32. Weber used this passive strategy again the following year; though he later accepted that "perhaps" some expellees might go back to visit acquaintances still in the old *Heimat*, he concluded that, just as consumers should select what they truly need in the advertisement sections of daily papers, so too "must each interested party personally come to a decision as to whether he wants to make use of these offers [of travel to Poland] or not." See "'Reisen nach Polen. . .'," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 10, no. 21 (November 10, 1958), 327.
[171] Italics in original, "Reisen nach Schlesien jetzt auch per Omnibus," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 2 (January 25, 1957), 32.
[172] Advertisement "Reisen mit Bus nach Schlesien," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 2 (January 25, 1957), 31.

Polish administration."[173] Many other expellee spokespeople shared Weber's fear that expellees might be brainwashed by advertisements that read "Poland 1958"; as EN declared, if expellees were misled to call Breslau Wrocław or forget that Lower Silesia was "a German *Heimat*," then "we are freely giving up our own lands."[174] As these spokespeople rightly feared, when expellees discovered Poland on the lands of the old *Heimat*, they gave up on revisionist agendas.

It should not be presumed, however, that most *Heimat* papers were paranoid of travel. The *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* regularly offered helpful advice and published advertisements for travel companies. At the same time that Weber tried to bully his readers into staying home, a writer for the Bunzlau paper extended his well wishes "that with these instructions many *Heimat* friends will be helped, and I wish those who receive permission [an entry visa] a good and light-hearted trip in the *Heimat*."[175] Professionally apolitical in style, the paper's editor, Karl Wiechmann, kept printing travel photos of gaps and decayed structures in Bunzlau's cityscape, which elicited such dispassionate observations as his meditation on the "irony of fate" that, while West Germans never had enough parking to accommodate their millions of cars, the many open squares which had appeared in Bunzlau due to the destruction of the city in 1945 were not needed for parking places, because Poland had very few cars.[176]

Even when editors stamped the materials they received with a stark political interpretations, the fact that they filled their papers with harrowing travel descriptions and photographs unwittingly transmitted the reality that the *Heimat* was too changed to be salvaged. Despite the fact that he discouraged travel itself, Gerhard Weber eagerly used the reports and

[173] Gerhard Weber, "'Reisen nach Polen. . .'," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 10, no. 21 (November 10, 1958), 327.
[174] EN, "Polen-Niederschlesien. Eine kritische Betrachtung," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 10, no. 7 (April 10, 1958), 97-98.
[175] Herbert Auschrat, "Hinweise für Reisen nach Schlesien," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 5, no. 17 (1956), 3.
[176] K[arl] W[eichmann], "Parkplätze- und keine Autos. Kurzer Besuch in der Gnadenberger Straße von 'Boleslawiec,'" *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no. 3 (1957), 6. While most *Heimat* papers featured regular travel

images that reached his desk as an opportunity to introduce political commentary. Though expellees who returned to Raudten [Rudna] in 1957 felt that it had been reduced to a "wilderness," populated by seventeen unknown Polish and Ukrainian families, Weber (who never went back to Silesia) stepped in at the end with an incongruous moral for the story: despite this bleak picture, "we still say 'our *Heimat*!'"[177] Likewise, when a Silesian woman's travel account recounted the ravaged condition of the abandoned cloister in Leubus [Lubiąż] in 1957, Walter Stein first lamented to readers that the regularly printed "eye-witness accounts show us a shocking picture of the primitive life in the German eastern territories, of the ruins that are still visible in the cities"[178]; then, as though rethinking the implications of what he had felt, he called on all expellees the following month to colonize the East again and make it a "Garden of Eden," as their ancestors allegedly had done after they built the cloister. But how many readers would really want *Heimkehr* to places so cherished in their memories if travel accounts led even their editors to portray them as "reduced back into a steppe and made desolate"?[179]

The Grassroots Response to Homesick Tourists

Readers responded to images and reports from Silesia with a meld of curiosity and depression, demonstrating that vicarious travel in the old *Heimat* was stimulating many of the same painful realizations that furthered each traveler's process of dealing with loss. By the time she had listened to his reports of the old *Heimat*'s impoverishment and foreignness, Martha Nowak felt as though she had accompanied her son Axel back to Falkenau in 1966 and stood

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accounts, Eberhard von Zalewski's Upper Silesian paper devoted to Gleiwitz, Beuthen, and Tarnowitz preferred to print translations of articles from Polish papers each month to show changes in the region.

[177] red, "Wie es in der Heimat aussieht," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 10, no. 9 (May 10, 1958), 136.

[178] wst [Walter Stein], "Omnibusreisen nach Schlesien," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 5 (March 10, 1957), 69. The cloister's origins are noted in chapter one. Already secularized in 1810, it served the *Wehrmacht* during World War II, later the Red Army (at which time it suffered significant damage), and then, apart from halting repair efforts in 1962, suffered neglect until the founding of the *Fundacja Lubiąż* in 1989, which has made great progress toward restoring it.

with him when he was only allowed on the ground floor of their old house, where a Polish woman now lived with her son. It was finally too much when he gave her the flowers that he had picked for her in the town garden; as she later recalled, "this is when I cried."[180] With her tears, she coped with the loss of spaces still so intimate in her memory.

Travel reports also brought reality home to expellees in the West through "name that picture" contests: *Heimat* paper editors, anxious to catalogue every last travel photo that entered their in-box, often published anonymous images of immense devastation and asked readers to identity the location. When a reader dared his former neighbors to identify some chunks of building interspersed with rubble that he had photographed in Bunzlau, Wiechmann reflected that "many of us Bunzlauer knew their *Heimat* city inside and out, but when they see this picture, they won't know what they are being shown."[181] Sure enough, when the unnamed reader revealed the actual location, Wiechmann was amazed that most everything was gone, even whole alleys: "So it is that the trees and a piece of city wall are the only things that we can still regard as belonging to us in this picture. What we feel about this will only be understood by one whose *Heimat* had to suffer just as much as our beautiful Bunzlau."[182] Although Bunzlau remained the spiritual *Heimat*, a glance at its present state through the lens of another's camera prompted the realization that very little remained amid the drastic changes that expellees could still call their own. A similar "riddle" was posed with the same result when the *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* asked for help with a photograph depicting the mutilated side-wall of an enormous structure adjacent to an open field that had once been the foundation for its attached neighbor (the traveler himself

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[179] wst [Walter Stein], "Kloster Leubus. Ein Beitrag zum Parchwitzer Jubiläumsjahr 1957," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 7 (April 10, 1957), 102.
[180] "Martha Nowak, geb. Winkler, schildert die Reise ihres Sohnes Axel (Alexander) mit Ehefrau und der Falkenauerin Erna Zimmermann, verh. Haupt, mit Ehemann nach Hause," Hamburg, 1967, in *Falkenauer Schrift*, vol. 2, ed. Waltraud Keiper-Gründel (Uelzen: Erich Winkler, 1997), 324.
[181] K[arl] W[iechmann], "Merkwürdiges Bild von Bunzlau," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 7, no 1 (1958), 6.
[182] Ibid., 8.

could not even remember where he had taken the picture); readers sent in conflicting guesses, naming places in different parts of the city without consensus; the *Heimat* had changed beyond recognition.[183]

It should be small wonder that, though reports inspired some to sate their own curiosity by traveling back later on (especially after 1970), the painful images of change they contained convinced many readers that they should never to go back. They should stay where they felt safe in the West and preserve their memories from exposure to harsh realities. This, too, was a form of coping with loss, and the political repercussions are clear: if expellees chose never to visit the old *Heimat* again, how much less would they ever desire to move back and live there?

In his visible role as a *Heimat* paper editor, Karl Wiechmann demonstrated how the prospect of travel could raise intense and conflicting feelings about the rift between memory and reality. In 1957, the Linzer travel company entreated him that, with three days in Bunzlau, he would "bring a knowledge back home with you with which you could serve yourself and many others." But Wiechmann conjured up excuses: he didn't have enough money, it would be hard to coordinate work and travel, the three-day time span would be too short. In a bold tone, he declared to his readers that it was "our duty" to venture back and see the lost East, but he couldn't be the one to go– it would all be too overwhelming and painful to experience the grim reality for himself![184] Wiechmann dreamed of return, not to the Bunzlau of reality, but rather to a dream world he knew no longer existed, and memories of which faded more and more into oblivion with each obituary that he reported; when he printed an idyllic prewar photo of Bunzlau's *Badergasse*, he meditated that "each of us goes gladly through the intimate old alleys

[183] "Wer kennt sich hier noch aus?" *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 9, no. 4 (February 25, 1957), 51; ibid. 9, no. 6 (March 25, 1957), 83.

of the *Heimatstadt* once again."[185] But to witness the *Heimat transformed*? How much better it was to undertake vicarious journeys and catalogue change for his readers from the comfort of his West German newspaper office. Responding to Linzer's offer to arrange his trip, Wiechmann spoke at length of how travel reports had already shown him that whole streets had been reduced to fenced lots, to the point that "many old Bunzlauer would not immediately find their bearings here."[186] Through the regular influx of pictures and reports, he continued to bemoan the steady collapse of one of Bunzlau's greatest icons, the *Schwibbogen* arch across from the town hall on the central marketplace; it prompted his realization that "nothing further from all of this remains for us than memory"; each depressing travel photo showed him "how short human life is and how changeable one's fate."[187] Even when the Polish residents repaired the *Schwibbogen* and marketplace, he mused once more that, as the city changed, "what we carry around with us in our memories no longer exists."[188] Already in 1958, travel reports had helped him to realize that nothing but existence itself was stable: "everything flows (*Alles fließt*)."[189]

The break between memory and reality often became so strong that Silesia itself disappeared from the map in an expellee's mind as a place that could be physically visited; at the Oder and Neisse rivers, one merely crossed between Germany and Poland. Gerhard Weber and his co-editor Heinz Hantschke had already reached this point in 1960, when, as an alternative to a harsh return to a *Heimat transformed* that had grown "distant– so unreachably distant," they published a *Heimat* book to facilitate a "theoretical journey" to a "realistic image, a living

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[184] Karl Wiechmann, "Der Giebel des Schwibbogens eingestürzt. Das Gewölbe blieb bisher erhalten. Schwerer Unglücksfall im Grundstück des Kaufmanns Beßrich and der 'Quetsche'. Ein toter, zwei Schwerverletzte," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no. 8 (1957), 6.
[185] Idem., "Die Badergasse in Bunzlau," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no 12 (1957), 6.
[186] Idem., "Der Giebel des Schwibbogens eingestürzt," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no. 8 (1957), 6.
[187] Idem., "Die Badergasse in Bunzlau," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 6, no 12 (1957), 6.
[188] Idem., "Wiederherstellung des Bunzlauer Schwibbogens. Seit dem 15. Januar 1960 steht das Wahrzeichen der Töpferstadt wieder," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 9, no. 10 (1960), 6.
[189] Idem., "Schwibbogen und Stockstraße in Bunzlau," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 7, no. 5 (1958), 5-6.

impression of one of the most beautiful cities of the German East." Far more than any real journey, they argued,

> such a theoretical journey has many advantages: one can undertake such a trip at any time, without many preparations, without passport difficulties, there are no stops, no problems with provisions, no worries about money. We can also travel again to the *Heimat* from our sick bed, we can take our relatives, our children and children's children with us, we always arrive right on time. . .[190]

Many other expellees consciously forwent real travel in favor of the more pleasant experience of a journey into memory, where, in their minds, the *Heimat* still existed. As Claus Weniger reflected by 1967, how could he ever return back to his parents' garden, which was so "great and full of wonders" such as the stream that flowed past the grave of his canary, or the old linden tree from which he believed that Frederick the Great had watched the battle of Burkersdorf? His fond childhood memories were shattered by the knowledge that "today the garden lays in an unreachably distant land, and the linden tree has certainly not rustled for a long time."[191] Knowledge of change pushed his German Silesian fairytale land outside physical space; simply traveling east across the Iron Curtain, he knew he would never find it. Even since the fall of the Iron Curtain, an old woman in Görlitz assured me in 2005 that, though she had come from "the most beautiful part of Görlitz" on the other side of the Neisse river, she could never bear to return; though a stone's throw from contemporary Zgorzelec she might find her old home, it was impossible to go back, for as she said, the old *Heimat* was "too far away."

Expellees hesitated to travel back, not only because they feared endangering fond memories, but also because they thought it would be dangerous.[192] Certainly enough horror stories were in print to dissuade them: when for instance Frau Akers (now a dealer in British antiques in Birmingham) traveled back with her two young daughters to Gleiwitz to visit her

[190] Heinz Hantschke, *Unser Liegnitz und sein Landkreis* (Lorch/Württemberg: Gerhard Weber Verlag, 1960), 4-7.

parents in 1958, a uniformed man burst into their train compartment and demanded to see her papers, allegedly threatening under his breath that he would kill her; though the daughters managed to escape, their mother vanished and was found dead some hours later in Poznań.[193] Such stories led a potential *Heimweh* tourist to write in 1960 that he feared for his safety in traveling back, and the federal minister at the BMgF had to work hard to assure him that "this sort of travel is no longer unusual, and I have also never heard of this sort of travel involving personal difficulties."[194]

Even after lightened border restrictions facilitated an increase in travel to Silesia in 1970 and 1990, there remained a strong need to cope with loss by staying "home" in the West. A West German told me at Kraków airport in 2009 that, whereas he had enjoyed regular tourist excursions across Poland, his father, a Silesian expellee, had never gone back and had always professed that his son was crazy to travel to such a "dangerous" place. Though very active in her *Heimat* community to her death, Edith Wieland similarly remained emphatic in 1996 that it was better to live in her memories, "even though homesickness sometimes almost overpowers me, and there are travel possibilities today." Fully aware of the changes via reports from "many relatives and acquaintances" that had already visited the old *Heimat*, she demanded to know "just where should I go on such a visit? To the door of a plundered home whose residents have long since changed? To the graves of my beloved dead, which have been leveled and the tombstones used as paving stones?" Imagining such changes, she vowed that she would "spare" herself "the

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[191] Claus Weniger, "Der Garten. Eine Kindheitserinnerung," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 16, no. 15-16 (1967), 27.
[192] Letters to the BMgF prove that some expellees were also put off by costs and hassles Christa-Maria Skopek fumed that, to visit relatives in Upper Silesia, she would have to give the Polish government thirty DM a day for hotel vouchers. See her letter to Erich Mende, November 18, 1964, BAK B 137/1295.
[193] "Engländerin bei Posen tot aufgefunden. Sie wollte ihre deutschen Eltern besuchen. Botschafter schaltet sich ein," *General-Anzeiger der Stadt Wuppertal* (September 17, 1958), 15.
[194] Ottokar Chyla, Bundesminister für Gestamtdeutsche Fragen to Fritz Neukamm, "Urlaubsreisen nach Polen," June 22, 1960, BAK B 137/1298.

view of the devastated, formerly bountiful land" of her ancestors. She would retain the untarnished picture of Silesia that she had "engraved" in her memory.[195]

Conclusions

In assessing the homesickness of the Russian exile Joseph Brodsky, Svetlana Boym notices more generally how "the tear of nostalgia is not a tear of return; one doesn't become one with the object of longing."[196] When homesick tourists returned to Silesia and found themselves alienated, they learned this lessen even more profoundly. The old *Heimat* that had turned *unheimlich*: eerily reminiscent at times of a distant past, but repopulated and reinvented atop the ruins of war and foreignness caused by ethnic cleansing.[197] With crucial political ramifications, the ordeal of travel taught them the truth of Boym's observation: "when exiles return 'back home' they occasionally realize that there is nothing homey back there, and that they feel more at home in the exilic retreat that they have learned to inhabit. The exile became home, and it is the experience of returning to the country of birth that might become unsettling."[198]

Return experiences to the unsettling spaces of Silesia increased dramatically after the Treaty of Warsaw eased travel restrictions. In 1970, Günther Granicky still had little inkling of the impending change: after multiple trips to Silesia, he complained that border traffic remained meager, and it was still only possible to obtain a visa after long deliberations. Such restrictions, he argued, proved contrary to both West German and Polish interests, since they impeded "knowledge of the objective state of affairs," which he felt would serve as the only basis for the "political decisions" that would confirm the border, something he now saw as "unavoidable"

[195] Quoted in Sauermann, *"Fern doch Treu,"* 399.
[196] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 307.
[197] *Unheimlich*, roughly translated as *eerie* or *uncanny*, is not directly derived from the word *Heimat*, but the similarity of the two words may explain why expellees so often used the adjective *unheimlich* to describe the sensation that filled them when they walked through the streets of the old *Heimat*.
[198] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 307.

(*unumgänglich*).[199] Granicky's pessimism proved unfounded. In 1971 alone, 53,000 West Germans were able to visit Poland; over 330,000 visited in 1979, many of them expellees.[200] Due to this dramatic increase, by 1972 a homesick tourist had to wait through "a long line of seventy to eighty vehicles" at the Polish border in Görlitz; to keep traffic moving, border guards on both sides only had time to confirm that each passport photo matched the face of a traveler.[201]

The surge in travel (followed by an even greater surge in 1990) was accompanied by a corresponding plunge in political stakes. Before 1970, the smaller number of reports facilitated widespread coping with loss at a time when spokespeople strove to muster support for border revision; later travel could facilitate memory work with less political pressure on both sides. Friendly interaction with the Polish inhabitants, already underway before 1970, now became extremely common at the same time that the traces of war (and often the German past) faded. Silesians expelled as children brought their own children to see the places they had come from. Afraid of disrupting their glorified memories, Günther Obst and his wife (both from Breslau) held off on returning until 1979, when enough friends who had returned had managed to convince them that the Poles had restored the *Heimat* well. When they went again in 2001 to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary, they took their four children to see Silesia for the first time, and together they admired how the province's capital took on new life as its inhabitants rebuilt it in beautiful way that spoke to the city they remembered.[202]

All the while, the basic experience of travel remained the same. In the coming decades, hundreds of thousands of homesick tourists walked the streets of the *Heimat transformed* and

[199] Granicky, "Ein Reisebericht über *Schlesien—heute*," 160.
[200] Polish travel did not increase at the same rate. Over 57,000 Poles visited West Germany in 1971, rising to over 200,000 in 1979. Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Bonn-Warschau 1945-1991: Die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen, Analyse und Dokumentation* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1992), 40.
[201] "Nach 27 Jahren in der Heimatstadt Bunzlau. Zwischen Niedermühlstraße und Lohgasse immer noch alles kahl. Viele junge Polen ohne Arbeit? Ein Aufpasser droht mit Miliz," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 18 (1972), 5.

measured both how drastically it had diverged from the world they still cherished in memory and how it had been reconstructed with a new, Polish character. They often met the new Polish population, spoke with the few remaining Germans, and then bid their farewell. Like those that had gone before them, they returned to the West with the healing realization that, to find the home that they truly yearned for, they could no longer reside in Silesia.

[202] Günther Obst, *Reise ins Vorgestern: Wiedersehen mit der geliebten Heimat. Geschehenes und Gesehenes im heutigen Schlesien. Bericht* (Bad Ems: Verein für Geschichte/Denkmal- und Landschaftspflege, 2002/2003).

CHAPTER 7

1970 AND THE EXPELLEE CONTRIBUTION TO *OSTPOLITIK*

On December 7, 1970, West German chancellor Willy Brandt (SPD) signed the Treaty of Warsaw, recognizing the Oder and Neisse rivers as Poland's western border with the divided Germany, in effect all but ending German claims to the eastern territories lost at the Potsdam conference in 1945.[1] The Brandt administration had taken a gamble in initiating what became the first freely negotiated treaty between any Polish and German government concerning a border (ratified by the *Bundestag* in 1972): millions of German expellees had come from the territories Brandt was signing away, and expellee leaders threatened undying protest and massive unrest. In an empathic televised speech to the West German public little more than two weeks before his trip to Warsaw, Brandt showed himself to be well aware of the risks, but also firm in his conviction that his goals spoke to the expectations of expellees. Encouraging them to accept "the situation as it is, as it now has already been for twenty-five years," Brandt claimed that his regime was speaking out "about something that most of those among us have already thought about in recent years."[2] Certainly expellees were generally depressed by the official cession of their *Heimat* and generally disliked *Ostpolitik*, but in the end Brandt was fundamentally on target: they knew that this was only the political confirmation of a loss that they had long been coming to accept. Indeed, the treaty granted them *closure*, a moment to take stock and openly acknowledge realities that they had considered for some time. Far from protesting in the streets,

[1] See the treaty text in "Vertrag zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Volksrepublik Polen über die Grundlagen der Normalisierung ihrer Beziehungen sowie Information der Regierung der Volksrepublik Polen über Maßnahmen zur Lösung humanitärer Probleme, Warschau, 7. Dezember 1970," in *Bonn-Warschau 1945-1991: Die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen, Analyse und Dokumentation*, ed. Hans-Adolf Jacobsen and Mieczyslaw Tomala, 222-224 (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1992).
[2] Willy Brandt, "Erklärungen über Rundfunk und Fernsehen am 20. November 1970," in *Reden und Interviews* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe Verlag, 1971), 243-244.

they generally kept to themselves and took solace in the *Heimat* that they would always possess in their memories. Dwelling in a political torpor, they contributed to *Ostpolitik*'s success.

Significant studies have examined the political interplay and contestation surrounding the 1970 treaty, such as the central role of Willy Brandt, the opposition of the CDU/CSU, and the threats of the expellee leadership; however none have offered serious attention to the expellees themselves, in whose name various political actors, especially the treaty opponents, claimed to be fighting.[3] Usually, the interests of expellees are ignored, conflated with the opinions of the political leadership, or said to have been relatively unimportant due to the expelled population's advanced age and economic integration. In the first place, even if those expelled as adults were now elderly, they still possessed potential political influence and the ability for active protest, as did middle-aged expellees. At the same time, economic integration seldom meant that they ceased to care about the fate of the East. In light of the memory culture exhibited and analyzed in the previous chapters, it is clear that many expellees still felt connection to Silesia as it existed in the abstract spaces of memory, including those expelled as children, who often nourished very fond recollections of the imagined world where they had been born and raised. So it is that, to comprehend the events of 1970, one cannot simply brush aside the views of the expellees. Their contribution to *Ostpolitik* must be explored.

Bringing expellees to the forefront of discussion, the 1970 treaty suddenly becomes a "point of reflection," continuous with the prior, growing understanding among expellees about the permanence of their exile. Though the Brandt administration faced no shortfall of bravado

[3] The public debates in mainstream newspapers and among politicians before and after the treaty has most recently been covered in Manfred Kittel, *Vertreibung der Vertriebenen? Der historische deutsche Osten in der Erinnerungskultur der Bundesrepublik (1961-1982)* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007) and Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, "*Ostpolitik* and Poland," in *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974. European and Global Responses*, ed. Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer, 39-57 (Cambridge and Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 2009). See also close analysis of expellee political groups in 1970 in Pertti Ahonen, *After the Expulsion: West Germany and Eastern Europe, 1945-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

from political opponents, the treaty slipped past without serious resistance from the population as a whole. Cries of outrage from expellee leaders met a groundswell of resignation rather than revolution, as for many expellees the ongoing political events merely confirmed the urgency of commemorating the ever-fragile, ever-fading *Heimat* of memory. There were even those who felt excitement that, with the confirmation of Silesia as part of Poland's West, the alleviated political environment would open new opportunities for travel and engagement with the former German East. Brandt himself had sought to tap into these hopes in his speech, promising that, with the border confirmed, ethnic Germans in Poland would be allowed to join their relatives in the West, and expellees would be given "the chance to visit the sites of their birth and the graves of their forefathers again in the old *Heimat*."[4] In hindsight, one sees that 1970 was above all a "turning point" in the political realm, as henceforth the hard-line expellee leadership became more and more isolated from society, doomed to obsolescence through its continued intransigence about territorial claims. A few prophets among them had already foreseen this in the preceding years and urged engagement with Poland, rather than antagonism, as the only possible future; for this they were excommunicated from the mainstream expellee leadership.

This overview of 1970 as an event in the lives of West Germany's expellees will be undertaken in three parts. The first will recount the traditional political narrative about how the treaty came about and then assess the strong political opposition it faced. In many ways serving as a coda to the expellee political project exhibited in chapter two, it will be shown how 1970 offered expellee leaders their last significant moment in the limelight, ardently preaching their tired rhetoric about a return to the 1937 borders despite superficial claims that they were also interested in reconciliation with Poland. Most significantly, they warned the Brandt administration that the millions for whom they supposedly spoke would never stand by and allow

[4] Willy Brandt, "Erklärungen über Rundfunk und Fernsehen am 20. November 1970," 243.

the regime to "renounce" their *Heimat* (anticipating this, *Heimatverzicht* was a term Brandt sensitively rejected). Herbert Czaja, the leader of the League of Expellees from 1970-1994 (BdV), declared that expellees were ready to march en-masse to demand the return of their *Heimat*, and though these protests were supposed to be peaceful, police were mobilized to expect violence.[5]

In contrast to the extensive preparation and expectations from both sides of the political leadership, all was relatively quiet in December 1970; the second part offers a new look at why. Building on the findings of the preceding chapters, the calm in 1970 should come as no surprise. In the end, Willy Brandt was just as powerless to convince expellees to give up on *Heimkehr* as Herbert Czaja was to drive them on to reconquer the lost East. The real weakening of the expellee desire for return had to come from within. Over twenty-five years of reflection, most expellees' "right to the *Heimat*" had come to refer to a *Heimat* which they knew only lived on in memory. In continuity with chapter four, they used the moment of the treaty as a chance to share reflections and light Christmas candles for a bygone world. In continuity with chapter five, they gathered together to commemorate the lost *Heimat* and found rootedness together in what had by then become dear, adoptive *Heimat* spaces in the West. Above all, in continuity with chapter six, they dreamed of, planned, and undertook real journeys back to Silesia as tourists, crossing the border in ever greater numbers thanks to the decline in tensions resulting from the 1970 treaty.

Finally, a concluding part illustrates how even those at the political extremes of the expellee community fell into the same pattern of mourning and resignation. Even traditionally leftist and progressive expellees mourned the finality of the 1970 treaty. And even a handful of

[5] Herbert Czaja was employed by the Nazi "Department of Education" in Kraków during World War II and helped to send professors from the Jagiellonian university in Kraków to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Central Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, *Leaders of Ultra-Nationalist "Aktion Widerstand" in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Warsaw, 1971), 29.

traditionally revisionist expellee leaders had come to see that, if they persisted in the territorial claims of their peers, they would become irrelevant, not only in German society, but also for expellees. All of this should reframe how one thinks about German society amid the controversial events of 1970. By the time that Willy Brandt fell on his knees before the Warsaw Ghetto monument in 1970, millions of Germans had already shed tears that they could only reside in their *Heimat* of memory.

1. The 1970 Treaty of Warsaw: The Political Background and Battles[6]

Parallel to twenty-five years of opposition by the expellee leadership (as illustrated in chapter two), some West German political and religious leaders steadily accepted the idea that, for the sake of reunification and East-West peace, the demand for a Germany restored within its 1937 borders must be abandoned. To name just a handful of benchmarks along the way, the SPD politician Carlo Schmid took a trip to Warsaw in 1958 and declared the need for reconciliation with Poland on the basis of political realities, including German guilt; for this he was reprimanded during a session of the *Bundestag* by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, who claimed that communist Poland and West Germany had no "common interests."[7] In the Tübingen Memorandum of November 6, 1961, a group of intellectuals and Protestant leaders petitioned the *Bundestag* to recognize the Oder-Neisse border in order to further the cause of reunification with the DDR.[8] By the mid-1960s, West German journalists such as Neven du Mont (1963) and Hans-Jakob Stehle (1964) broadcasted mainstream television programs portraying Poland's

[6] For an excellent history of the treaty in documents, featuring the text of the Moscow and Warsaw treaties of 1970 and responses by the political players, the press, and scholars, see *Die Verträge der Bundesrepublik Deutschland mit der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken vom 12. August 1970 und mit der Volksrepublik Polen vom 7. Dezember 1970.* (Bonn: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, March 1971).
[7] "Aus der Rede des Bundeskanzlers K. Adenauer vor dem Deutschen Bundestag, 23. Januar 1958," in *Bonn-Warschau 1945-1991*, ed. Jacobsen and Tomala, 89.
[8] Meant to be a confidential paper, it was leaked to the press and published on February 24, 1962."Auszug aus dem 'Tübinger Memorandum' vom 6. November 1961," in *Bonn-Warschau 1945-1991*, 115.

Western Territories in positive, if at times idealized ways, offering the West German public a stronger sense that these regions had become an integral part of the neighboring country.[9] In a memoir of October 1, 1965 entitled "The Circumstances of the Expellees and the Relationship of the German People to their Eastern Neighbors," a synod of Protestant bishops renounced revenge and violence (language in fact reminiscent of the 1950 Expellee Charter) and recounted, not only the suffering of expellees, but also the suffering of Poles, inflicted by Germans.[10] Similar language filled the letters exchanged by the Polish and Catholic bishops at the Second Vatican Council in November 1965, which, despite some reference to past grievances, was framed by the Christian obligation to "forgive and beg for forgiveness," a phrase that was henceforth at the center of the Polish-German Christian project for reconciliation.[11] The generally insular expellee culture did not tend to play a great role in these developments; though expellees steadily confronted loss and even at times took note of Poles as fellow-victims, they seldom mustered the stamina to explicitly call for recognition of the Oder-Neisse-Line.

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[9] Hansjakob Stehle, *Deutschlands Osten— Polens Westen? Eine Dokumentation* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Bücherei, 1965); Jürgen Neven-du Mont, "'Polen in Breslau'. Wie sieht das Leben in Breslau im Jahre 1963 aus? Ein Filmbericht von Jürgen Neven-du Mont," BPA Abt. Nachrichten, Rundfunkaufnahme, Deutsche Gruppe West, May 7, 1963, 8:15 PM, BAK B 145/2858. Both reporters were attacked by the expellee leadership, and Du Mont was even physically assaulted at an expellee political convention.

[10] Erwin Wilkens, ed., *Vertreibung und Versöhnung. Die Synode der EKD zur Denkschrift 'Die Lage der Vertriebenen und das Verhältnis des deutschen Volkes zu seinen östlichen Nachbarn'* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1966). The first edition of 27,000 copies on May 1, 1965 sold out quickly, as did further editions printed that same year. The Silesian *Landsmannschaft* tried in vain to attack it; now presuming to speak for all German Protestants as well as expellees, they claimed that church attendance was in decline because the church leadership was taking on a political mantel and, though the memoir, "dedicating a highly unpleasant polemic against church members of eastern German origin and against the expellee organizations," whom they claimed had the support of the churchgoing population. Bert Berlin, "Es begann mit der 'Ost-Denkschrift'. Einige Bemerkungen zu den Austritten aus der evangelischen Kirche," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 22, no. 1 (New Years 1970), 3. This does not mean that the Protestant community welcomed the Treaty of Warsaw when it was signed in 1970– in the leading Protestant expellee paper, the regular contributor Paul Bertram contended that the treaty would not lead to "true peace," since the "injustice" in the East Bloc's system of government would remain; though never specifically mentioning expellees in particular, he argued, "Genuine peace will not be based on strength, but on justice." See his article "Friedensvertrag? Friede ist nicht gleich Friede," *Schlesische Gottesfreund* 21, no. 12 (December 1970), 2936-2937. For all this, the *Ostdenkschrift* received a generally warm reception in Poland. Sylvia de Pasquale, *Die EKD-Denkschrift 'Die Lage der Vertriebenen und das Verhältnis des deutschen Volkes zu seinen östlichen Nachbarn' von 1965 im Spiegel der deutschen und polnischen Presse* (January 1996), 62.

[11] *German-Polish Dialogue: Letters of the Polish and German Bishops and International Statements*. Bonn-Brussels-New York: Edition Atlantic Forum, 1966.

While over a decade of CDU/CSU rule maintained a status-quo on the border issue, the opposition SPD started to develop a new *Ostpolitik* in the early 1960s. Like most leading politicians, Brandt was careful at first not to offend the powerful expellee lobby; as Polish journalist Marian Podkowinski noted in *Trybuna Ludu* in 1961, Willy Brandt, then mayor of West Berlin, declared at the annual *Schlesiertreffen* before 200,000 participants that "Silesia remains a German land in our consciousness," requiring a struggle for "just borders" and "right to the *Heimat*."[12] For all this, in 1967 Brandt's associate Egon Bahr started unofficial meetings with Jerzy Raczkowski, counselor to Polish embassy, in advance of an expected SPD election victory; here both Bahr and Brandt recognized that intransigence on the Oder-Neisse border would yield nothing from the Poles, for whom the border's legitimacy had been the foremost question in foreign policy since the end of World War II.[13] With this in view, Brandt took a more aggressive stance in 1968; by then foreign minister of a CDU/SPD coalition government, he published his view that, though the 1937 borders should be a "point of departure" at a future peace conference (in which the borders of a reunited Germany were to be delineated),[14] the fact that forty percent of the resident Polish population had been born in the former eastern territories demonstrated that Germany's "legal titles" to the East no longer coincided with reality, and no ruling on the border would ever "be agreed upon against the will of the Polish people." Thus, he

[12] Marian Podkowinski, "Willy Brandt auf dem Schlesiertreffen," in *Die Polnische Presse zum Schlesiertreffen 1961*, ed. Freiherr von Braun, 12-13 (Göttingen: Göttinger Arbeitskreis Veröffentlichung Nr. 253, 1961), 12-13, originally *Trybuna Ludu* Warsaw 159, v. 11.6.1961.

[13] As Edmund Dmitrów demonstrates, Poland's communist regime recognized from the start that the postwar border issue and fear of German revanchism would win them public support for the alliance with USSR. The 1970 Treaty of Warsaw helped to weaken the regime by reducing fears about German revanchism and the sense that Soviet protection was necessary for Poland's defense. See "Vergangenheitspolitik in Polen 1945-1989," in *Deutsche-Polnische Beziehungen 1939 1945 1949: Eine Einführung*, ed. Włodzimierz Borodziej and Klaus Ziemer, 235-264 (Osnabrück: Fibre Verlag, 2000), 246. Dan Diner likewise notes that "the standing of the Polish Communists remained by and large undisputed so long as the territorial question in the West was open." See *Das Jahrhundert Verstehen: eine universalhistorische Deutung* (Munich: Luchterhand, 1999), 133.

[14] Willy Brandt, *Friedenspolitik in Europa* (Frankfurt/Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968), 114.

concluded, "after the declaration of the mutual renunciation of violence that we offer, the Poles can feel safe in their borders."[15]

In May 1969, Władysław Gomułka, first secretary of Polish Communist policy, finally gestured his openness to confirm Poland's western border with the recently elected Brandt administration.[16] Within days, Brandt issued an official government statement advocating normalization of relations with Poland, and Egon Bahr, now secretary of state, proposed that, for the sake of future German reunification, "the current western border is no longer an object of discussion and thus should be incorporated in any text regulating the issue of territorial integrity."[17] After negotiations in both West Germany and Poland from February through November 1970, Brandt traveled to Warsaw from December 6-9; he signed the treaty and surprised the world by kneeling before the monument to the victims of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, an act which roughly half of the respondents of a poll in *Der Spiegel* felt to be "exaggerated" rather than "appropriate."[18] For many Germans at the time, this celebrated act of national reconciliation was simply too much; how this translated into the expellee struggle to cope with loss, and indeed whether some expellees might have grown ready to accept Brandt's *Kniefall* as a genuine and responsible gesture will be explored in the second part.

Certainly the debates were not over after the signing of the treaty. The CDU/CSU opposition attempted to topple the Brandt regime with a vote of no confidence, and there was a

[15] Ibid., 122.
[16] Douglas Selvage demonstrates that in fact Gomułka's regime resisted the 1968 SPD offer to recognize the Oder-Neisse border, due to the possibility that Ostpolitik would also cater more to the interests of the DDR or USSR. Fear of isolation within the East Bloc, as the DDR itself chose trade with the BRD over trade with Poland, finally made Gomułka consent to deal directly with the BRD. See "The Treaty of Warsaw: The Warsaw Pact Context," *German Historical Institute Bulletin Supplement* 1 (2003): 67-79.
[17] Quoted in Ruchniewicz, "*Ostpolitik* and Poland," 44.
[18] "Kniefall angemessen oder übertrieben? Spiegel-Umfrage über Willy Brandts Totenehrung am Ehrenmal im früheren Warschauer Getto," *Der Spiegel* 51, no. 14 (1970): 27. As Bogdan Koszel notes, the images of Brandt's *Kniefall* were hidden from the Polish public until 1989. See "Die Außenpolitik der Volksrepublik Polen gegenüber der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949-1989," in *Erlebte Nachbarschaft. Aspekte der deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Jan-Pieter Barbian and Marek Zybura, 57-75 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 65.

protracted struggle to prevent ratification of the treaty (ultimately in May 1972, 248 voted in favor, 17 voted against, and 231 representatives abstained).[19] Despite the fact that the Polish public in general felt the treaty to be of great importance and a way to engender greater trust in the Germans, Bonn also had to pursue a lengthy battle with the Polish regime, which demanded greater compensation for the suffering of Polish concentration camp victims during the Second World War and backed away from its claim that it would allow remaining individuals in Poland who declared themselves as Germans to emigrate to West Germany.[20] Finally in August 1975 Warsaw accepted Bonn's offer of 1 billion DM in investment credits in return for allowing ethnic Germans to leave.[21] The wave of emigration offered just the latest proof that the Germans in Poland knew that the only "German *Heimat*" which remained to them was in the West, in Germany– surely no surprise to those in the expellee community who corresponded with relatives in Polish or read the abundance of reports about conditions there in the Heimat papers. 370,000 Germans had already resettled from Poland to Germany from 1955-1970 thanks to agreements between the German and Polish Red Cross. After the signing of the Treaty of Warsaw, a flood of 270,000 new applications came to Warsaw for emigration, and especially after 1975 most of these applicants managed to leave.[22]

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[19] Krzysztof Miszczak, *Deklarationen und Realitäten. Die Beziehungen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der (Volks-)Republik Polen von der Unterzeichnung des Warschauer Vertrages bis zum Abkommen über gute Nachbarschaft und freundschaftliche Zusammenarbeit (1970-91)* (Munich: tuduv-Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 1993), 98.

[20] Karl Hartmann, "Vier Jahre deutsch-polnischer Vertrag," *Osteuropa* 25 (April 1975), 246-256.

[21] Brandt's *Ostpolitik* remained the basis of BRD foreign policy with Poland: the 1975 agreement was reached via Brandt's successor Helmut Schmidt, and in 1990 Helmut Kohl (CDU) confirmed the Oder-Neiße border. Ruchniewicz, "*Ostpolitik* and Poland," 48, 57.

[22] Koszel, "Die Außenpolitik der Volksrepublik Polen gegenüber der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949-1989," 66-67. For an excellent review of the major decisions and treaties which marked the improvement in German-Polish relations from the late 1960s through the end of the Cold War, as well as statistics on German emigration from Poland, see Miszczak, *Deklarationen und Realitäten*.

Not unexpectedly, the expellee political leadership strongly opposed the treaty from the start and attacked Brandt's *Kniefall* as a form of national "betrayal."[23] The day before the treaty signing, after months of heavy campaigning, the federal chairman of the Upper Silesian *Landsmannschaft* sent a letter to the chancellor, formally "depriving" him of "the right to hand over legally binding declarations for all the groups that had earlier resided in Upper Silesia."[24] The press organs of the Silesian *Landsmannschaft* likewise wrote to government leaders, rejecting the treaty on behalf of all expellees for having sanctioned Polish annexation, and threatening new tensions and polarizations.[25] Herbert Czaja, the head of the BdV, went so far as to warn that expellees would rally "democratically" to "achieve constant opposition, that is to say spiritual and political, individual and organized."[26]

What exactly did the expellee leadership propose as an alternative to the treaty? Though in public they shrank from the prospect of expelling those now living in the former German territories and claimed quite regularly that their hands were stretched out for reconciliation with Poland, they were without question calling for the *Heimkehr* of the expellees and restitution of their property. At the annual gathering of the Silesian *Landsmannschaft* in Hannover in 1969, president Herbert Hupka declared that he did not desire a "second expulsion" of people from Silesia, but nonetheless demanded the restitution of expellee property, a platform which the

[23] "Verzicht ist Verrat" and "Auf die Knie darf ein Kanzler nur vor Gott!" *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 20, no. 3 (February 1971), 2.
[24] Friedrich Hollunder to Willy Brandt, "Mitteilung für die Presse," December 6, 1970, BAK B 137/5998.
[25] Pressedienst Schlesien, Bonn, December 7, 1970, BAK B 137/5998. The letter was also sent to the BMgF. Another common approach was to denounce the treaty as a replay of the 1950 Görlitz Treaty, through which the DDR had recognized the border, an act many prominent politicians had then declared as "unjust". See for instance "Die Landsmannschaft Schlesien erklärt zur Paraphierung des Vertrages von Warschau," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 22, no. 48 (November 26, 1970), 1.
[26] "'Organisiert Widerstand leisten'. SPIEGEL-Interview mit dem Präsidenten des Bundes der Vertriebenen Dr. Herbert Czaja," *Der Spiegel* 24, no. 19 (1970): 30-31.

Landsmannschaft later claimed to be representative for the 230,000 who had gathered.[27] The leadership applied a variety of imagery to convey their claim. In a 1967 article, they presented a photograph of rock formations in the *Riesengebirge* to point to an ancient German past, affirming that, "measured from these spaces of time, the years in which we had to remain distant from our Heimat will seem like the blink of an eye."[28] To achieve such a far-fetched campaign, leaders themselves admitted that they had to react "time and again" to a question "posed in private conversation and in public. . . who really wants to go back?" In response to this question, an expellee leader with the pen-name Ostrog fantasized mere months before the treaty signing that far-reaching change would occur in the East in anticipation of the return to the *Heimat*. Exceptionally vague about just how this would come about (apart from promising an end to the communist "tyrants" who had "turned the Heimat into a foreign land" and assuring that there would be no "second expulsion"), he urged all expellees to agitate for return; should an expellee be asked if he wanted to go back, he was to answer "under the precondition that one has *sufficient fantasy at his disposal* in order to envision a better future."[29] Openly admitting that return could only occur in the realm of fantasy, the leadership remained irresponsible enough to profess that return was imminent, and so its supposed claims of friendship with Poland rang hollow.

The most violent expression of the leadership's position manifested itself in the actions of rightwing fringe groups, most notably *Aktion Oder-Neisse* and *Aktion Widerstand*, both of which had direct roots in the mainstream expellee movement. *Aktion Oder-Neisse*, founded in September 1962 by the prominent *Ostforscher* Bolko Freiherr von Richthofen, professed such

[27] Herbert Arndt, "Schlesier suchen Aussöhnung mit Polen. Hupka fordert Solidaritätsappel von Bonn. 230 000 beim Deutschlandtreffen in Hannover," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 23, no. 7/8 (July/August 1969), 151-154.
[28] "Die Quarksteine im Riesengebirge," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 16, no. 22 (1967), 3.
[29] Italics added, Ostrog, "Wer will denn überhaupt zurück?" *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 22, no. 5 (January 29, 1970), 3.

platforms as the "winning back" of the *Heimat* through removal of all the "illegal occupants in eastern Germany," with cynical assurance that Poles would experience their expulsion in a "much more orderly" fashion than that experienced by the expellees.[30] Linus Kather, formerly a mainstream expellee politician, entered into the fold of the rightwing nationalist NPD party in 1968 with the argument that it was the only party left which defended the "German character" of the lost East;[31] after the NPD fell below the 5% mark needed to retain a seat in the *Bundestag*, he helped to found *Aktion Widerstand* in the company of leading rightwing ex-Nazis in Munich on October 25, 1970.[32] Kather loathed the aversion to radicalism and violence which he observed at expellee meetings and warmly encouraged his supporters to remember: "Radicalism can be something very good, in this case it is indispensible."[33]

Aktion Widerstand reached its apex in an assembly of roughly three to four thousand rightwing enthusiasts in Würzburg on October 31, 1970, who professed themselves ready to stop *Ostpolitik* "with every means" and to mobilize "the silent majority" in West Germany who, they were certain, shared their views. After a series of frenetic speeches, punctuated by cheers and the mass-salute with three fingers in the shape of a W, three thousand of them set off on a premeditated and illegal march through the city, chanting such slogans as: "Willy Brandt to the wall!"; "German land will never be given away, we'd rather see Brandt hang!"; "Willy Brandt, treacherous pig!"; and "Germany, we're on our way!"[34] It just so happened that, on the other side of town, Günter Grass was meeting with a student assembly to discuss upcoming elections;

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[30] "'Akon' fordert Abzug der Polen aus Ostdeutschland," *Dürener Nachrichten*, November 10, 1964, BAK B 234/42.
[31] Central Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, *Leaders of Ultra-Nationalist "Aktion Widerstand" in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Warsaw, 1971), 28.
[32] Among them was the leader of *Aktion Widerstand*, Peter Bruno Kleist, who had joined the NSDAP in 1932, served as a devout SS officer, and led the Nazi ministry for the Germanization of the Baltic countries. Ibid., 14-15.
[33] "Radikalismus unentbehrlich," *Deutsche Nachrichten* (October 30, 1970), 5.
[34] "Rechtsradikale rüsten zum Kampf. Gründungsversammlung der 'Aktion Widerstand' mit NPD-Chef von Thadden," *Main-Post* (November 2, 1970), in *Aktion Widerstand. Eine antidemokratische Bewegung, dargestellt in Dokumenten* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1971), 40.

but discussion quickly revolved around the overwhelming desire among the students to march against *Aktion Widerstand*, something Grass tried to dissuade for fear of violence. The youth deemed this motion "*uneffektiv*". No sooner had Grass's colleague summarily terminated the meeting, than about five hundred students marched through the city chanting the slogan "Nazis get out of our city, we've had enough of fascism!"[35] Police lines were set up between the two groups, and, as the mayor later recalled, the city was shaken with "violence and terror."[36] After the events in Würzburg, Aktion Widerstand led further (but less heavily attended) marches in Essen and Cologne in early December.[37] These events found attention all over Germany, and there were additional scuffles, such as when rightist and leftist students in Marburg started a fight on December 9, 1970, which was broken up by police.[38] Nevertheless, when one considers the millions affected by the cession of the Oder-Neisse territories, the scale of conflict generated primarily by former Nazi leaders remained surprisingly low. Even *Aktion Widerstand* itself dissolved and then dissipated into splinter neo-Nazi groups when on June 20, 1971 the NPD formally withdrew its support.

Though few expellee leaders openly supported violent resistance by a group like *Aktion Widerstand*, they did use their strong domination of *Heimat* papers in the months leading up to the treaty as a means to print ever more histrionic rhetoric *ad nauseam*; in so doing they raised the stakes so high that, when in the end the treaty was signed, they had everything to lose. In a cover-page article in the *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* on the eve of the treaty signing, Erich Janke,

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[35] "Grass warnte vor den Rechten. Jugend demonstrierte trotzdem. OB Zeitler: Demokratie muß radikale Kräfte verkraften. Widerstand gegen die Aktion Widerstand in Würzburg," *Main-Echo* (November 2, 1970), 3, in *Aktion Widerstand* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1971), 53.
[36] "Rechtsradikale rüsten zum Kampf. Gründungsversammlung der 'Aktion Widerstand' mit NPD-Chef von Thadden," *Main-Post* (November 2, 1970), in *Aktion Widerstand*, 40.
[37] Central Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, *Leaders of Ultra-Nationalist "Aktion Widerstand" in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Warsaw, 1971), 13.
[38] "Aktion Widerstand lost Schlägerei aus," *Frankfurter Neue Presse* (December 10, 1970), in *Aktion Widerstand* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1971), 133.

a Silesian *Landsmannschaft* leader, warned that the treaty would "never leave any sort of future possibilities open, but rather will seal them conclusively and for all time." On the next page, a bold poster featuring a map of the lost territories in their 1937 borders declared that the Warsaw Treaty was the "death sentence for eastern Germany! (Todesurteil für Ostdeutschland!)," a phrase repeated in the months to come.[39] The stakes were drawn in a desperate campaign: the leadership portrayed the treaty as a "now or never" moment, in which expellees had to declare their "right to self-determination," lest the doors for border revision close forever. Then the doors closed, and the leadership's own rhetoric about "for all time" left them with nowhere to go.

2. The 1970 Treaty of Warsaw: The Expellee Response

Early on, Willy Brandt recognized the need to convince the expellee population that, at the very least, *Ostpolitik* was not so dire as the expellee leadership made it out to be. For all the assaults he weathered in the halls of power, if the population at large remained relatively peaceful, then the storm would hopefully pass. Evidence to this effect fills the language that Brandt applied immediately before and during the treaty negotiations, language which was clearly directed to an expellee audience. In a speech to the Advisory Board of Expellees and Refugees and SPD party leadership during his election campaign on April 22, 1969, he sensitively declared the "cultural and spiritual substance of the eastern territories" as a heritage to be preserved, not only among expellees, but "for the whole nation. Only in this way can that which was lost outside be won internally." The entire "*Volk*" was to preserve eastern trademarks, such as traditions and dialects.[40] There would be no renunciation (Verzicht) of the *Heimat of memory*. Likewise, in his November 20, 1970 televised speech, Brandt called on all Germans "to

[39] Erich Janke, "Ein Verhängnisvoller Vertrag," and "Warschauer Vertrag: Todesurteil für Ostdeutschland!" *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 19, no. 23 (First December Edition 1970), 1-2, 3.
[40] Quoted in Kittel, *Vertreibung der Vertriebenen?* 12.

muster understanding and attentiveness for a burden which [expellees] carry with them for us all: the loss of *Heimat* and the fact that "whoever lost relatives or had their Heimat taken away will only be able to forget with difficulty." Asserting that the treaty was not "legitimizing injustice after the fact" (as expellee leaders claimed), but rather was "a result of the crimes of Hitler," he also assured expellees that they could keep their cherished victim status. "Nevertheless," he continued, "at this hour I have to ask my expellee compatriots not to nurse bitterness, but rather to turn their eyes to the future." This future, he argued, was embodied in a treaty that would finally "close a dark chapter of European history" and foster "the possibility for understanding and cooperation."[41] The day that he signed that treaty, he declared in another television broadcast that Germans "must proceed from what is, what has come into being, also in reference to Poland's western border." And quoting eastern German notables such as the Silesian poet Andreas Gryphius and the East Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant, he emphasized the need for all Europeans to mourn their past suffering, to avoid resentment, and strive toward a peaceful future.[42] Other SPD leaders copied Brandt's rhetoric as they sought to address their expellee populations in the months after the treaty,[43] and when the allied FDP party's federal chairman spoke to the *Bundestag* in November 1970, he went so far as to assert that, by calling for peace in Europe and renouncing revenge, the treaty was fulfilling the pacifist goals set forth by the expellees in the 1950 Charter.[44]

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[41] Willy Brandt, "Erklärungen über Rundfunk und Fernsehen am 20. November 1970," 243-244.
[42] Willy Brandt, "Fernsehansprache aus Warschau am 7. Dezember 1970," in *Reden und Interviews*, 250-251. See also *Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung* 171, December 8, 1970, pg. 1814. For further political analysis of the Warsaw Treaty, see Axel Schildt, "Mending Fences: The Federal Republic of Germany and Eastern Europe," in *Germany and the European East in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Eduard Mühle, 153-180 (Oxford: Berg, 2003).
[43] See for instance the March 19, 1971 speech of Lower Saxon prime minister Alfred Kubel (SPD) to an expellee public. Ministerpräsident Kubel, "Zeitgemäße zum 50. Jahrestag der Volksabstimmung in Oberschlesien (20. März 1921)," BAK B 137/5998, 14-15.
[44] Volrad Deneke, "Stellungnahme der FDP zum Vertrag zwischen der Volksrepublik Polen und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, 16. November 1970," in *Bonn-Warschau 1945-1991*, ed. Jacobsen and Tomala, 220.

Though perhaps Brandt was in fact only gambling that expellees had come to terms with "reality," he ultimately proved more astute than a popular magazine like *Der Spiegel*, which in its May 4, 1970 issue portrayed expellees as mindless rabble massing behind the invectives of their leadership.[45] In *Spiegel*'s depiction of the approaching treaty, Brandt was presented as a hero, breaking a longstanding taboo in the face of opponents like BdV president Herbert Czaja, who promised massive expellee resistance to the border's recognition.[46] Imagery throughout the article was meant to reinforce the idea of an impending expellee revolution: opposite images of German soldiers murdering Poles during the war, *Spiegel* featured expellees massed at rallies, expellee youth marching with drums to "inherit their right to the *Heimat*," and processions under banners on the "Day of the *Heimat*." Even the "right to the *Heimat*" voiced in the 1950 Expellee Charter was portrayed as proof of longstanding expellee revisionism, without mention of the Charter's rejection of violence and retaliation. As such, there was absolutely no humanization, much less empathy for the expellees, and a reader could easily envision the millions flocking behind Czaja for a great revolution against the treaty. Even the CDU/CSU opposition endorsed the idea that expellees would enter into active struggle to prevent *Ostpolitik*; party chairman Franz-Josef Strauß declared in June 1970 that Silesian *Landsmannschaft* president Herbert Hupka's speeches signified a collective demand on behalf of all expellees, rather than just a few functionaries, and that it was moreover "the opinion of [all] Germans, or at least it should be."[47]

What were expellees in fact talking about in the months before, during, and after Willy Brandt's trip to Warsaw? Far from Strauß or Czaja's fantasies and *Spiegel*'s fears, years of steady reflection had prepared expellees to accept reality, painful though it was. This is not the

[45] "Oder-Neisse-Grenze. Gott behüte," *Der Spiegel* 24, no. 19 (1970), 27-34.
[46] "'Organisiert Widerstand leisten'. SPIEGEL-Interview mit dem Präsidenten des Bundes der Vertriebenen Dr. Herbert Czaja," *Der Spiegel* 24, no. 19 (1970), 30-31.
[47] "'Der Schlesier' im deutschen Bundestag," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 22, no. 23 (June 4, 1970), 1.

sort of outlook that one will find at first glance in the expellee press. Only through leafing past the statements of the *Landsmannschaft*, BdV, and various leaders, printed and reprinted on the most prominent pages, does it become possible to uncover a sense of resignation, an urgency to commemorate the past, and, after the treaty signing, even a sense of relief that at last the inevitable had transpired. In *Der Schlesier* itself, the mouthpiece of the Silesian *Landsmannschaft*, this trend was evident throughout the months surrounding the treaty (1) in muted, at times even stark political allusions, (2) amid private reflections about the lost *Heimat*, (3) at *Heimat* meetings, and (4) during *Heimat* tours (thus in direct continuity with trends shown in the previous three chapters).

The first of these motifs brings most strongly to the forefront the question of expellee political orientation and possible activism: to what extent were expellees politically opposed to the revisionist statements which were especially strong around the time of the treaty? At one extreme, the expellee Hans Stephan wrote to Chancellor Brandt on May 21, 1971, taking him to task for having reversed himself from his position in the early 1960s, when he had declared that "renouncing [the East] is treachery (Verzicht ist Verrat)."[48] At the other extreme, however, the *Liegnitzer Heimatzeitung* reprinted a very candid letter from a "non-reader" of their paper (in order to attack it), and in so doing revealed deep-seated political opposition. Having been sent a "promotional copy" of the paper (the late-August 1970 issue), she was appalled by the political content which blackened the first pages, notably the cover-page article, which featured a large map of the eastern territories alongside demands that expellees reject *Ostpolitik*. "I will never order this newspaper," she responded:

[48] This letter was reprinted in the newsletter run by his old classmates. It was not representative of the usual content, which was generally apolitical and devoted to commemorating the old school and teachers. *Mitteilungsblatt des Matthesianer-Verbandes* 20 (November 1971), 2-3.

> In my opinion, a paper that features an opening article of this sort stands opposed to my life outlook, which is oriented toward the friendship of peoples and world peace. Because you represent the opinion of the 'career expellees' [Berufsvertriebenen], who make politics and do business with sentimental feelings. . . I would like to explicitly distance myself in every way. Since my address will be published against my wishes, I'd like you to explicitly print that I welcome the eastern treaties with Moscow and Warsaw and await a contribution for understanding between peoples and peace.[49]

The FDP (in coalition with Brandt's SPD) felt confident enough that this outlook represented a common view among *Schlesier*'s readers to place a huge advertisement just months before the treaty signing, calling on expellees to vote for their party as a show of support for the change to a more liberal platform, which of course included *Ostpolitik*.[50]

Dissention from revisionist positions on the cover pages stimulated debates among the readers themselves. During Christmas in 1970, just after the treaty had been signed, Herbert Schönwitz drew on the very common theme of expellee suffering to give his peaceful acceptance to the Warsaw treaty. Writing to the *Neue Brieger Zeitung*, he asserted that at last it was clear that the *Heimat* was lost: "the political developments in recent weeks and months have given us cruel certainty that. . . we will never see our unforgettable Heimat again." Silesia, he claimed, had been as German as any part of West Germany, and this land now had to "pay the bill of which the individual person of this German land was guiltless."[51] Having first suffered as innocent victims during the expulsion, he argued, expellees were now suffering again for the sake of peace.[52] Ilse Menzel rejected Schönwitz's reflections the following month for not having gone far enough. Though she approved of his advocacy for peace, she admonished him for his

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[49] Irene Hohn, Letter to the Editors, *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 23, no. 1 (Early January 1971), 3.
[50] Expellees should vote FDP, they argued, out of gratitude that "without the FDP, the change in government so bitterly needed after twenty years of CDU rule would not have been possible." "Offener Brief von Willi Weyer, Innenminister und Landesvorsitzender der F.D.P. in Nordrhein-Westfalen, an alle Bürger," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 22, no. 22 (May 28, 1970), 7.
[51] Herbert Schönwitz, "Erinnerungen an Weihnachten 1945," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 24, no. 12 (December 1970), 279. The Brieg *Heimat* community offers a particularly useful case study: the *Heimat* paper was not nearly so strictly edited as most others, which allows one to see a great deal more of what the general expellee population thought. Other papers tended to give over the most prominent pages to revisionist perspectives.
[52] Herbert Schönwitz, "Erinnerungen an Weihnachten 1945," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 24, no. 12 (December 1970), 280.

continued bitterness and identified complicity with Nazism (also by expellees) as the cause for the loss of the East. She presented herself as having suffered as much as any expellee: like so many other women, she had fled Brieg as the Russians had approached in the winter of 1945; she carried along her two small children and was fearful for her husband at the front. This being said, she declared that these "wounds" had been healing for most expellees, and she was angry with Schönwitz for "ripping these wounds back open," just as she was angry with him for trying to rewrite the past and claim that Silesians hadn't played a part in Nazi crimes:

> most expellees voted for Adolf Hitler and helped him to power– admittedly without believing and often without knowing of the Satanic cruelties with which this man ruled. But that does not absolve anyone from responsibility and guilt for the war and the form in which it was led on the front and in the *Heimat*. The development that followed from this is the harvest of a seed that the expellees had not impeded.

Thus, she argued, "as much as we love our Silesia with all of its beauties, as much as we welcome that *Heimat* associations cultivate its history, customs, and traditions," it was also essential to counteract a "cult of *Heimat*" that nourished a sense of injustice and prevented any open reconciliation with Poland. This position, she concluded "speaks for many expellees."[53]

It would be difficult to prove Menzel's assertion that, by 1970, many expellees recognized that they had been perpetrators as well as victims. The sheer longevity of the expellee culture of victimhood can be proven by the fact that Hans Graf von Lehndorff's "East Prussian Diary," a sympathetic survival account of expulsion, had sold 235,000 copies by the mid-1960s and entered its twenty-first edition by 2006.[54] This being said, it is evident that most expellees had progressed at least as far as Schönwitz in their process of dealing with loss: seldom so politically outspoken as in the cases shown above, expellees in general retreated from the

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[53] Ilse Menzel, "Mitverantwortung und Mitschuld," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 25, no. 1 (January 1971), 8-9.
[54] Hans Graf von Lehndorff, *Ostpreußisches Tagebuch. Aufzeichnungen eines Arztes aus den Jahren 1945–1947* (Munich: Biederstein Verlag, 1961). Translated by Elizabeth Mayer as *Token of a Covenant. Diary of an East Prussian Surgeon, 1945-47* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964); For statistics see Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 180.

political questions of the time and embraced the pleasant *Heimat of memory* that they would never lose. Herbert Czaja knew all too well that he could never mobilize this kind of reaction. Having observed the feeble response of expellees to the 1970 treaty, he fretted a few weeks later that expellees were "sinking into *Heimweh*," and he called on all expellees "to toss the past behind with resignation and bitterness" and press on to their "great goal" of (somehow) recovering the East.[55] He was as powerless now as he had ever been to hold back the fundamentally apolitical melancholy that filled the expellee community. Even other *Heimat* leaders were "sinking into *Heimweh*" by the time of the treaty. Just over a year before, Claus Weniger, a regular contributor to the *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung*, urged his fellow expellees to speak out as a "unified community" against the "leftwing *Radikalinski*'s" and work "with peaceful means for our ancient German Heimat"; only in this way could they prove that they were "not a union of blissful big bushy beards, who peacefully indulge in their memories over sauerkraut and a knuckle of pork."[56] Ironically, though, Weniger himself spent most of his time reminiscing about "the garden that had belonged to my parents' house," which had featured an old walnut, pear, and linden tree. This world, "great and full of wonders," he already recognized in 1967 as lost, "in an unreachably distant land, [where] the linden tree certainly no longer rustles in the breeze."[57] Other expellees were also content to live in the spaces of the past, and as Weniger had feared (perhaps also in himself), this made them docile rather than active in the face of *Ostpolitik*.

Assessing the second motif, chapter four demonstrated how this "yearning over sauerkraut" was well underway in the years before. By November 1970, an "old Breslauer" and

[55] Herbert Czaja, "Der Friede ist das Werk der Gerechtigkeit," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 20, no. 1 (first January issue 1971), 1.
[56] Claus Weniger, "Wichtig ist, daß wir unserer Heimat treue Kinder sind," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 18, no. 5 (1969), 2
[57] Idem., "Der Garten. Eine Kindheitserinnerung," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 16, no. 15-16 (1967), 27.

his Silesian wife spent their vacation in Bavaria likewise indulging in memories and yearning for the "beautiful Breslauer garlic sausage" he had known as a child. Most of his ambling reflections fell back on the differences that set apart the "many sorts of '*Heimkehr*'." Imaginary journeys back home, he admitted, were "shaky," though these at least gave him some peace. Another form of *Heimkehr* involved returning home to the "second *Heimat*," in West Germany, after the trip to Bavaria. Then as a third type there was:

> the *Heimkehr* in our beloved Silesia, our good old 'Gruß Brassel [Breslau/Wrocław].' Yeah, and now the belief in that is *totally gone*, since in our generosity we no longer want to shake things up about the borders that now exist in the East. And so nix to *Heimkehr*. Great, now let's talk about something else, and that is something I certainly want too. Namely, I've recently come back home from my vacation. . . in Füssen in Allgäu [Bavaria]. Yeah, too bad we couldn't go to the *Riesengebirge* any more. Or do you mean to say perhaps that [the politicians] will make that possible up there with their new *Ostpolitik*?[58]

Embittered that he could not return home to Breslau, he nonetheless came to realize the finality indicated by the impending treaty. Both in his imaginary journeys and closing question, he also demonstrated genuine interest in a real trip to his dear Silesia, even though this would be yet a different kind of *Heimkehr*, now as a tourist in Silesia, much as he had recently been in Bavaria.

Many other accounts at the very time of the treaty signing demonstrated a similar "letting go" of any lingering fantasies about the *Heimkehr* forever demanded by the leadership. In stark contrast to the political diatribes filling *Schlesier*'s opening pages, Ursula Kristen dreamed of past Christmases from "once upon a time," an unreachably distant world of tasty cakes and familial warmth in her "blessed childhood!" As a memorial to this lost world, she said that she would "light a little Christmas candle for our memories."[59] The day before the treaty signing, Margarete Klette was likewise distant from political events; without mentioning the treaty at all, she thought back on the concerts she had heard performed by the Don Cossacks in Breslau. Since

[58] Italics added, "Euer alter Breslauer" Alfred Stierand, "Heimkehr," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 22, no. 48 (November 26, 1970), 8. Most of the more reflective accounts were printed deep inside of *Der Schlesier*, officially on the page meant as a periodical for expellees from Breslau, "Die Seite für unsere Breslauer."
[59] Ursula Kristen, "Wie's daheim war," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 22, no. 51/52 (Christmas 1970), 11.

her expulsion, she had attended every concert possible, and at the most recent concert she had even sent the director flowers. Despite this, she knew, "for us, the lights in Breslau's concert hall have been forever extinguished." In an abstract, distant future, she prayed that God would "grant that light will one day be over our Heimat again"[60] – she wanted her dear Silesia, which she imagined as a darkened and ruined land, to recover the cultural vibrancy that she remembered, even though she was certain that she herself would never live there again. Had she undertaken a trip to contemporary Wrocław and witnessed a theater production, she may well have recognized that her Christmas wishes had already come true.

In continuity with the trends shown in chapter five, expellees showed a similar disinterest in politics when they came together at meetings; they were drawn instead to intimate reunions on surrogate *Heimat* spaces in the West. Keeping in mind the sheer size of the expellee population, it is striking that in 1970 the large-scale political rallies drew such pitiful attendance (by contrast with the more commemorative, locally-oriented *Heimat* events). The Silesian *Landsmannschaft* was clearly embarrassed that only nine thousand bothered to show up and be subjected to three hours of speeches at the 1970 "Day of the *Heimat*" in West Berlin, and they attributed the dismal turnout to "extraordinarily unfavorable weather."[61] On May 30, 1970, the BdV organized 55,000 demonstrators on the Bonn Marketplace. Yet even here the gathering appears to have merely drawn the most committed expellee leaders and rightwing radicals from across West Germany for a weekend trip, as shown when CDU chairman Franz-Josef Strauß preceded his fiery speech by greeting the many gathered *Landsmannschaft* leaders and NPD party members that he saw around him. In seeking to play up the rally as a grassroots achievement, the editors of *Schlesier*

[60] Margarete Klette, "Breslau und die Don-Kosaken. Geschichten nach einem Wiedersehen in Frankfurt," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 23, no 2 (January 14, 1971), 8.
[61] "Gewaltverzicht: ja,– gewaltige Verzichte: nie!" *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 19, no. 18 (Second September Edition 1970), 1.

wrote in panicked tones that "by all means it was not a club of career expellees (Berufsvertriebenen)," and again that "the overwhelming applause proved that expellees have absolute confidence in the leadership of the [expellee] groups."[62] Though they were only applauding themselves, the expellee leaders still proclaimed that they were speaking for "all expellees"– a trend that was particularly prominent at the largest official gathering of 150,000 Silesians in Munich in May 1970. Even here, the numbers were markedly reduced from the 230,000 who had come in 1967, and an expellee leader recorded his frustration that the people felt "more resignation, more unrest and uncertainty than before." Only 25,000 of those gathered bothered attending the political demonstration to hear declarations that Silesia was an eternally German land.[63] Despite their self-congratulatory statements, even the expellee leadership knew on the eve of the Warsaw Treaty that very few of their constituents cared to hear their political demands; attendees preferred to exchange memories and find old friends.

This trend is even more evident at local *Heimat* gatherings, which already centered less around the leadership's customary political speeches than around *Wiedersehen* and *Erinnerung*. In contrast to lower attendance at political gatherings, about 2,500 Brieger (among them 49 from the DDR) filled every available room (and more) in Goslar when they met for the twentieth anniversary of the *Patenschaft* in 1970.[64] Political discussion only dominated during the regular speech of the visiting *Landsmannschaft* leader[65] and the old Catholic priest Alfred Rieger's Sunday sermon, which urged expellees to hold fast to their "God-given justification" for *Recht auf die Heimat* and oppose the ongoing *Ostpolitik* (by contrast, Protestant pastor A. Bollenbach

[62] F. Andiel, "Unserer Heimat droht Gefahr," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 22, no. 23 (June 4, 1970), 1.
[63] "Die Zeiten sind härter geworden. Eindrücke vom Schlesiertreffen 1971," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 25, no. 8/9 (August/September 1971), 175-177.
[64] "Starker Besuch des Goslarer Patenschaftstreffens erwartet," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 24, no. 9 (September 1970), 193.
[65] Über 2000 Teilnehmer beim Brieger Bundestreffen in Goslar," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 24, no. 10 (October 1970), 222.

called on expellees to give thanks for the *Patenschaft* and the fact that they had found a new existence in the West). [66]

Along with the usual social gatherings and dances, the majority of festivities dedicated themselves to honoring images of the Heimat of memory, as well as affirming Goslar as a surrogate *Heimat*. The old organist from Brieg offered a concert, a slideshow featured Brieg as it had been, and the Goslar museum exhibited sixty-nine contemporary paintings by expellee artists from Brieg. The centerpiece was a "triptych in memory of Brieg" by Karlheinz Urban, who described his work in terms emphasizing the permanence of separation from the *Heimat*:

> the nickel-coated steel coat of arms at the center signifies the city of Brieg. The barbed wire covering over the coat of arms symbolizes its unattainableness (Unerreichbarkeit). It should at the same time represent the suffering of all those who did not survive the expulsion due to pain, old age, hunger, yearning, and violence, or who lost their acquaintances because of this. Finally, it should not be a symbol of hate or any kind of feeling of revenge, but rather of pain and of being separated.[67]

Expellees gathered in Goslar were celebrating traces from a vanished past. As the Goslar mayor noted, the "exhibition is a core example of what the *Patenschaft* between Goslar and Brieg means. Because the work of the artist is what still remains, next to memory," of the old *Heimat*.[68]

Though the *Heimat* was lost, Goslar was celebrated for its role as a "second *Heimat*" over the past twenty years. In addition to a tour of Goslar and the nearby city of Hildesheim, gathered expellees met for a commemorative service in the *Brieger Turm*, the tower which had been given to the community as surrogate soil from the old *Heimat*, in which Brieg lived on under flags and monuments with the city's coat-of-arms. The chairman of the Brieg *Heimat* association gave particular emphasis to Goslar's role as a surrogate *Heimat*, declaring that "not least of all the city

[66] "Evangelischer Festgottesdienst in der Neuwerkkirche mit Pastor A. Bollenbach, Brieg-Essenrode," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 24, no. 10 (October 1970), 229; "Katholischer Festgottesdienst in der St. Jakobi-Kirche," idem., 229-231; Alfred Rieger, "Versöhnung oder Anerkennung von Gewalt?" *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 25, no. 1 (January 1971), 8.
[67] gsi, "20 Jahre Patenschaft zwischen Brieg und Goslar," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 24, no. 10 (October 1970), 219-220.
[68] Ibid., 219.

[of Goslar] has ensured that we no longer feel homeless. Certainly, we are scattered all over the world, but Goslar has become a second Heimat for us."[69] Likewise, the expellee Paul Modlar wrote a song for the meeting thanking "Goslar, our little sponsor city, beautiful city in the Harz lands," which he professed would "faithfully uphold our *Heimat*, which is now in foreign hands." Thus, as he mourned that Brieg was lost in the transformed spaces of Silesia, Modlar took consolation from the fact that Goslar would "continue to defend Silesia's customs and Brieg's spirit!"[70]

Other meetings in the Brieg *Heimat* community were similarly oriented away from politics and toward commemoration and garnering a sense of *Heimat* in the West. During a class reunion from a Protestant boy's school for those who had graduated in 1919/20, the thirty-nine attendees recited Silesian poetry, chatted over coffee in a room filled with large pictures and flags from Brieg, and watched a slide show from the last gathering in Goslar. The students' wives, "overwhelmingly not from Silesia," spoke in their own dialect.[71] Even at the big Silesian rally in Munich, to which expellee leader Erich Mai had called all Brieger to "take part in the struggle of our *Heimat* for freedom" and so "give proof of our love of Heimat and resolve,"[72] the stand for Brieg opposed the idea of the rightwing ringleaders in attendance, who proposed that West German expellees should become "recognized as a national eastern German minority," because, so those who went argued, they already had a new *Heimat* in Goslar which held them together. "If the Brieger place their *Patenschaft* a step above the day's political goals," one

[69] Ibid., 221. See also the general tone of the invitation to the meeting: "Einladung zum Bundestreffen Stadt und Landkreis Brieg vom 28. bis 31. August 1970 in der Patenstadt Goslar," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 24, no. 7/8 (July/August 1970), 154.
[70] Paul Modler, "Dank an Goslar. Zum 20jährigen Bestehen der Vereinigung der Brieger," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 24, no. 9 (September 1970), 193.
[71] Karl Gritzka, "Die Brieger Jungen leben noch!!" *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 24, no. 7/8 (July/August 1970), 166-167.
[72] Erich Mai, "Schlesiertreffen in München vom 9.-11. 7. 1971," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 25, no. 7 (July 1971), 147-148.

attendee observed, "then this is because we don't want to lose the new Heimat"[73] as they had lost the old. Thus for all Mai's claims about the political intent of those he mustered for the Silesian rally only months before Brandt traveled to Warsaw, those who came in fact tended to espouse an anti-political platform.

To conclude with the fourth motif: the forthcoming treaty generally failed to matter to those undertaking tours of Silesia, though very shortly it drastically improved the chances for many expellees to undertake a journey. As shown in chapter six, travel continued to offer the most dynamic means of engaging with Silesia and coming to terms with loss, and travelers increasingly emphasized the joy of coming to know and understand the province's postwar Polish inhabitants.[74] The mood in 1970 was best captured by a Liegnitzer who returned to the former *Heimat* in the summer months, as the treaty was in preparation, and, after the moving and memory-filled experience of measuring the scale of change and meeting the local inhabitants, he concluded that "we haven't regretted the trip but recommend real sobriety to anyone that wants to visit his former *Heimat*. *That which was* belongs to the past and cannot be magically brought back."[75] Reconciled with the fact that Silesia was now Polish, the traveler was already planning to return the following year. In another representative case that same summer, Elsbeth Hodlitz ventured back to Bunzlau for the first time and never once mentioned the ongoing political developments. In Bunzlau, she met with the remaining German nun, stayed with a Polish family, and left with a very positive impression. Though she expressed a few reservations about changes,

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[73] "In der Brieger Halle," *Neue Brieger Zeitung* 25, no. 8/9 (August/September 1971), 177.

[74] Even in papers saturated with political diatribes, such as the *Gleiwitzer-Beuthener-Tarnowitzer Heimatblatt*, large advertisements from travel companies continued to entice expellees in the months leading up to the Warsaw treaty. The Gerhard Bennek travel company in Munich (advertising itself as formerly an Upper Silesian touring company in Hindenburg [Zabrze]) offered readers "travel to Upper Silesia-Silesia-Poland with a train to your own town. You determine the travel dates, for this trip you only need a permission for travel from your acquaintances. We will take care of all the further formalities for you." Likewise, the Linzer travel company in Amberg continued to advertise its "special office for travel in the eastern countries!" *Gleiwitzer-Beuthener-Tarnowitzer Heimatblatt* 20, no. 7 (July 1970), 47-48.

[75] Italics added, "Liegnitz im Sommer 1970," *Liegnitzer Heimatbrief* 23, no. 4 (February 1971), 16.

she found that "nevertheless in general Bunzlau has once again become a handsome city. Broad avenues and many lovely flower gardens with clean benches beautify the image of the city. The city looks very welcoming." Via translation from a local woman who also spoke German, she "enjoyed a lovely German-Polish conversation with a cozy coffee hour in the garden" with her Polish hosts until well after nightfall on "a warm, magnificent summer evening." After taking her leave (*Abschied*), with her arms filled with gifts of apples, plums, and honey, she reflected on "a very beautiful week" filled with many friendly encounters with the new residents, experiences she vowed that she and her companions would "retain in our memories for a long time and draw from."[76] Silesia, a world filled with her own memories, had become an organic part of Poland. She had formed new memories to treasure of the *Heimat* as it had become, making political recognition of the Oder-Neiße border that same month just a formality in light of the facts.

3. 1970 as a Pan-Expellee Experience: Distress on the Left, Dissent on the Right

Having illustrated the manifold and usually peaceful means through which expellees confronted loss at the time of the 1970 treaty, it should be emphasized that this phenomenon did not exclude those expellees far to the left and right of the political spectrum. On the one hand, expellees famous for standing above the supposedly revisionist masses also tried to cope with the loss of their dear *Heimat* in 1970. On the other hand, even a few expellee leaders – presented up to now as irredeemable, revisionist curmudgeons – were aware of the necessity for genuine reconciliation with Poland (that is, without territorial strings attached). In strongly comparable ways, expellees at the extremes needed to pause in 1970, take stock, and seek to reconcile with the loss that they had long mourned.

[76] Elsbeth Hodlitz, "Renovierung der Evangelischen Kirche in Bunzlau," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 19, no. 24 (second December issue 1970), 5.

Prominent left-leaning figures like Günter Grass and Marion Gräfin von Dönhoff contrasted with many expellees for their longstanding advocacy of the idea that, to come to terms with the past, Germans must look to their own guilt as a cause for their losses. This outlook led Willy Brandt to invite both Grass and Dönhoff to accompany him to Warsaw. But at the same time, they both mourned the 1970 treaty in ways that reflected the spirit of the time within the larger expellee community. In his self-designated role as national conscience, the popular writer Günter Grass used a 1970 *Spiegel* interview to modestly propose himself as a new expellee leader who could mandate to his countrymen the best way to preserve (that is, invent) the *Heimat of memory*. Any previous expellee memory work was irredeemably political, because (he presumed) expellees had been uniformly "fighting against the *Ostpolitik* of the federal government." Embittered by the fading of eastern dialects and traditions, he called for the creation of "an eastern German museum to be established somewhere centrally located in the Federal Republic, perhaps in Kassel," devoted to "preserving the cultural substance of the lost territories in the East" through exhibiting "models of typical house constructions, costumes, and artistic products." Protesting that expellee groups had failed to properly use federal funds to promote the advancement of expellee culture, he proposed a new project, the forced concentration of all the ethnic German refugees that were about to emigrate from Poland into "a newly constructed portion of Hamburg or Frankfurt [to be called] 'New Danzig' or 'New Breslau'."[77] However novel Grass thought his Kassel *Heimat* museum and city-sized expellee camps might be, relics of expellee memory work already covered West Germany, sponsored by *Heimat* associations, and visited by expellees at regular gatherings that were far from political rallies. From his lofty disposition, presuming that all expellees thought like their rightwing

[77] Günther Grass, "Kalte Heimat," *Der Spiegel* 24, no. 40 (September 28, 1970), 115. Brandt found these ideas interesting, as did senator Heinz Ruhnau, also from Danzig, and they spoke about the prospects with the leader of the Federal Expellee Ministry (*Bundesvertriebenenministerium*).

spokespeople, he was unable to see that many expellees had long been obsessed with preserving their cultural heritage in ways outside the political ambitions of their leaders. Rather than point to a genuine lack in the expellee community, his schemes serve instead to illustrate that his own love of *Heimat* was similar to that felt by the masses he proposed to guide, and to reveal that he too was gripped with mourning at the time of the 1970 treaty.

Marion Gräfin von Dönhoff, the influential writer and editor for the magazine *Die Zeit*, likewise embodied the spirit of 1970. Though like Grass she has often been seen as a patron saint for reconciling with loss, her process was in fact also highly comparable to that of many other expellees.[78] For all of her interest in postwar dialogue with Poland and renunciation of violence, the born East Prussian had opposed acceptance of the Oder-Neisse border through the 1950s. Only by 1962 had she reached the "painful conclusion" that, to avoid the possibility of "revenge and hatred," she had to renounce territorial change; much as she still loved "the woods and lakes of East Prussia, its wide meadows and old shaded avenues" as they appeared in memory, she realized that "perhaps the highest form of love is loving without possessing."[79] She further clarified this point in 1964: though it was possible to come to terms with lost property, and though lifelong mourning for the lost *Heimat* did not mean that one would raise "a stone up against those who stole the *Heimat*," it was still the case that "no one who comes from the East will renounce land." To expect this "would be like demanding that they betray their dead."[80]

Although she still hesitated from recognizing the border in 1964, her continued thoughts on the matter culminated with her article in *Die Zeit* on October 10, 1970. Here, in terms similar

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[78] For an excellent overview, see Leszek Żyliński, "Marion Gräfin Dönhoff," in *Erlebte Nachbarschaft. Aspekte der deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Jan-Pieter Barbian and Marek Zybura, 303-310 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999).
[79] Marion Gräfin von Dönhoff, *Before the Storm: Memories of my Youth in Old Prussia*, trans. Jean Steinberg (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 202-204.
[80] Idem., "Versöhnung- ja, Verzicht– nein. Die Oder-Neiße-Gebiete: ein innen und außenpolitisches Problem," *Die Zeit* (September 4, 1964), http://www.zeit.de/1964/36/Versoehnung-ja-Verzicht-nein.

to those laid out by Brandt, she blamed Hitler's "madness and brutality" for the sacrifice of seven centuries of German history in the East. Willy Brandt traveled to Warsaw to assent to the fact that "the cross was already erected over Prussia's grave twenty-five years ago." In light of her vocal support for "an active *Ostpolitik* for many years," Brandt invited her to come with him to Warsaw. Unlike Grass, she felt grave concern about having accepted Brandt's offer:

> the nearer the date came, the more unpleasant I expected it to be: certainly I had come to terms with the fact that my *Heimat* in East Prussia had been lost forever, but to assist in this myself, when the letter and official seal had been set down, and then, when it was now inevitable, to raise a glass to the completion of the treaty– this suddenly seemed to me as more than one can bear.[81]

Brandt proved very understanding of Dönhoff's predicament and excused her from attending. Dönhoff's open love for her East Prussia of memory and her plainspoken difficulty in coming to terms with the Oder-Neisse border are refreshing in their honesty. Looking back in 1990, she reflected that "it took me a long time before I was able to accept what happened afterward: the loss of my home. For years, against all logic, I continued to hope for a miracle, even though my political sense should have told me that this is an area in which miracles are not likely to happen." Like many expellees, years of mourning for the lost *Heimat* finally brought her to recognize by 1970 that "it is possible to accept reality yet continue to dream."[82]

At the other end of the political spectrum, a few *Ostforscher* and local *Heimat* leaders were showing greater openness to the idea that the former East had become and would remain a part of Poland. Certainly most expellee leaders clung to hope for border revision; nonetheless, in a pattern comparable to many expellees, a few expressed resignation and started to hope instead with genuine idealism for peace and reconciliation in the years before the 1970 treaty. In 1967, *Ostforscher* affiliated with the Herder Institut in Marburg (founded in 1950 and closely tied in the past to the expellee leadership's goals) produced a thick edited volume devoted to examining

[81] Idem., *Von Gestern nach Übermorgen. Zur Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1981, 1984), 159-160.
[82] Idem., *Before the Storm*, 202-204.

contemporary conditions in Lower Silesia.[83] In keeping with earlier literature, they continued to indulge in nostalgia for prewar Silesia and berate what they saw as contemporary Polish mismanagement of regions which "according to human rights are part of Germany in the legitimate borders of 1937 pending a peace conference."[84] After such usual formalities, however, some finally began to acknowledge that Polish cultural life was taking root in the former German province, that the Polish inhabitants were rebuilding some of Lower Silesia's most important landmarks, albeit interpreted through a Polish nationalist mythology.

The work was co-edited by the expellee scholar Kurt König, who had traveled back to Silesia in 1958 and taken many photographs of the old *Heimat* as it now appeared as a Polish province. Though no mention of König's trip appears in the volume, evidence about the region drew heavily on published travel accounts as well as Polish literature. The prolific Polonist Karl Hartmann (born in Częstochowa in 1923) argued that scholars should not limit themselves to reports about Poland's "Wild West" in the chaos of the immediate postwar period, as by 1966 Wrocław was well on its way to becoming an important Polish cultural city.[85] Similarly, in his minute investigation of Polish museums and care for monuments in Lower Silesia, Dieter Großmann highlighted that, though plundering, neglect, and vandalism had been a feature of the immediate postwar period, contemporary Polish reconstruction and conservation efforts far exceeded even German efforts in the region before the war.[86] On this basis, he strongly critiqued scholarly distortion, not only in Polish sources, but also in "the German literature, often proceeding from the ideal of an intact prewar condition," and he encouraged closer reference to

[83] Ernst Bahr and Kurt König, eds., *Niederschlesien unter polnischer Verwaltung* (Frankfurt/Main: Metzner, 1967)
[84] Richard Keyser, "Zussammenfassung und Ausblick," in ibid., 415-425, here 424.
[85] Karl Hartmann, "Bildungswesen, Wissenschaft, und Kulturpflege in Niederschlesien," in Ibid., 275-304, here 298. At the same time, he attached the discrimination of German communities, notably in Waldenburg. Hartmann had already been advocating greater scholarly collaboration between West German and Polish scholars for five years. See "Neue Wege der wissenschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit im Ostblock," *Europa-Archiv* 24 (1962), 859-864.
[86] Dieter Großmann, "Das Schicksal der Kunstdenkmäler in Niederschlesien seit 1945. Denkmalpflege und Museumwesen," in *Niederschlesien unter polnischer Verwaltung*, 305-384, here 367-368.

travel accounts as primary sources. Despite his misgivings about Polish nationalism (restoring monuments to configure them as proof of an ancient Polish past in the region), Großmann ended by strongly encouraging support for Polish efforts "in the interest of the restoration of the cultural assets of Silesia – and so actually in the common interests of the Germans and Poles as well as human civilization."[87] Certainly not all of the articles in the volume proceeded from the same, progressive outlook,[88] but these contributions point toward the emergence of greater interest among expellee leaders in the scholarly world for putting aside old territorial vendettas in favor of a more productive approach to research. As Herder Institut director Gotthold Rhode was slowly coming to recognize in 1965, much as *Ostforscher* disliked the views coming out of Polish research institutions, the movement toward trust and collaboration had to be initiated not only by Poles but by Germans as well.[89]

That some expellee political leaders were themselves splintering away from the hard-line approach is best illustrated in the case of Hans Beske, the chairman of the *Heimatvereinigung* for the town of Landsberg [Gorzów], roughly one hundred kilometers to the north of Silesia. Hans Beske had been an atypical *Heimat* leader for some time. In the early 1960s, he had the opportunity to meet the local Polish bishop from Gorzów during a trip to Rome, with whom he remained in regular contact thereafter. In 1965, as editor of a journal called "European Encounter, Contributions toward West-East Dialogue," he explicitly attacked the "tragic" outlook of most of his peers: "with their all-or-nothing [demands] for their own nation, the

[87] Ibid., 310, 372.
[88] Richard Breyer took the classic, negative view, claiming that Polish "attempts to bring forth a native intelligentsia in Silesia itself has hardly succeeded," and that "in comparison with the prewar time, Silesia is overall a culturally fallow land, and the sole activity in Breslau cannot take away this deception." Even Polish reconstruction efforts in Breslau were berated as *Kunstdenkmäler von nationaler Bedeutung*. See "Zusammenfassung und Ausblick," in *Niederschlesien unter polnischer Verwaltung*, 415-425, here 424.
[89] Gotthold Rhode, "Deutschland und die Deutschen im Geschichtsbild und in der Geschichtsschreibung des heutigen Polen," *Europäische Begegnung. Beiträge zum west-östlichen Gespräch* 5, no. 7/8 (July/August 1965): 408-411.

representatives of both peoples totally prove themselves to be bad patriots in a dangerous world." He expressed his ever-growing conviction that Germans in general (and he as an individual) had to work to build trust with the Poles and abandon the "anachronistic" idea of a national struggle (Volkstumskampf) to restore old borders.[90]

For his outspoken and tireless peace activism, Beske earned several other allies in local *Heimat* groups, such as Roland Reche, a leader in the *Patenschaft* for Brieg/Goslar; but the overwhelming weight of the expellee leadership thrust itself against him to exact the harshest punishment possible. To appreciate the significance of Beske's "purge" from the mainstream expellee movement, one must appreciate his prior contributions as a leading figure in the expellee cause. In addition to his active leadership of the Landsberg *Heimat* society and its *Patenschaft* with West German Herford, he had dedicated years of service to the expellee office in Celle (a city heavily populated by expellees), had helped to found the expellee political party (BHE), had served as its representative in the Lower Saxon parliament, and by 1959 (now in the SPD) had held the influential position as department head for "all-German questions" in the Lower Saxon expellee ministry. He had used this position to further reconciliation and understanding with Poland, rather than to demand territorial revisionism. This outlook finally provoked influential expellee functionaries to muster 170 pages of allegations against him, including espionage and forbidden Eastern contacts, peaking with the demand of BdV president Wenzel Jaksch that "the man must go!"[91] So it was that in February 1966, behind closed doors and without any significant help from the SPD party, Beske was pushed out of the Lower Saxon

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[90] Hans Beske, "Deutsch-polnische Beziehungen," *Europäische Begegnung. Beiträge zum west-östlichen Gespräch* 5, no. 7/8 (July/August 1965): 406-407. The journal was sponsored by the Hanover *Gesellschaft zur Förderung der west-östlichen Begegnung in Europa*, which Beske helped to fund as a state minister.

[91] Haug von Kuenheim, "Der Mann muß weg! Oberregierungsrat Beske vertrieben von den Vertriebenen," *Die Zeit* 26 (June 24, 1966), 7, http://www.zeit.de/1966/26/Der-Mann-muss-weg; idem., "Geheimverfahren. Oberregierungsrat Beske wartet auf sein Recht," *Die Zeit* 15 (April 12, 1968). These proceedings were also observed in Polish papers, such as "Casus Beske," *Dziennik Polski*, London, 158 (July 5, 1966).

expellee ministry and ultimately banished into the administrative office's statistical department.[92] Beske had tried to stand in the ever-widening gap between the expellee leadership and the expellees as a whole, and the leadership had tried to destroy him for it.

Where some might have been broken, Beske remained undaunted by this persecution and continued on the eve of the 1970 treaty to arrange timely venues for discussion. After returning in summer 1970 from the first of many visits to his old *Heimat*, Beske transformed the regular *Heimat* gathering into a platform through which he used his recent experiences as a departure point for advocating understanding and dialogue with Poland.[93] Beske and his allies then sent further delegations to the old *Heimat*, often against opposition from other *Heimat* leaders.[94] With help from associates such as Roland Reche and members of the Catholic church, he also organized conferences such as the *Göttinger Gespräche* that included *Heimat* members, politicians, journalists, and Polish representatives as a way to discuss the potential impact of the Warsaw treaty on both countries.[95] They consciously organized these initiatives as a way to bring relevance back to an expellee movement that they knew was otherwise doomed to obsolescence.[96] This generated strong opposition by *Heimat* leaders such as Erich Mai

[92] The attacks on Beske did not end there. In November 1968 he was brought before the administrative court in Hanover and harassed about a supposedly political accent in his conversations with the Polish bishop Kominek in Rome and that, having sought a visa to visit Poland, he had planned to carry state secrets into the "communist sphere of influence." All charges were dropped in the end, and he was given 1000 marks in compensation. "Beske wird vor Gericht gestellt. Verfahren gegen Ministerial-Referenten beginnt," *Die Welt* 259 (November 5, 1968); "Unhaltbare Vorwürfe. Nach drei Jahren Oberregierungsrat Hans Beske erwartet seine Rehabilitierung," *Die Zeit* 46 (November 15, 1968).

[93] "Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Landsberg (Warthe)- Stadt und Land. Jahresrundschreiben 1970," SaG-HBB:2:9, 1-2; "Das Bundestreffen 1970. Ein Meilenstein für Herford und die Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Landsberg (Warthe)," *Heimatblatt der ehemaligen Kirchengemeinden Landsberg/Warthe, Stadt und Land* 22, no. 5/6 (1970): 3-6.

[94] "Sitzung am 30.1.71 Göttingen Fridtjof-Nansen-Haus," SaG-HBB:2:9.

[95] This included such events as the September 17, 1971 meeting of the *Internationale Studentenfreunde* and *Arbeitskreis für deutsches und europäisches Selbstverständnis* on the topic "The Warsaw Treaty – A Challenge or Chance for Peace for all of Europe?" Gesellschaft 'Internatonale Studentenfreunde' E.V. an den Landrat des Kreises Herford, Osterode, and Goslar, February 12, 1971, Unpublished Manuscript, 2. Beske also led annual international discussions in Göttingen in the years immediately following the treaty.

[96] See for instance the debates documented in Siegfried Scholz, "Patenschaft Brieg. Kontakte mit Polen," June 21, 1971, SaG-HBB:2:9; idem., Durchschrift Patenschaft Brieg. Kontakte mit Polen, July 25, 1971, SaG-HBB:2:9.

(mentioned above for summoning Brieger to the Silesian rally in Munich in 1970 to protest *Ostpolitik*). In 1971, Mai urged the *Patenschaft* to keep away from activities prepared by the likes of Hans Beske or Roland Reche, "because it would be the end of the *Patenschaft* for Goslar and Brieg. As I reported to this to some countrymen, [they] responded at once that, if Brieg is already a Polish city, then we don't need to travel to Goslar anymore."[97] In the view of Mai and other leaders, if the expellee movement officially relinquished the 1937 borders, if in fact Brieg had now officially become Polish Brzeg, then the expellee cause would surely die.[98]

Thinking back on his struggles alongside Hans Beske at the time of the Warsaw treaty, Roland Reche recently reflected that, if anyone truly put forth the effort, it was possible to "consider how to proceed out of hostile relations into timely neighborliness, despite the catastrophe [during and after the war] and despite the old judgments (German alienation from and blindness to the East)."[99] A host of other expellee efforts in 1970 and after could be mentioned for their contribution to East-West understanding: monetary and material contributions to restore historic monuments in the old *Heimat*, efforts by some *Patenschaft* cities to enter into contact with their Polish counterparts, and transnational dialogue achieved through *Heimat* tourism. Grappling with the difficult past, some expellees found a way to interact with the possibilities of the present. The scholar Hans-Adolf Jacobsen summed things up well shortly after the German-Polish Border Treaty was signed on November 14, 1990 to confirm the Oder-Neiße border and renounce violence for all time.[100] Observing how even at the end of the Cold War expellee leaders stubbornly clung to an "unrealistic, at present even illusionary position," he

[97] Erich Mai to D.O.St. Goslar circa July 19, 1971, SaG-HBB:2:9.
[98] Roland Reche recalls that by the 1980s Erich Mai was able to see how necessary these "*Annährungensversuchen*" had been. Reche asserts that one should be sensitive that, due to their own personal suffering, there were those who would never consent to dialogue with Poland. Andrew Demshuk, Interview with Roland Reche, July 8, 2008.
[99] Roland Reche to Andrew Demshuk, July 15, 2008.
[100] The groundwork was already laid by the two-plus-four treaty of September 12, 1990, which affirmed the borders of a reunited Germany, which promised the Poles a final recognition of the Oder-Neisse border. It was ratified by the Polish parliament November 26, 1991 and by the Bundestag on December 16, 1991.

asserted that the expellee population in general had long since renounced revenge and retaliation; in the end, the real "'revisionists' were those who didn't want to come to terms with the political realities."[101]

Conclusions

In its May 4, 1970 headline, *Der Spiegel* claimed that the Warsaw Treaty signified "the end of an illusion"; six months later, Willy Brandt professed that the illusions had already long since waned, that border recognition was simply the confirmation of something most expellees had already come to expect.[102] In the end, both views point to some aspect of the truth. As this dissertation has shown, the illusion of *Heimkehr* had already been fading over the preceding twenty-five years. The treaty ended this illusion decisively for nearly all expellees, because they comprehended it in continuity with a long-term process of confronting loss that was to endure for the rest of their lives. This explains why, though expellee leaders preached the need for organized resistance, expellees in general remained politically detached and retreated to the safe spaces of their cherished *Heimat of memory*. Here they continued to cope with the ever widening separation between the two *Heimat* images and, in many cases, found peace.

In 1974, the prominent eastern researcher Herbert Schwedt was asked whether, now that the political questions were basically settled, the very purpose of *Ostforschung* (and by extension the official narrative) had become pointless. He responded with startling sobriety: some institutions can outlive their purposes.[103] After 1970, the expellee leadership's agenda became frozen in a changing world that made it irrelevant. Winded by a lost struggle, trapped by their

[101] Jacobsen, *Bonn-Warschau 1945-1991*, 28.
[102] *Der Spiegel* 24, no. 19 (1970); Willy Brandt, "Erklärungen über Rundfunk und Fernsehen am 20. November 1970," in *Reden und Interviews* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe Verlag, 1971), 243-244.
[103] Herbert Schwedt, "Ist eine Volkskunde der Heimatvertriebenen überflüssig geworden?" *Jahrbuch für Ostdeutsche Volkskunde* 17 (1974): 20-26. The editor of this journal for *Ostforschung* had asked Schwedt whether, in the near future, lack of interest might lead to a decline in article submissions. Schwedt feared that this could come to pass and pleaded with other scholars to take up expellees as a research topic.

own rhetoric, and incredulous at the inactivity of their supposed constituents, their promises of further struggle grew ever more feeble, their professed objectives quixotic. Just days before the treaty signing, Ostrog called for action, but was unsure what it could be: "tears don't help anymore," he cried, "that would be the end, and this end would be deadly. May others build on the idea that Silesia is dead; we build on the idea that Silesia lives."[104] *Heimat* paper publisher Karl Goldammer urged expellees to considered the treaty "illegal" and take heart: the Brandt administration would come and go, but the German *Volk* would remain![105] Erich Janke took the idea of a strong *Volksgemeinschaft* even further. Impervious to the reality of widespread resignation, he claimed to be speaking for "the overwhelming majority of expellees" and even native West Germans when he framed the treaty as the worst collective German experience "since the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany," and he called for unified opposition (*Widerstand*) (though he explicitly distanced himself from "radical right" groups such as *Aktion Widerstand*).[106] In a pathetic reaction to a December 1970 federal survey's finding that most expellees had no desire to return to the East, Herbert Patschke declared that this "false image" failed to correspond with what he saw as self-evident: not just all expellees but also many Westerners would flock to the East if given the chance.[107] So it was that, as the few progressive leaders like Beske and Reche had foreseen, the expellee leadership very quickly cut its remaining ties with reality and drifted to the fringes of society.

The split between the official expellee narrative and the general German public only widened with time. Notwithstanding reality, Herbert Czaja's BdV fought against the 1990 border

[104] Ostrog, "Tränen helfen nicht weiter," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 22, no. 48 (November 26, 1970), 2.
[105] "Die Brandts und die Scheels kommen und gehen, das deutsche Volk aber bleibt!" Karl W. Goldammer, "Frieden ist kein unterschriftsfertiges Dokument, Frieden ist mehr! Besinnliche Gedanken zum Weihnachtsfest und Jahresausklang," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 19, no. 24 (2nd December edition 1970), 2.
[106] Erich Janke, "1970/1971: Rückblick und Ausblick," *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 23, no. 1 (January 7, 1971), 1.
[107] Herbert Patschke, Rückkehr in die 'Alte Heimat,'" *Der Schlesier. Breslauer Nachrichten* 23, no. 13 (April 1, 1971), 4.

treaty with just as much senseless vigor as the 1970 treaty, and he even attacked chancellor Helmut Kohl for meeting with Polish president Tadeusz Mazowiecki in Krzyżowa [Kreisau], Lower Silesia, in the eventful month of November 1989; in Czaja's view, this was still officially German territory.[108] But much as expellee leaders continued to bask in the past glories of their "resistance" to the Warsaw treaty and clung to revanchist slogans such as "Silesia remains ours!" at the 1985 Silesian convention (a slogan that even alienated the CDU/CSU, which until then had been at least superficially supportive), they knew that their claims found little resonance within the dwindling expellee population, to say nothing of the next generation.[109] After the 1960s, obituaries, anniversaries of obituaries, and anniversaries for long-forgotten traditions and battles consumed more and more space in the pages of the *Gleiwitzer-Beuthener-Tarnowitzer Heimatblatt*; only the increasing number of travel reports about conditions in Upper Silesia supplied fresh material. Other papers mirrored the trend: a little circle of embittered and moribund leaders recited the same old laments. By 2004, Herbert Hupka, still honorary chairman of the Silesian *Landsmannschaft*, lamented that "Death has yielded bitter harvests," severely limiting the organization's finances and leaving a great many "holes" in their leadership. Like leaders in the BdV and *Preußische Treuhand* (Prussian Claims Society), he had at first hoped that expellees would use the opening of borders in 1990 as a chance to demand back their old

[108] Miszczak, *Deklarationen und Realitäten*, 324-325. The following year, Czaja proposed the "Europeanization" of Upper Silesia, that is the advent of "duel citizenship," which he no doubt hoped would be accompanied by an influx of German settlement. Jacobsen, *Bonn-Warschau 1945-1991*, 28.

[109] Most active expellee leaders today are part of a very different community – the so-called *Spätaussiedler* [late emigrants], many of them members of the "German minority" in Upper Silesia. As noted in earlier chapters, Upper Silesians have a mixed national identity; in 1990, 153,000 officially declared themselves Germans, while 173,000 considered themselves "Silesians," rather than members of either nationality. Because they are entitled to citizenship in Germany, many of them left Poland after the fall of the Iron Curtain to seek a better living. Some of them infused new (and extremely different) life into the dying expellee organizations. Even so, as of 2003 only about 80,000 assembled for the big Silesian convention in Nuremberg, and in 2004 only 130 people from all of Germany bothered to show up for the "Day of Heimat" in Bremerhaven. pse, "Schlesier heute. . ." *Die Rheinpfalz* (August 30, 2003), Section Leben Heute, 2; Jürgen Sandmann, "Tag der Heimat 2004 in Bremerhaven," *Schlesische Nachrichten* 23 (December 1, 2004), 9.

property as an expression of *Recht auf die Heimat*, but the limited response by expellees led him to wonder "how many want to use it."[110] Hupka himself died two years later.

What had actually become of the expellees as their leaders died in despair? The aforementioned *Ostforscher* Herbert Schwedt was already asking himself this very question in 1974: "Two decades ago, politicians, the media, and scholars were still attentive to [expellees]– today they appear to have disappeared, as if from the touch of a magic wand. Is that thinkable?"[111] Like most leaders, Schwedt had been so tied into the political war waged by the official narrative that now, as he took stock on a field of lost battles, he wondered what had become of the army. The leadership had failed to assimilate the idea that millions of expellees were in fact quietly confronting loss long before 1970. Expellees had gradually fallen into the gulf between their supposed leaders (who called for a return to past spaces regardless of the changed present) and the views of the general public (whose immersion in the present inspired little attention to the lost East). Though like their leaders they yearned for the past spaces of memory, they had come to see that in reality the German East had become Poland's West.

[110] Herbert Hupka, "Bekenntnis zu Schlesien," *Schlesische Nachrichten* 23 (December 1, 2004), 3.
[111] Schwedt, "Ist eine Volkskunde der *Heimat*vertriebenen überflüssig geworden?" 21-22. In his final guess, Schwedt was able to touch on at least some aspect of what had happened. Rather than seek continuity with the past through "especially great or even politically-meaningful associations," expellees had often gathered as a way "to create social interchange." He only wondered in the end whether this expellee culture "represents a relic, or will endure over time. This we've never been able to determine with any reliability" (23).

EPILOGUE

SILESIA FORGOTTEN

Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung editor Karl Wiechmann reminded his readers in 1968 that the dear streets and structures which he recounted with intimate detail in every issue only existed in memory. "Until 1945, Bunzlau's old stones could still speak of the old times," he maintained, but in the years since, "new life has blossomed from the ruins." Polish Silesia had come into being, while "those that once hurried past the old stones each day have been scattered to the four winds."[1] For the rest of their lives, the German exiles from Silesia dealt with their painful past and sought closure. It is a process that has continued for sixty-five years, up to this present, historic moment, in which the so-called *Erlebnisgeneration*, a generation that knew the former Silesia and experienced the uprootedness of flight and expulsion, is about to die out. In just a few years, Bunzlau's old Germans will no longer speak of the old times, their memories will be scattered to the four winds of historical interpretation. Church bells from Silesia will still toll across West Germany every Sunday, Goslar's citizens will wander each day past the locked iron gate into the Brieg tower, and the unwitting passerby might find a bargain on Silesian artifacts painstakingly collected over the past decades that have ended up in the local flea market. It is from this contemporary vantage-point – the rapid disappearance of the expellee culture of commemoration – that I wish to conclude my study, sketching two outcomes with implications which I believe bear considerable importance for the future.

First of all, as the worldwide experience of mass population movements from the past century increasingly fall out of the living, "communicative memory" into the realm of textual

[1] Karl Wiechmann, "Am Marktplatz in Bunzlau und Boleslawiec," *Bunzlauer Heimat-Zeitung* 17, no. 22 (1968), 5.

"cultural memory,"[2] politicians, scholars, and activists are increasingly vocal in a debate (or sometimes unreflective presumption) about the necessity of placing past ethnic conflicts side-by-side, both in scholarly compilations and museum exhibitions.[3] Some of these efforts are yielding valuable results, others are in my opinion problematic. To clarify why, I will lay out what I feel are the potential benefits and also the potential dangers in attempting a "comparative history of ethnic cleansing" which incorporates the Germans from the Lost East.

After this, I wish to close the dissertation by discussing what I feel is at stake in the present historical moment, as Silesia and the East in general have become a forgotten space in contemporary German consciousness. Throughout the newly united Germany, one encounters a striking ignorance about Silesia, not to mention Poland as a whole. The expellee movement to somehow "preserve" a pan-German awareness of the old *Heimat* (naturally in the rosy tones of their memories) has failed; at the same time, the old stereotypes about Poland have prevailed. This is not to say that an ongoing pan-German idealization of a Lost East would have been in any way healthy or desirable– quite the contrary. Rather, I contend that the current ignorance, especially among young and middle-aged Germans, threatens not only to sustain old bigotries cloaked in contemporary language, but also to stimulate a potentially hazardous misunderstanding about the Lost East, untempered by a lived experience of the violent consequences of ethnic cleansing.

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[2] Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (Spring-Summer 1995): 125-133.

[3] The most visible debates have surrounded the proposed "Center Against Expulsions" in Berlin. Among the comparative histories, one diverse approaches in Pertti Ahonen, Gustavo Corni, Jerzy Kochanowski, Rainer Schulze, et. al., eds. *People on the Move. Forced Population Movements in Europe In the Second Word War and its Aftermath* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2008); Michael G. Esch, *"Gesunde Verhältnisse". Deutsche und polnische Bevölkerungspolitik in Ostmitteleuropa 1939-1950* (Marburg: Herder Institut, 1998); Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press, 2001); Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, eds., *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001); Terry Hunt Tooley and Stevan Béla Várdy, *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

1. The Possibilities and Perils for a Comparative Analysis of Ethnic Cleansing

History is replete with examples of dislocation and forced migration. Is it possible to weigh experiences that are burdened with such emotional, usually politicized debates? Can one compare a process that often stems from drastically differing causes in radically different regions? If so, how can it be done, and what is to be gained? The case of Germans from the Lost East offers a particular challenge: how for example could one attempt a dispassionate comparison between the experiences of a German expellee and a Jewish victim of Nazism?

Before exploring the potential benefits, I want to outline where comparison can occlude historical understanding, and even serve political causes that seek to mobilize a movement for revenge. Above all, it is essential that comparative history *attend explicitly and carefully to the historical progression that made the ethnic cleansing possible in the first place*. Whether or not the victims of ethnic cleansing were themselves individually responsible for the ensuing tragedy (and this can range broadly from resistance to a culpable regime, to indirect collaboration, to outright criminal behavior), the scholar comparing instances of ethnic cleansing must trace the ideologies, past political actions, and the scale of injustice that made so extreme a course of action possible. Merely placing people side-by-side as fellow victims of ethnic cleansing has potential to erase this causality, with dangerous results. As Eva Hahn has recently argued, the pending creation of a "Center against Expulsions" in Berlin, supported by public funds, could result in "de-contexualizing the past, thus breaking the causal relationship between the Nazi policies of radical nationalism and racial extermination on one hand and the flight and expulsion of ethnic Germans on the other hand."[4] One must always remember that, in the end, the expulsion of the Germans was only possible because of the prior policies of the Nazi-German

[4] Eva Hahn, "For a Critical and Enlightened Debate about the Past," http://www.vertreibungszentrum.de/, accessed November 18, 2009.

government and the support and behavior bestowed upon it by a significant number of Germans. Without emphasizing the full context, a comparison of German expellees and Jewish Holocaust victims threatens to make victimhood generic. It would remove events from a necessary causality that allows the process of ethnic cleansing to become at least comprehensible. Assessment of the Holocaust should also highlight its singular nature as an act of genocide: more than the movement of a population, this was the intended extermination of a race.

The scholar of "comparative ethnic cleansing" must also exercise a healthy level of skepticism about preferential victim narratives, which are very often mobilized as a way to victimize other populations: at times the perceived "perpetrators," and at times other masses of people entirely. Sometimes without ill intent, and often with the conscious desire to serve a political agenda, the "victim-status" of the German expellees has been mishandled by many scholars since the end of World War II through comparison with groups as diverse as Jewish Holocaust survivors and Palestinian refugees. In 1949, Eugen Lemberg lumped together all of the ongoing contemporary migrations to contend that, "from a world-historical perspective," the German case was:

> on par with the fate of the displaced persons, the Jews, the Muslims and Hindus wandering here and there in the parts of the new India, which are demarcated off against each other. Everywhere it is the same: due to some principle, be it nationalism, communism, or a need to shut down economic competition, people are torn out of their *Heimat* in great quantity, robbed of their property, tossed into misery, herded together into camps, and killed.[5]

In seeking to establish the idea of a global moment of "change," Lemberg removed causality, German expellees became victims with equal status alongside "displaced" Holocaust survivors, and so the means to assess and understand the source of each instance of ethnic cleansing was lost. Making a different comparison in 1985, Wolfgang Benz went so far as to claim that

[5] Eugen Lemberg, *Die Ausweisung als Schicksal und Aufgabe: Zur Soziologie und Ideologie der Ostvertriebenen* (Gräfelfing: Edmund Gans Verlag, 1949), 63.

Germans were *better* victims. Citing their supposed economic integration and alleged awareness of prior German crimes, he claimed that expellees had lost any revanchist tendencies, while Palestinians remained bent on returning to their lost homeland: "A better fate than that of the Palestinians was determined for the expellees from the eastern lands– there is as good as no longing for revenge and fantasies for stealing back what was lost."[6] Economically comfortable and having apparently accepted the fact that Germans had been perpetrators as a means to explain their own fate, Benz's expellees suddenly became model victims.

This points to the problem with imagining that any instance of ethnic cleansing could ever be posed as a "success." Here ethnic cleansing becomes quite comparable: it always yields trauma and ruptures in the historical memory. Far from "orderly and humane", it can only be executed through crimes against humanity, it always breeds hatred and brings about tremendous cultural loss. While this study has shown how West German expellees steadily came to terms with this experience, they always bore the trauma of ethnic cleansing, as did Polish victims of ethnic cleansing, Jewish Holocaust survivors, and others who had suffered due to the preceding Nazi population policies. Because of ethnic cleansing, Silesia and the surrounding lands remain scarred to this day, riddled with physical holes where cultural treasures were destroyed or holes in memory where the old meanings have simply been forgotten. The resident population is now attempting to come to grips with how to take possession of their new homeland's history, a process with parallels in Thessaloniki and Amritsar/Lahore.[7]

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[6] Wolfgang Benz, "Vierzig Jahre nach der Vertreibung: Einleitende Bemerkungen," in *Die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten: Ursachen, Ereignisse, Folgen*, ed. Wolfgang Benz, 7-11 (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985).

[7] See for instance Mark Mazower's analysis of the traces of the former Turkish culture in *Salonika: City of Ghosts. Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430-1950* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2005); see also Ian Talbot's analysis of two formerly multicultural cities in India and Pakistan in "A Tale of Two Cities: The Aftermath of Partition for Lahore and Amritsar 1947–1957," *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 1 (2007): 151-185.

When one abandons the idea of "success," one finds that in fact ethnic cleansing leaves a complicated legacy, in which every victim population must seek to cope with its losses. Contrary to Benz's assertions, few expellees ever felt that they had been compensated for the material, let alone spiritual losses of their old *Heimat*, and as this study has shown, coping with loss need not mean recognition of German crimes against other populations. Benz's analysis becomes more problematic when one considers recent work on the Palestinian problem. From her vantage point as director of the Palestinian Diaspora and Refugee Center, Sari Hanafi has found that many Palestinian refugees actually possess little desire to "go home": having become urban dwellers, few would be able to relate with the rural locales that they or their ancestors had come from, especially as many of the old dwellings had since been destroyed; in a recent survey "40 per cent declared themselves unwilling to return, if a family home no longer exists."[8] Each case of ethnic cleansing is accompanied by a process of dealing with loss, usually with material/economic, spiritual/memorial, and also some political aspects; but to say that the Silesian, Karelian, and Kosovar experiences were historically "equal" is to conflate the usually incompatible aspects of "the causes of expulsion" with the "experience of expulsion." When the latter is taken in the context of the former, potential arises for a productive comparative analysis.

Once a scholar has highlighted the varied and often incomparable origins of the ethnic cleansing, it can become possible to analyze the often highly comparable *human experience of ethnic cleansing*. Regardless of whether one was a Jew in Warsaw, a German in Breslau, a Turk in Salonika, or a Muslim in Kosovo, the process of ethnic cleansing itself tends to include highly

[8] Sari Hanafi, "Capital, Transnational Kinships and the Refugee Repatriation Process," in *Israel and the Palestinian Refugees*, ed. Eyal Benvenisti, Chaim Gans, and Sari Hanafi, 3-40 (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2007), 8-9. The survey was undertaken by the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research. For varying reasons, other ethnically cleansed populations have also integrated into their land of settlement. Liisa Malkki found that Tutsi refugees who settled in urban areas in Tanzania exhibited less desire for return to the lost homeland than those who brooded in camps. See "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees," in Becoming National: A Reader, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, 434-453 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

comparable features such as ongoing war conditions which facilitate "extreme measures", particular suffering for women, children, and the elderly, violence, starvation and disease, and afterwards a pervasive sense of homesickness, loss of familial and neighborly connections, struggles for integration in the land of reception, idealization of the lost homeland, erasure of previous historical traces in the lands of origin, and return-movements with tribal or nationalist characteristics.

The Polish journalist Leszek Wołosiuk sought to make such a comparison in his analysis of German, Polish, and Ukrainian victims of ethnic cleansing: "A great deal unites all of these people: their age (they are all over sixty years old); the yearning for the *Heimat* that they had been thrown out of when they had still been children; the habit of collecting documents, maps, plans of individual sites, and old photographs over the course of years, which were attached to chronicled memories." When these populations had an opportunity to meet each other, as when a German family met the Polish family that had been forcibly moved out of Ukraine and had settled on their estate in Pomerania, they found that they had much in common and even developed friendships, comparing old photographs and repairing the old estate together.[9] When they chose not to compete for victim status, when they took note of the larger chain of events through which other populations had also suffered, then the German and Polish populations with past and present ties to the old borderlands found a chance for new understanding. Unfortunately, as this population dies out, few Germans remain that have an interest in the Lost East's multilayered history, so that ignorance and casual stereotyping are commonplace.

2. What is the Future of Silesia's Past?

[9] Leszek Wołosiuk, "Östlich des Westens und westlich des Ostens," in *Verlorene Heimat. Die Vertreibungsdebatte in Polen*, ed. Klaus Bachmann and Jerzy Kranz, 266-277 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1998), 266-267.

In his influential novel *Im Krebsgang* (2002), Günther Grass positions himself as a leading figure in the growing movement to break the "taboo" surrounding questions of German victimhood; but in the process of examining the implications of past "silence," Grass demonstrates the same *fear* of the Lost East common among contemporary Germans, rooted in his unshakable conviction that the older generation failed to achieve any genuine understanding about the world they had lost.[10] Grass's novel is most effective when it poses that an inability to deal with questions of German victimhood could provoke a dangerous misreading of the past. This is expressed through a generational hierarchy: the middle-aged and disillusioned 1968er has little interest in his mother's East Prussian *Heimat*, while ignorance about past German losses makes his son susceptible to faulty notions about a glorious past whose loss must be avenged. The book rings false, however, in its two-dimensional presentation of the mother: an irredeemable revanchist expellee, who works with her fellow expellee cronies to exert a pernicious influence over the impressionable grandson, driving him to the incomprehensible act of murdering a Jewish boy whom he meets on the internet. To be sure, a few rightwing expellees were publishing travel accounts and propaganda tracts through the 1980s which explicitly sought to inculcate a revanchist agenda in the next generation.[11] That being said, this sort of climate was simply not the reality in most expellee households.

If all expellees had thought like their revanchist leaders, as Grass appears to think, then the present historic moment, when living memory of prewar Silesia finally dissipates, should elicit a sense of relief. Instead, this study has shown that widespread discussion in the BRD about

[10] Günther Grass, *Im Krebsgang: eine Novelle* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2002).
[11] See for example Elizabeth and Peter Ruge, *Nicht nur die Steine sprechen deutsch: Polens Deutsche Ostgebiete* (Munich/Vienna: Langen Müller, 1985).

German victimhood,[12] specifically translated through dialogue about the lost *Heimat*, had potential to facilitate healing. I submit that the ignorance passed on by the middle generation portends far greater damage to the present historical memory than any yearning for *Heimat* within the soon-to-be-extinct *Erlebnisgeneration*. The 68er in Grass's book, like Grass himself, feared that no one had dealt with the past. In making this claim Grass was perhaps reflecting on his own as-yet undisclosed past as a child soldier, and more broadly *his own* generation's struggle to talk about German victimhood in a constructive manner.

If there has been a "tabooization" about German suffering, it arose most strongly through the decades after the Warsaw Treaty. As Kai Struve has shown, through their own unyielding demands, expellee groups were driven to the margins of society through the 1970s, and the general public came to connote German "achievements" in the east with a negative German tradition of oppression in relation to eastern neighbors.[13] Manfred Kittel has gone so far as to argue that talk of expellees was "expelled" from public discourse through the 1970s, because federal funding for expellee organizations decreased after the Warsaw Treaty, and official commemoration of the East was restricted to the "ghettos of the *Landsmannschaften*."[14] This

[12] In emphasizing the prevalence of this culture of victims, I agree with Robert Moeller's critique of Grass: "Sinking Ships, the Lost Heimat and Broken Taboos: Günter Grass and the Politics of Memory in Contemporary Germany," *Contemporary European History* 12, no. 2 (2003): 147-181. Like Grass, Andreas Kossert has also made the peculiar claim that the difficulties expellees faced in integrating into postwar West German society were repressed and tabooized, and that they remain to be discussed. See *Kalte Heimat: Die Geschichte der deutschen Vertriebenen nach 1945* (Munich: Siedler, 2008). Extensive literature from the time the expulsion and also through recent scholarship, applied heavily in Kossert's book, demonstrates the there has been extensive discussion.

[13] Kai Struve, "Vertreibung und Aussiedlung," in *Schlesische Erinnerungsorte: Gedächtnis und Identität einer mitteleuropäischen Region*, ed. Marek Czapliński and Tobias Weger, 281-305, (Görlitz: Neiße Verlag, 2005), 293.

[14] Manfred Kittel, *Vertreibung der Vertriebenen? Der historische deutsche Osten in der Erinnerungskultur der Bundesrepublik (1961-1982)* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 171, 176. The tone of Kittel's assertion has brought down an attack that he has in fact "made the complaints [of expellee leaders in the BdV] his own." Basing his analysis on many of the leadership's assertions in their public organ *Deutscher Ostdienst*, he may have less-than-critically adopted the leadership's own language in claiming that, of late, insufficient attention has been paid to expellee suffering. See Kurt Nelhiebel, "Die Engkopplung von Krieg und Vertreibung. Zu Manfred Kittels Deutung der jüngeren europäischen Geschichte," Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft 58 (2010), 54-69. Nelhiebel, himself an expellee from northern Bohemia in 1946, was a pronounced critic of the expellee organizations and their leaderships' reliance on former Nazis from the early 1960s onward.

trend was assisted by the fact that discussion of the former Eastern Territories gradually disappeared from schoolbooks; laudable efforts to remove the dangerous idealization of the Lost East from textbooks in the 1950s ultimately resulted in texts and classroom instruction which, after the Warsaw Treaty, had little to say at all about the long German past in the East.[15] Through highly necessary and valuable public debate and emphasis concerning the Holocaust and other German crimes in the East, Poland perhaps unintentionally became the land of Auschwitz. If anything, this has had a tendency to strengthen reticence among Germans to learn about Poland, much less travel there or develop real connections.[16]

As a final factor, the dwindling expellee population withdrew to yearn for the *Heimat of memory* in private. Apart from a few exceptions, they were the only West Germans that retained an active interest in the East: due to their personal connections with the old *Heimat*, they often sent financial aid to keep up landmarks, expressed ever more positive assessments about Polish Silesia as they toured the region after 1970 and 1990, and they even established real ties with the present population.[17] However, they seldom managed to stir interest or even comprehension from their children and grandchildren. Few citizens of contemporary Germany can find Silesia

[15] The disappearance of the East was not the intention of Enno Meyer, a leading planner. See his 47 theses about the representation of the German-Polish relationship in historical instruction in March 1956. Finding acclaim for his work in Poland and West Germany, Meyer sought a stronger and more objective treatment of the shared German-Polish past in classroom instruction and textbooks, featuring the past commonalities between the two peoples, as well as ways in which each side had harmed the other (such as explicit reference to the German murder of Poles and Jews during World War II and the expulsion of Germans). See *Über die Darstellung der deutsch-polnischen Beziehung im Geschichtsunterricht* (Braunschweig: Albert Limbach Verlag, 1960), 1-19.

[16] Jürgen Röhling asks how it is possible "that a region could completely disappear from consciousness" or only survive with negative associations. Hopefully, on the basis of the evidence brought forth in this study, it is clear that his answer is too simple: it is not the case that a uniformly anti-Polish image arose in all postwar West German literature about Silesia to yield contemporary disinterest in the region. First, it is natural that the generation that experienced flight and expulsion should have had a greater interest in the spaces they left behind than those born in the West. And second, when one moves beyond heavily published novels and diaries and examines more intimate accounts, such as reflections in *Heimat* periodicals, the *Schlesienliteratur* becomes far more complex than a genre composed entirely of *negative* anti-Polish views, to be contrasted against the *positive* portrayals put forth by a few enlightened writers such as Horst Bienek and August Scholtis. See "'Unter polnischer Verwaltung.' Schlesien, ein Phantom," in *Verhandlungen der Identität. Literatur und Kultur in Schlesien seit 1945*, ed. Jürgen Joachimsthaler and Walter Schmitz, 39-48 (Dresden: Thelem, 2004), 39-40.

[17] The broader importance of such travel will be laid out at greater length in my next project.

on a map, few have any conception of the seven centuries of German history within the contemporary borders of Poland, and Poland itself is reified through stereotypes that render it, on the one hand, as the land of Auschwitz and German guilt, and on the other as an uninteresting place dominated by backwardness, insecurity, inefficiency, and even incapability, where a German will certainly be threatened and perhaps harmed. In sum, it is a land to be avoided. Though young people are not murdering Jews, Grass's fear about possible reaction has some validity. In the long term, such ignorance could provoke a potentially dangerous misreading of history.

This raises questions about the idea of West Germany as the paragon of coming to terms with the past by contrast with East Germany, Poland, Russia, and other countries that have supposedly fallen "behind"; rather than presuming that "a robust national identity" can result through a collective *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, it may be more productive to explore how individuals within that very diverse national body are in fact interpreting the past.[18] Here I can fall back on my own casual conversations with young and middle-aged Germans who generally consider themselves liberal and open-minded. Whenever I try to discuss the German past in the East, I tend to find striking ignorance; whenever I ask a German whether he or she has ever been to Poland, I almost always receive the same answers: it is a boring place, a dangerous place. Certainly I understand that this is a general trend which does not apply to all Germans,[19] and these observations have not been subjected to the same scholarly scrutiny with which I have conducted the rest of this project. They are meant as the reflections of an American scholar who,

[18] For an example of this "ranking" among various "nations" in working through the past, see Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu, eds., *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 27.

[19] To take an example, while on a train from Kassel to Marburg in November 2009, I met a German student who had recently been to Poland and planned to return; he agreed with my observation that his choice of destination was an uncommon one and hoped that one day more Germans would develop interest in Poland.

in the midst of his research, has developed concerns about the contemporary state of the German memory work that he studied in the period of the early Federal Republic.

When a pair of German students visited me in the United States in 2003, they were confused by an historical map of Germany before the First World War, which I was using in classroom instruction. "Why is so much of Germany in Poland?" they wanted to know, and they presumed that this was just an image of Nazi conquest. When I mentioned that German-speaking populations had settled in the region over centuries before, my friends were hurt, and even spiteful about the "absences" in their school instruction. I've had a similar experience with students across Germany. Insularity and ignorance even prevail *along* the border, which in contrast to the prewar Upper Silesian or Masurian border regions, lacks an in-between zone of population mixing and interchange. To take an example, while in the border town of Görlitz in 2005, I decided to have my dinner at the "mill" restaurant, which is situated in the middle of the Neiße river. A pair of Bavarian tourists were enjoying their dinner directly beside the black, red, and gold border marker, and as I was alone, they invited me to join them. As our conversation progressed, I mentioned the pedestrian bridge a few meters from our table. They responded by expressing absolutely no interest in ever visiting Poland, even though it was literally a stone's throw away. They were tourists in Görlitz, *not* Poland, and offered the usual excuses as to why. While the Bavarians felt at home touring the former DDR, they refused to acknowledge the former Eastern Territories. This is the new *Mauer im Kopf*. One acquaintance summed up the general sentiment as we ate brats together at a cookout: after recounting his embarrassment that his family was "from Poland" (that is, his parents had been expellees from Lower Silesia), he concluded by assuring me that he "would travel anywhere but Poland!"

Perhaps also for economic reasons, such disinterest and ignorance are hardly so widespread in reverse. As Gesine Schwan of the Europa-Universität Viadrina in Frankfurt/Oder reflected at the German Unification Symposium on October 3, 2006, 2.5 million Poles were learning German, while only 10,000 Germans were learning Polish.[20] To speak from my own experiences, a Polish homeless man that I met at the train station in Zgorzelec, across the river from Görlitz, was thrilled that with the advent of the Schengen zone agreement in 2007 he could regularly cross into Germany; a Polish student that I met on the train to Görlitz in 2009 had lived for years with her family on the German side of the border town, where they enjoyed coming to know the local culture, cuisine, and language. Especially among Poles who live in the former German territories, interest in Germany is high and on the rise. Disinterest is also far less of a problem among the elderly remnant of the expellee population. An older couple that I met on the main square in Kraków in summer 2009 came from Bavaria, but the elderly woman had been born in Habelschwerdt in Silesia; having first ventured back to see the old *Heimat* in 1994, they had come back regularly to Poland ever since, vacationing well outside the former Eastern Territories, because they had come to appreciate the beauties of the Polish culture and countryside.

The wandering American scholar had not been alone in charting such observations across the eastern and western parts of the reunited Germany. When Ursula Waage, a former DDR citizen from Silesia and activist for German-Polish understanding, recently read portions of her new book about life in immediate postwar Wrocław at the *Landeszentrale für politische Bildung* in Dresden, students and middle-aged listeners alike proved unaware that Silesia had ever been

[20] Gesine Schwan, "Bridging the Oder: Reflections on Poland, Germany, and the Transformation of Europe," *German Historical Institute Bulletin* 40 (Spring 2007): 39-46, here 45.

part of Germany.[21] Meanwhile, in West Germany three decades before the fall of the Berlin Wall, scholars were already noting the widespread lack of knowledge about the German heritage in the East.[22] Assessing the state of research in 1987, Klaus Boockmann expressed concern that many who were advocating better relations with Poland wanted to forget that Wrocław had been Breslau before 1945, and that this "collective suppression" could in fact endanger the very *Ostpolitik* that they claimed to be furthering.[23] For this reason, Janusz Reiter, the director of the Center for International Relations in Warsaw and former Polish ambassador to Germany, concluded in 1997 that the passing of the *Erlebnisgeneration* in fact represented a *challenge* that had to be overcome through spreading awareness about the past. "Working through history is like clearing mine fields," he argued.

> Who knew this better than the war generations? Today we know on both sides, in Poland as in Germany, that an ignorance of history [Geschichtslosigkeit] rather than history itself is dangerous. Understanding history permits a helpful orientation, ignorance of history causes people to be easily manipulated.[24]

As Reiter feared, ignorance has bred misunderstanding and already in rare cases has germinated more dangerous sentiments. When a group of West German students took a trip in their old VW bus across the Oder-Neiße lands in 1981, they sought to lay a new claim to lands that they decided were still a part of Germany. Without any personal background in the land, they referenced prewar tourist guidebooks and idealized a past they knew little about. They played their guitars along overgrown Prussian canals and nursed their sense of resentment. "Where are Pomerania and East Prussia?" they asked. "Now we are here, and we know where they lay: they lay where our *Volk* is missing land." Traveling through Polish cities and villages,

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[21] Ursula Waage to Andrew Demshuk, November 19, 2007.
[22] See the observations in Klaus Weigelt, ed. *Flucht und Vertreibung in der Nachkriegsliteratur: Formen ostdeutscher Kulturförderung* (Melle: Verlag Ernst Knoth, 1986), 7.
[23] Hartmut Boockmann, "Historische, politische und kulturelle Traditionen der Herkunftsgebiete – Bemerkungen zur Einführung in den Forschungsgegenstand," in *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in der westdeutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte*, ed. Doris von der Brelie-Lewien, Helga Grebing, and Rainer Schulze, 81-88 (Hildesheim: August Lax Verlag, 1987), 88.
[24] Janusz Reiter, "Vorwort," in *Verlorene Heimat*, ed. Bachmann and Kranz, 17.

their fantasies about the past and yearning for vengeance only increased: "*We ourselves* are the ones affected, because this is *our* property. One of *us* could live here. . . . *We ourselves* were expelled from here."[25] Though thankfully an exception, such blatant revanchist yearning for *Lebensraum* in Poland is the fruit of ignorance, and such ignorance might bode ill for the future.

As I am convinced through my reading and observation that a prevailing German ignorance about the former Eastern Territories presents an obstacle to East-West understanding, I wish to highlight approaches already underway that could contribute to ameliorating the problem. It is my view that, where the Lost East is concerned, Germans should embrace neither silence nor idealization, but *discussion* supported by education and experience that incorporate the latest German and Polish attempts to bridge the gap between the two histories and promote understanding. In this manner, it could be possible to achieve Karl Schlögel's recent plea to integrate the former German Eastern Territories, today's Polish West, into European collective memory and history.[26] With frank awareness of past suffering as well as positive contributions on both sides, I encourage active exchange between German and Polish students and towns, as has already been undertaken in a limited manner through the existing German-Polish partner-city [Partnerschaft] program. Rather than just send political delegations, these programs should regularly send thousands of Germans to Poland, and after visiting Auschwitz, they should visit Wrocław as well and tour the excellent new exhibition of the town's German, Polish, and Jewish past in the city museum (Muzeum Miejskie Wrocławia).[27] Germans should become as aware of the history of East Prussia and the Upper Silesian industrial region as they are of Bavaria and the

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[25] Italics in original, Dietmar Munier, *Reise in besetztes Land: Eine Deutsche Jugendgruppe fährt über die Oder* (Kiel: Arndt, 1981), 25.
[26] Karl Schlögel, "Nach der Rechthaberei: Umsiedlung und Vertreibung als europäisches Problem," in *Vetreibungen europäisch erinnern? Historische Erfahrungen Vergengenheitspolitik - Zukunftskonzeptionen*, ed. Dieter Bingen, Wlodzimierz Borodziej, and Stefan Troebst, 11-38 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003).
[27] Mateusz Hartwich, exhibition review of *1000 lat Wrocławia - 1000 Jahre Breslau*, April 15, 2009, in H-Soz-u-Kult, June 20, 2009, http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/id=116&type=rezausstellungen.

Ruhrgebiet. Those who vacation in Paris or Majorca could also enjoy a great deal of culture and relaxation in Warsaw and along the Baltic coast.

Education should be the basis from which new understanding is achieved. Rather than merely feature a "comparative" treatment of German and Polish suffering, new histories should feature ethnic cleansing as a chain reaction. The population schemes of the Nazi regime, such as the movement of Baltic Germans in 1939 into ethnically cleansed regions conquered in Poland, triggered a far-reaching process.[28] The displacement of the German populations in Eastern Europe, and even the displacement of the Palestinian population through the months after World War II, became possible because of Nazi crimes in Europe, which uprooted so many peoples and drove them to settle elsewhere. Some strides in this direction have already been made; they just need to be disseminated and expanded upon. For example, the Herder Institut in Marburg has recently worked with the Wrocław promotional office to publish a bilingual text for general consumption, "Breslau in aerial photography in the interwar period." Having already sold thousands of copies, the book features a selection of 350 photographs with accompanying text by German and Polish experts on prewar history; this was also set up as an exhibition of fifty images at the Herder Institut and in the Wrocław town hall, and even as a display of ten posters on the Wrocław marketplace in June 2008.[29]

One should also consult a model text for school instruction, "Understanding History, Forming the Future," which was recently published in both German and Polish for use in Eastern Saxony and Lower Silesia. This joint venture by leading German and Polish scholars features

[28] See for instance the analysis of Götz Aly, *Final Solution: Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews*, trans. Belinda Cooper and Allison Brown (London: Arnold, 1999).
[29] "Breslau im Luftbild der Zwischenkriegszeit. Leitung: Dr. Dietmar Popp," in *Herder Institut Jahresbericht 2008* (Marburg), 15-16. The successor project of a picture exhibition and publication for Danzig is already being planned for 2010. The images all stem from a collection of 4500 aerial pictures taken in the 1920s and 1930s by the commercial company *Hansa-Luftbild*, which were acquired by the Herder Institut in 1967/68. "Breslau im Luftbild der Zwischenkriegszeit/Wrocław na fotografii lotniczej z okresu międzywojennego," *Herder Institut Jahresbericht 2008* (Marburg), 40.

heavy use of translated primary texts (including survivor accounts by both German and Polish victims of ethnic cleansing) to facilitate an examination of the history and heritage of the German-Polish borderlands within the context of historical events which prompted their dramatic transformation.[30] Regional projects like this need to spread through the curriculum in both countries, just as travel and exchange must transcend scholarly and political interaction. Germans and Poles need to become comfortable crossing the border; they must learn to interact outside of old stereotypes. By exploring their shared historical legacies and mourning their shared historical traumas, they have a chance to build an integrated Europe that is based upon the knowledge of their common humanity.

[30] Kinga Hartmann, Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, Tobias Weger, and Kazimierz Woycicki, eds., *Geschichte Verstehen – Zukunft gestalten. Die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen in den Jahren 1933-1949*, Ergänzende Unterrichtsmaterialien für das Fach Geschichte (Dresden and Wrocław: Neisse Verlag, 2007). This book was funded by the European Union and the state of Saxony. It benefited from collaboration with the Federal Institute for the Culture and History of Germans in Eastern Europe (Oldenburg), the Polish Institute of National Memory (Warsaw), the Willy Brandt Center (Wrocław), the Polish Institute (Leipzig), the Silesian Museum (Görlitz), the University of Zielona Góra, the Lower Silesian Center for Teacher Improvement and Pedagogical Information (Legnica and Wrocław), and the cities of Görlitz and Zgorzelec. It drew significant media interest in both countries.

APPENDIX

Abbreviations:

BAB: Bundesarchiv Abteilung Berlin-Lichterfelde
BAK: Bundesarchiv Abteilung Koblenz
BdV: Bund der Vertriebenen (League of the Expellees, est. 1958)
BHE: Block der Heimatvertriebenen (Bloc of Expellees, est. 1950, fused with DP 1961)
BMgF: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (Federal Ministry for all-German Questions)
BRD: Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal Republic of Germany)
CDU: Christlich demokratische Union Deutschlands (Christian Democratic Union, BRD)
CSSR: Czechoslovak Socialist Republic
DAA: Deutsches Adelsarchiv (Archive of the German Nobility)
DDR: Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic)
DJO: Deutsche Jugend des Ostens (German Youth of the East)
DM: Deutschmark (West German currency, roughly four DM to the dollar 1949-1969)
DP: Deutsche Partei (German Party, a small party that fused with BHE in 1961)
EKD: Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (German Protestant Church)
EZA: Evangelisches Zentral Archiv (Protestant Central Archive)
FDGB: Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (Free German Trade Union Federation, DDR)
FDP: Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party, BRD)
HB: Heimatgruppe Bunzlau (Bunzlau Homeland Association, Siegburg)
HO: Heimatstube Oppeln (Oppeln Homeland Room, Bad Godesburg)
HS: Haus Schlesien (House of the Silesians, Königswinter)
KPD: Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (German Communist Party)
LH: Liegnitzer Heimatverein (Liegnitz Homeland Association in Wuppertal)
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPD: Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (German National Democratic Party)
NSDAP: Nationalsozialistische deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Nazi party)
OMGUS: Office of Military Government, United States
OS: (alternatively O/S and O. S.): Oberschlesien (Upper Silesia)
SA: Sturmabteilung (Nazi storm troopers or brownshirts)
SaG-HBB: Stadtarchiv Goslar- Hauptamt-Betreuungsstelle Brieg (Brieg archive, Goslar)
SB HI2: Stadtarchiv Bottrop-Heimatarchiv Gleiwitz (Gleiwitz archive, Bottrop)
SBZ: Sowjetische Besatzungszone (Soviet Occupation Zone)
SED: Sozialistische Einheitspartei (Socialist Unity Party, DDR)
SPD: Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party, BRD)
SS: Schutzstaffel (Nazi racial police force)
SSD: Schlesischer Studentenbund (Silesian Student Union)
UB: Urząd Bezpieczeństwa (Polish secret police, 1945-54)
USSR: Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics
VHDS: Verband Heimatvertriebener Deutscher Studenten (Union of German Expellee Students)
VOL: Vereinigten Ostdeutschen Landsmannschaften (union of all eastern German land associations)
VRP: Volksrepublik Polen (People's Republic of Poland)

ZvD: Zentralverband der vertriebenen Deutschen (Central League of Expelled Germans)

German and Polish Place Names:

Former German Eastern Provinces (English – German – Polish/Russian names):
East Brandenburg – Ostbrandenburg – Woiwodschaft Lebus (with Zielona Góra, 1999)
East Prussia – Ostpreussen – Kaliningrad (Russian Oblast in northern partition)
Masuria – Masuren – Mazury (Polish region in southern partition of East Prussia)
Pomerania – (Hinter)pommern – Pomorze
Lower Silesia – Niederschlesien – Dolny Śląsk
Upper Silesia – Oberschlesien – Górny Śląsk

Major Rivers in Silesia (German – Polish names):
Bartsch – Barycz
Bober – Bóbr
Glatzer Neisse – Nysa Kłodzka
Katzbach – Kaczawa
Klodnitz – Kłodnica
Lausitzer Neisse – Nysa Lużycka
Oder – Odra (each river listed here is a tributary)
Ohle – Oława
Queis – Kwisa

Lower Silesian Cities (German – Polish):
Agnetendorf – Jagniątków
Bad Altheide – Polanica Zdrój
Bad Charlottenburg – Jedlina Zdrój
Bad Kudowa – Kudowa Zdrój
Bad Landeck – Lądek Zdrój
Bad Salzbrunn – Szczawno Zdrój
Bad Warmbrunn – Cieplice
Bernstadt – Bierutów
Breslau – Wrocław
Brieg – Brzeg
Bunzlau – Bołesławiec
Camenz – Kamieniec Ząbkowicki
Frankenstein – Ząbkowice Śląskie
Freystadt – Kożuchów
Friedersdorf – Biedrzychowice
Glatz – Kłodzko
Glogau – Głogów
Goldberg – Złotoryja
Görlitz – Zgorzelec
Greiffenberg – Gryfów
Grünberg – Zielona Góra
Grüssau – Krzeszów

Guhrau – Góra
Habelschwerdt – Bystrzyca Kłodzka
Haynau – Chojnów
Hirschberg – Jelenia Góra
Jauer – Jawor
Kohlfurt – Węgliniec
Lahn – Wleń
Landeshut – Kamienna Góra
Langenbielau – Bielawa
Lauban – Lubań
Leubus – Lubiąż
Liegnitz – Legnica
Löwenberg – Lwówek
Lüben – Lubin
Marklissa – Leśna
Militsch – Milicz
Münsterberg – Ziebice
Namslau – Namysłów
Naumburg – Nowogródziec
Neumarkt – Środa Śląska
Neurode – Nowa Ruda
Nimptsch – Niemcza
Neusalz – Nowa Sól
Obernigk – Obornik
Oels – Oleśnica
Ohlau – Oława
Ossig – Osiek
Parchwitz – Prochowice
Penzig – Pieńsk
Peterswaldau – Pieszyce
Raudten – Rudna
Reichenbach – Dzierżoniów
Sagan – Żagań
Schmiedeberg – Kowary
Schreiberhau – Szklarska Poręba
Schweidnitz – Świdnica
Siegersdorf – Zebrzydowa
Simsdorf – Szymanów
Sorau – Żary
Sprottau – Szprotawa
Strehlen – Strzelin
Streigau – Strzegom
Trachenberg – Żmigród
Trebnitz – Trzebnica
Waldau – Wykroty
Waldenburg – Wałbrzych

Winzig – Winsko
Wohlau – Wołów
Zobten – Sobótka

Upper Silesian Cities in the borders of 1920 (German – Polish):
Beuthen – Bytom
Bielitz-Biala – Bielsko-Biała
Birkenhain – Brzeziny
Falkenau – Chróścina Nyska
Friedrichshütte – Strzybnica
Gleiwitz – Gliwice
Gross Läswitz – Lasowice Wielkie
Gross Strehlitz – Strzelce Opolskie
Grottkau – Grodków
Guttentag – Dobrodzien
Hindenburg – Zabrze
Kattowitz – Katowice (Stalinogród 1953-1956)
Königshütte – Chorzów
Krappitz – Krapkowice
Kreuzburg – Kluczbork
Lamsdorf – Łambinowice
Leobschütz – Głubczyce
Myslowitz – Mysłowice
Neisse – Nysa
Nikolai – Mikołów
Oberglogau – Głogówek
Oppeln – Opole
Ottmachau – Otmuchów
Patschkau – Paczków
Pless – Pszczyna
Ratibor – Racibórz
Rosenberg – Olesno
Rybnik – Rybnik
Sankt Annaberg – Góra Święty Anny
Tarnowitz – Tarnowskie Góry
Teschen – Cieszyn (Těšín/Czech Republic)
Tichau – Tychy

Other Cities in the Oder-Neisse Territories (German – Polish):
Allenstein – Olsztyn (Masuria)
Crossen – Krosno (East Brandenburg)
Danzig – Gdańsk (interwar free city, historically West Prussia and chief Polish port)
Elbing – Elbląg (Masuria)
Frankfurt/Oder Dammvorstadt – Słubice (Frankfurt's east suburb, chief border crossing)
Frauenburg – Frombork (East Prussia)
Guben – Gubin (East Brandenburg)

Kolberg – Kołobrzeg (Pomerania)
Königsberg – Kaliningrad (capital of East Prussia, now Russian Kaliningrad Oblast)
Köslin – Koszalin (Pomerania)
Küstrin – Kostrzyn (East Brandenburg)
Landsberg – Gorzów (East Brandenburg)
Lötzen – Giżycko (Masuria)
Marienburg – Malbork (West Prussia, plebiscite to Germany 1920)
Marienwerder – Kwidzyn (West Prussia, plebiscite to Germany 1920)
Memel – Klaipeda (north East Prussia, chief Lithuanian port 1920-39 and since 1945)
Pillau – Baltijsk (East Prussia, now Kaliningrad Oblast)
Rastenburg – Kętrzyn (East Prussia)
Rössel – Rzeszel (Masuria)
Stettin – Szczecin (historic capital of Pomerania)
Stolp – Słupsk (Pomerania)
Tilsit – Sowetsk (East Prussia, now Kaliningrad Oblast)

Other Cities (Polish – German):
Bydgoszcz – Bromberg (West Prussia, interwar Polish Corridor)
Chełmno – Kulm (West Prussia, interwar Polish Corridor)
Częstochowa – Tschenstochau (Polish pilgrimage site, annexed to Silesia after 1945)
Gdynia – Gdingen (Poland's interwar Baltic port, Nazi Gotenhafen 1939-45)
Gniesno – Gnesen (Poznań province, early medieval Polish capital)
Grudziądz – Graudenz (West Prussia, interwar Polish Corridor)
Kraków – Krakau (medieval Polish capital, English Cracow)
Lwów – (German Lemberg, Ukrainian L'viv, Russian L'vov, Latin Leopolis)
Łódż – Lodz (major Polish industrial city, Nazi Litzmannstadt 1940-45)
Oświęcim – Auschwitz (Nazi concentration camp, annexed to Upper Silesia 1939-45)
Poznań – Posen (capital of Poznań province, part of German Empire before 1918)
Toruń – Thorn (West Prussia, interwar Polish Corridor)
Warszawa – Warschau (Polish capital, English Warsaw)
Wilno – Wilna (today Lithuanian Vilnius)

Selected German Words:

Abschied – farewell.
Arbeitskreis – research committee, often collaborating to produce scholarly works.
Aussiedler – emigrants.
Autochthonen – autochthonous or indigenous populations often said to have "forgotten" their bloodlines. Alleged "Slavs" in postwar Upper Silesia were claimed as Poles that had been Germanized, though many had "German" parents and "Polish" siblings. See *Volksliste*.
Beheimatet – domiciled or resident.
Besatzungszone – zone of occupation (in immediate postwar Germany).
Bevölkerungswissenschaft – population research, often incorporating racial ideologies.
Bodenreform – massive land reform in the SBZ breaking up large estates for small landowners, offering land to many refugees from the East.
Brachzeit – a fallow period.

Bundesministerium – federal ministry (a department of government).
Bundestag – federal parliament in the BRD.
Bundestreffen – a federal meeting, such as a meeting of expellees from across the BRD.
Denkmalpflegung – care of monuments.
deutsch – German.
einheimisch – native or indigenous (as in a population already settled on the land).
endgültig – permanent, final, without any chance of revision or change.
Flüchtlinge – refugees (a term that is comparably politically neutral).
Freikorps – free units (such as interwar German militias, usually with rightist leanings).
Friedhof – cemetery.
Gemeinschaft – community.
Gesamtdeutsch – all-German, implying a subject that concerns all Germans everywhere.
Gestapo – Nazi secret police.
Glaube – faith, often religious faith.
Grenzpolizei – border guards and police.
Grundgesetz – the Basic Law of the BRD (1949), essentially the West German constitution.
Heimat – homeland, versatile term with connection to soil, people, and landmarks.
Heimatboden – one's native soil, or the earth of *Heimat.*
Heimatbuch – a book devoted to chronicling the history and features of a region or town.
Heimaterde – soil from the *Heimat*, sometimes kept in a jar and given sacred meaning.
heimatlos – homeless.
Heimatstadt – the city that one considers to be *Heimat.*
Heimattreffen – a meeting devoted to residents of a former region or town of the East.
Heimatvertriebene – those expelled from the homeland, synonymous with *Vertriebene.*
Heimatzeitung – periodical, usually with small circulation, devoted to a town or county.
Heimkehr – a return home (to the East), used synonymously with *Rückkehr.*
Heimweh – homesickness.
Herrenvolk – Nazi term for the master race.
Kampf – struggle, often implying a violent effort.
Knecht – laborer, often with connotations of slavery.
kresy – Polish for "outskirts" or "borderlands," also the Polish eastern territories annexed to the Soviet Union in 1945, now part of Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania. Roughly two million Poles fled from the *kresy* into the West, many finding a home in the former German Eastern Territories.
Landschaft – landscape.
Lastenausgleich – the equalization of burdens, a 1952 BRD law to evenly distribute wealth in the aftermath of uneven wartime losses among postwar citizens.
Landsmannschaft – regional associations devoted to specific lost territories.
Meinungsforschung – public opinion research.
Neubürger – new citizens, officially used in the DDR for Germans refugees after 1948.
Ordnung – order, often connoting superior arrangement, efficiency, and cleanliness.
Ostforscher – eastern specialists, researching the alleged and real German heritage in the East.
Ostforschung – research of the East, usually with an emphasis on German contributions.
Ostkunde – study of the East.
Ostpolitik – politics of the East, such as the Willy Brandt administration's politics of rapprochement with members of the East Bloc by the end of the 1960s.

Ostverträge – eastern treaties, such as the BRD treaties with Warsaw Pact states in the 1970s.
Partnerschaft – partnership, as when BRD towns became "sister-cities" to those in Poland, especially after 1990. This implies a connection between the inhabitants of real cities.
Patenschaft – sponsorship, as when BRD towns became "godparents" in the 1950s for towns lost in the East. This involved German-speaking residents from the former eastern towns, rather than the new, Polish-speaking inhabitants.
Piast – medieval Polish dynasty whose minor branches established themselves in Silesia and steadily became Germanized before dying out by the seventeenth century.
Polnische Wirtschaft – Polish economy, an old German slur degrading Poles as inferior, inherently chaotic, incapable of ruling themselves or managing their own affairs.
Raum – space, often a physical region or the ambience of a surrounding area.
Recht auf die Heimat – right to the homeland.
Reich – realm or empire, with expansionist meaning under the Third Reich, but also bearing an older meaning as the heartland of German culture and civilization.
Reichsdeutsche – ethnic Germans from inside the 1937 borders of Germany (the earlier *Reich*).
Reichstag – German parliament before 1945, still the name for the parliament building in Berlin.
Reise – travel or trip.
Reisebericht – travel report, a journal or diary of a travel experience.
Rundbriefe – circular letters, such as those distributed by eastern clergy to members of their former communities.
Schicksalsgemeinschaft – a community of fate or destiny, often having shared a formative collective experience.
Schlesien – Silesia, a region in Central Europe which runs along the Oder river and borders German, Polish, and Czech-speaking populations. *Śląsk* is the Polish name for Silesia.
Selbstbestimmung – self-determination, a Wilsonian idea that people choose their nation.
Spätaussiedler – Germans that left the East after the 1940s.
Schlonzok – a mixed German-Polish population in Upper Silesia, also known by the diminutive name *Wasserpolacken*.
Traumland – dream land, or land of dreams.
Umsiedler – resettler, officially used in the SBZ for German refugees before 1948.
Unvergänglich(keit) – permanent or lasting.
urdeutsch, urpolnisch – ancient German or Polish, something a nation allegedly "originally" formed.
Vaterland – fatherland.
Vaterstadt – city of fathers, one's birthplace or where the family history runs deepest.
Verband, Verein – association or organization.
Vergänglich(keit) – transience or impermanence.
Verlag – publishing house.
Vertreibung – expulsion, also used in biblical references to the expulsion from paradise.
Vertriebene – expellee, term in the BRD to denote German refugees from the East.
Verzicht – renunciation.
Volk – people, nation, collective population.
Volksdeutsche – ethnic Germans from outside the 1937 borders of Germany.
Volksgemeinschaft – national community.
Volksgruppe or *Volksstamm* – ethnic tribe or group (Masurian, Bavarian, Franconian).
Volksliste – population lists, drawn up in four racial categories by the Nazis when they occupied

ethnically "mixed" regions such as Upper Silesia in order to classify which people were worthy of being retained, which should be lesser citizens or enslaved, and which should die. After the fall of the Third Reich, the Polish authorities inverted the *Volksliste* in order to determine which people were racially "worthy" of integrating into the new Poland.

Volkspropheten – people's prophets.
Währungsreform – currency reform, instituted in the western occupation zones in 1948.
Wehrmacht – the Nazi armed forces.
Wende – the change or turn, often referred to the epochal shift of 1989/90 in Germany.
Wirtschaftswunder – economic miracle, drastic BRD economic recovery of the 1950s.
Ziemie Odzyskane – Polish for "Recovered Territories" in the new Oder-Neiße provinces.

Important Dates:

May 8, 1945: The End of World War II
July 17 to August 2, 1945: Potsdam Agreement determines a border along the Oder and Lusatian Neisse rivers, east of which former German regions are to be administrated by Poland (and by the Soviet Union in northern East Prussia).
Fall 1945: *Bodenreform* starts in the SBZ and carried on in the coming months, *Umsiedler* received new farms as every farm over 100 hectares was to be divided.
March 5, 1946: Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill coins the idea of an iron curtain in a speech at Fulton, Missouri and places the Oder-Neisse Line's permanence in question.
April 28, 1946: Polish national council decrees that Polish citizenship be bestowed on all persons in the new territories who possess "Polish ethnicity," Nazi *Volksliste* are inverted in O/S.
September 6, 1946: United States Secretary of State James F. Byrnes speaks in Stuttgart declaring the readiness of the United States to seek a revision of the Polish border through a future peace conference. The speech elicits sharp criticism from the USSR and Poland, which declare the finality of the Oder-Neisse border.
February 25, 1947: Allied Control Council publishes Law 46, the "dissolution of the Prussian state."
Early 1948 in SBZ, the terms *Flüchtling* and *Umsiedler* are abolished in favor of *Neubürger*.
June 20-21, 1948: *Währungsreform* (Ludwig Erhard's Currency Reform) ends production and price controls in western zones. This fosters the construction of settlements for expellees.
May 23, 1949: founding of the Federal Republic of Germany, establishment of the Basic Law.
September 20, 1949: In his first speech to the government, Federal Chancellor Adenauer speaks against recognition of the Oder-Neisse border.
October 10, 1949: Founding of the German Democratic Republic
1949: proposals for nascent *Herder Institut* and *Göttinger Arbeitskreis*, both founded in 1950.
July 6, 1950: The Treaty of Zgorzelec [Görlitz] between the DDR and Poland recognizes the Oder-Neisse border.
July 29, 1950: Formation of the "*Hellmut-von-Gerlach-Gesellschaft* for the support of German-Polish cultural and economic exchange" in Düsseldorf.
August 5, 1950: Assembly of eastern German *Landsmannschaften* in Stuttgart, attended by 70,000 expellees with parallel meetings in other cities across West Germany. Charter of the Expellees renounces revenge and retaliation.

October and November 1950: law for the betterment of the position of former *Umsiedler* in the DDR, emphasizing education and jobs.

August 14, 1952: *Lastenausgleich*, or law of equalization of burdens in the BRD seeks to distribute wealth from those less impacted by the war to those who had lost a greater quantity of property and assets. This injected much-needed cash into the generally impoverished expellee population.

May 19, 1953: Declaration of the *Bundesvertriebenengesetz*, including paragraph 96, which demands state support for the transmission of "cultural materials from the regions of expulsion into the consciousness of the expellees and refugees, the whole German people, and foreign lands."

July 22, 1953: The new Polish constitution designates the Oder-Neisse regions as "recovered territories, returned forever".

December 15, 1953: The *Bund der Landsmannschaften* in Bonn determines the parameters for the creation of *Patenschaften* (sponsorships) between West German states, cities, and communities and counterparts in the former German eastern territories.

1955/1956: the Khrushchev thaw begins

February 18, 1955: the Polish regime declares an end to the state of war with Germany.

December 5, 1955: the German and Polish Red Cross sign an agreement allowing Germans in Poland to return to live with their families in the West. (*Familienzusammenführung der Deutschstämmigen*)

November 1956: The first West German bus excursion to the former Eastern Territories through Leo Linzer travel company in Amberg.

July 1957: West German travel to Poland possible intermittently via bus or train, visas are secured through the travel office of the Polish military mission in West Berlin.

March 11, 1958: Bundestag member Carlo Schmid (SPD) unofficially travels as first government representative to Poland and declares at the University of Warsaw that all upright Germans deeply regret the misdeeds of the Nazi past. On March 16, 1959, he proposed that the BRD establish diplomatic relations with Poland.

May 1958: Acquisition of a visa for travel to Poland remains extremely difficult, usually reserved for officials from the press and the church.

May 1958: Meeting of the FDGB, trade unions in Poland, CSR, and DDR declares the beginning of cross-border exchanges between workers in similar trades to encourage understanding and, in the case of the DDR, to show Poles that there is a difference between West and East Germans.

1959: The Kassel Resolution, in which the BdV argues that just and lasting peace for an undivided Germany needed to be negotiated by the four partition powers, spoke of the right to self-determination and *der Anspruch auf die Heimat*. Consequences of Versailles posed as an historical warning.

August 31, 1959: in a memorial speech on the twentieth anniversary of the outbreak of World War II, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer declared West Germany's readiness to live together with Poland in understanding, attentiveness, and sympathy.

February 1, 1961: The West German government enacts guidelines for a unified cartographic depiction of places and borders, based on the borders of December 31, 1937. These guidelines are further expanded in a more detailed depiction in August 1965. Chancellor Ludwig Erhard clarifies in a government declaration on October 18, 1963 that Germany existed within the borders of 1937 until the meeting of a peace conference.

August 13, 1961: DDR authorities begin construction of the Berlin Wall.
November 6, 1961: Tübinger Memorandum, signed by major West German scholars and clerics, calls for recognition of Oder-Neisse Lands in order to gain support of eastern neighbors and bring about peaceful reunification of Germany and Berlin.
1964: West German tourists were able to cross the Oder-Neisse border with the obligatory visa.
September 1965: The opening of a regular airline connection between Warsaw and Frankfurt/Main.
October 14, 1965: Publication of the EKD memorandum: "The situation of the expellees and the relationship of the German people to their eastern neighbors".
November 18, 1965: The Letter of the Polish Bishops to the German Bishops at the Second Vatican Council calling for reconciliation between the peoples (mentioning the Oder-Neisse border as essential for Poland's continued existence): "*Wir vergeben und bitten um Vergebung*." The German response on December 15 asserts readiness for reconciliation (without mentioning the Oder-Neisse border).
December 13, 1966: the Grand Coalition government (CDU/SPD) calls for reconciliation with Poland and declares that Poland has a right to exist in secure borders. But the German-Polish border could only be confirmed at a peace conference by the whole government. Polish president Władysław Gomułka spoke at Katowice February 8, accusing Bonn of pursuing old goals through new methods.
March 18, 1968: At the party rally for the SPD, Willy Brandt demanded recognition and respect for the Oder-Neisse Line, stimulating a protest by spokespeople from the eastern German land associations on March 22.
August 12, 1970: Moscow Treaty between the BRD and USSR renouncing German territorial claims and declaring the Polish and East German borders as inviolable.
October 30, 1970: BdV president Czaja sends letters to federal ministers formally opposing recognition of the Oder-Neisse border and the "renunciation of German rights".
November 2-18, 1970: Official reading of the treaty by the West German foreign minister, and Polish permission for those with German nationality to emigrate (The Polish regime would retreat somewhat from this position, so that it was only fully realized by 1975).
November 7-8, 1970: BRD foreign minister Scheel visited Kraków and Auschwitz.
December 4, 1970: CDU/CSU faction in the government declared their opposition in the Bundestag to the recognition of the border until a peace conference.
December 6-8, 1970: Chancellor Willy Brandt visits Warsaw with a German delegation, lays the wreath and kneels at the monument to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.
December 7, 1970: The signing of the treaty normalizing Polish-West German relations (*Vertrag über die Grundlagen der Normalisierung zwischen Polen und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, also known as the Treaty of Warsaw).
In 1971, over 57,000 Poles visited West Germany, in 1979 over 200,000 Poles visited West Germany; in 1971 over 53,000 West Germans visited Poland, in 1979 almost 330,000 West Germans visited Poland. From 1971 onward, a flood of self-identified ethnic Germans left Poland for West Germany, peaking 1975/6 due to the reaching of financial agreements between West Germany an Poland, as well as in 1989/90 with the end of the Cold War. Hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans have left Poland by 1990.
November 25, 1971: Polish and East German governments sign an agreement about border traffic, opening the border to citizens of both countries as of January 1, 1972. Visa restrictions likewise raised between both countries and the CSSR, so that millions of East

Germans flood over the border primarily into the former German eastern territories.

May 17, 1972: The West German Bundestag approves the *Ostverträge* with Poland, thereby finalizing what was proposed and agreed in Warsaw in 1970. Henceforth, political opposition to the border is essentially irrelevant.

July 18-28, 1973: The chair of the foreign commission for the German Bundestag, Gerhard Schröder (CDU), visits Poland and states that the *Ostverträge* are also binding for the opposition parties.

August 1980: Solidarnność strikes in Poland, centered in Gdańsk [Danzig], leading to the formation of free trade unions. During the "conditions of war" prevailing in Poland from December 1981 to July 1983, the West German population mustered a large humanitarian aid action for Poland.

November 9, 1989: The opening of all border crossings for DDR residents into West Berlin and the BRD.

March 6, 1990: Bundestag declares the right of the Polish people to live within secure borders, and renounces territorial claims by the Germans "both now and in the future", confirmed by foreign ministers of the Big Four in July.

September 12, 1990: Two-Plus-Four Treaty declared the borders of a reunited Germany and promised the Poles a final recognition of the Oder-Neisse border.

November 14, 1990: Foreign ministers of Poland and the BRD sign the German-Polish border treaty in Warsaw, confirming the Oder-Neisse line as the final western border of Poland. Both states declare the sovereignty of the other's frontiers and renounce violence.

November 26, 1991: Ratification of the border treaty by the Polish Sejm; December 16, 1991, ratification by the German Bundestag.

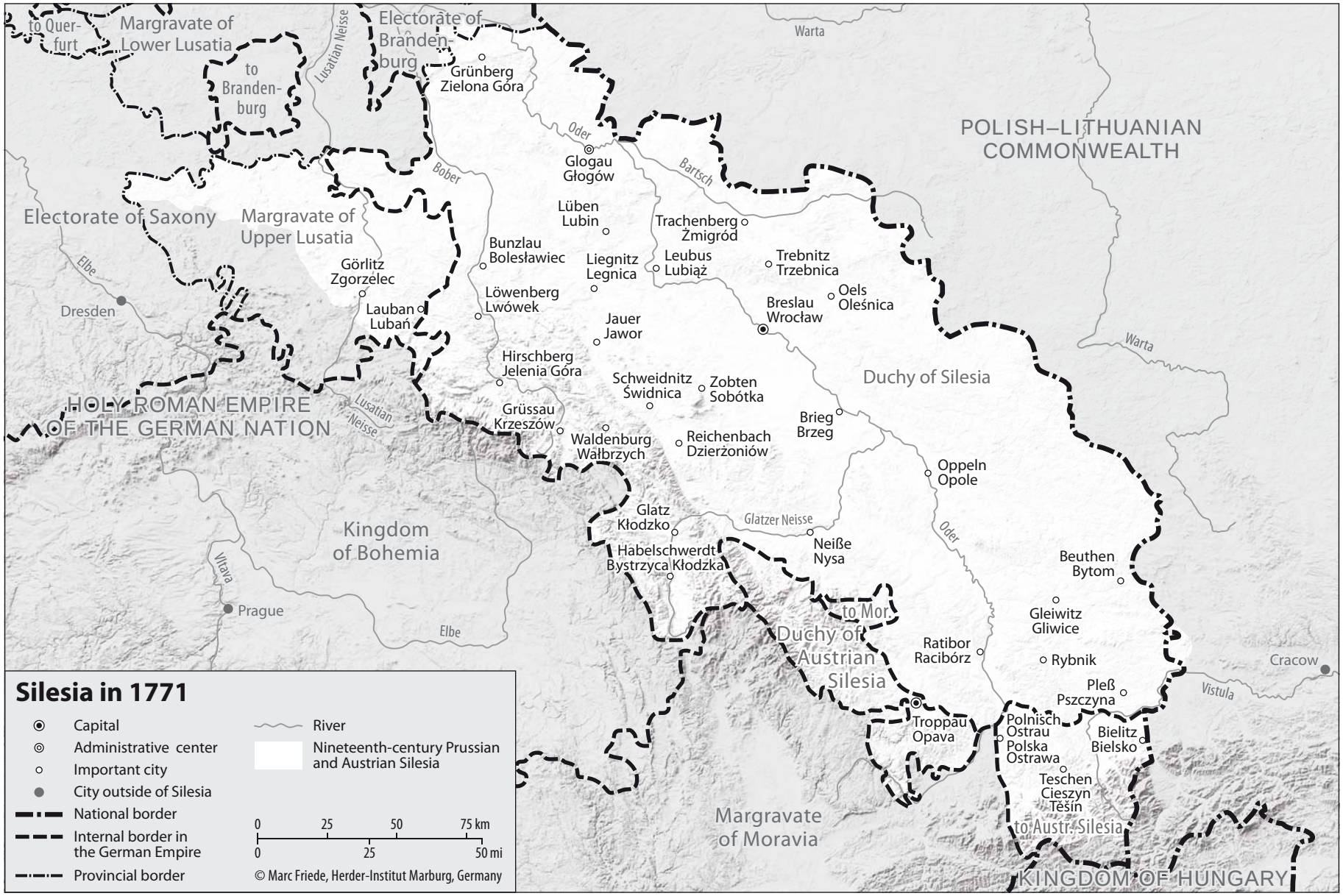
Figure 1-
Silesia as shown in the borders of 1937.
Adapted by the author from the inner cover of *Deutschland. Landschaft, Städte, Dörfer und Menschen. 244 Meisteraufnahmen, davon 16 farbige* (Frankfurt/Main: Umschau Verlag, 1956). This book passed through over thirty editions and was reprinted from 1956 through the mid-1970s.



Figure 2-
Silesia as shown in Polish borders after 1945.
Taken from Pawel Barteczko, *Schlesien Heute,* trans. Brunon Heinrich (Warsaw: Verlag Interpress, 1971), inner cover.



Figure 3



Figures 3-7 used with permission from the Herder Institut. www.herder-institut.de/staedteatlas

Figure 4


KINGDOM OF PRUSSIA
Province of Saxony
Province of Brandenburg
Province of Posen/Poznań
RUSSIAN EMPIRE
Kingdom of Poland
Margravate of Upper Lusatia
KINGDOM OF SAXONY
Province of Silesia
Kingdom of Bohemia
AUSTRIAN EMPIRE
Margravate of Moravia
Kingdom of Hungary
REPUBLIC OF CRACOW
Kingdom of Galicia and Londomeria
Lusatian Neisse
Oder
Bober
Bartsch
Warta
Elbe
Vltava
Glatzer Neisse
Grünberg Zielona Góra
Glogau Głogów
Lüben Lubin
Trachenberg Żmigród
Bunzlau Bolesławiec
Liegnitz Legnica
Leubus Lubiąż
Trebnitz Trzebnica
Görlitz Zgorzelec
Löwenberg Lwówek
Breslau Wrocław
Oels Oleśnica
Dresden
Lauban Lubań
Jauer Jawor
Hirschberg Jelenia Góra
Schweidnitz Świdnica
Zobten Sobótka
Grüssau Krzeszów
Brieg Brzeg
Waldenburg Wałbrzych
Reichenbach Dzierżoniów
Oppeln Opole
Glatz Kłodzko
Neiße Nysa
Habelschwerdt Bystrzyca Kłodzka
Prague
Beuthen Bytom
Gleiwitz Gliwice
Kattowitz Katowice
Ratibor Racibórz
Rybnik
Cracow
Pleß Pszczyna
Troppau Opava
Polnisch Ostrau Polska Ostrawa
Bielitz Bielsko
Teschen Cieszyn Těšín
Vistula
Silesia circa 1830
Capital
Administrative center
Important city
City outside of Silesia
National border
State border
Provincial border
Administrative border
River
Nineteenth-century Prussian and Austrian Silesia
0 25 50 75 km
0 25 50 mi
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Figure 5

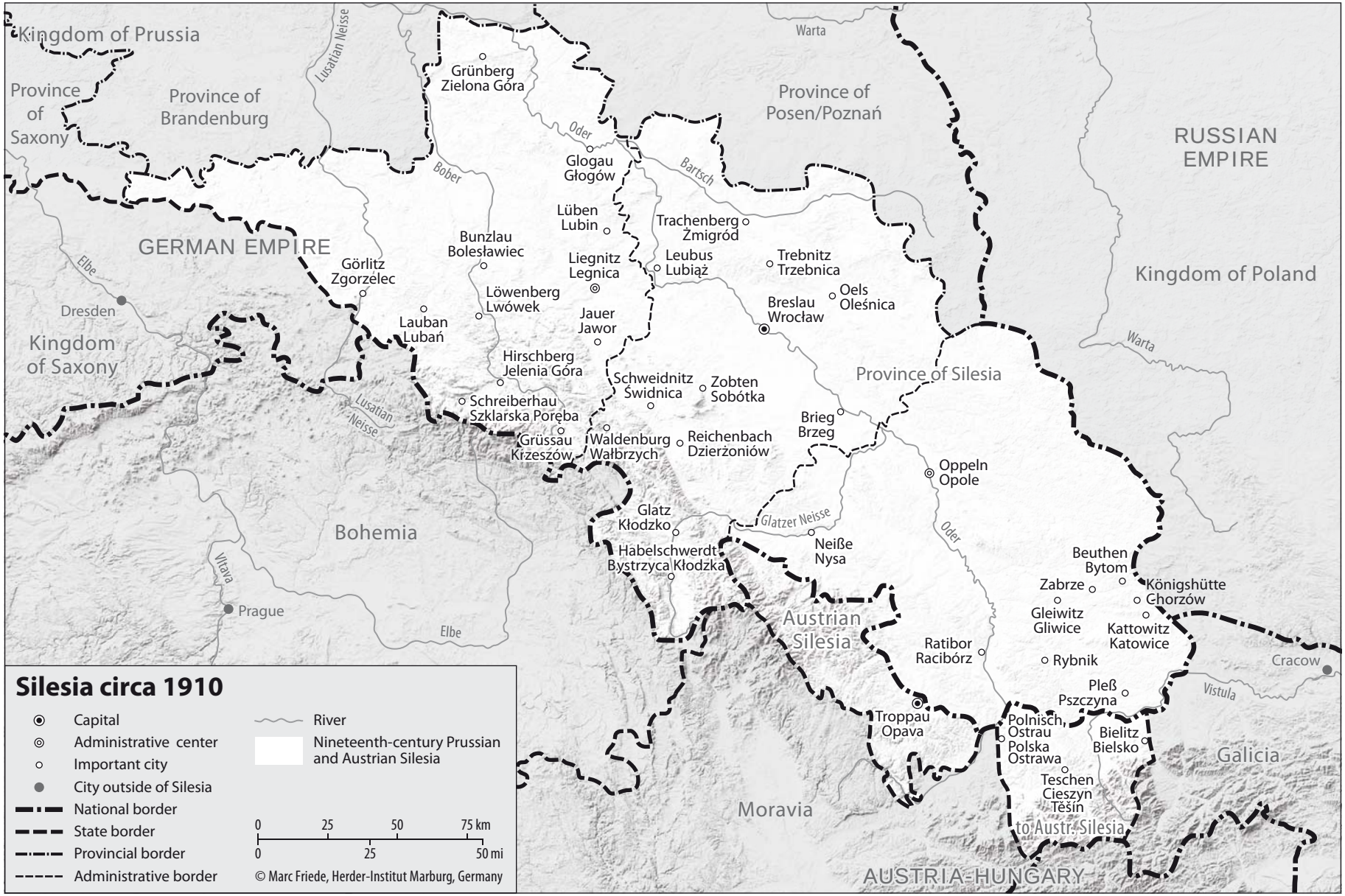

Kingdom of Prussia
Province of Saxony
Province of Brandenburg
Province of Posen/Poznań
RUSSIAN EMPIRE
GERMAN EMPIRE
Kingdom of Poland
Kingdom of Saxony
Province of Silesia
Bohemia
Austrian Silesia
Moravia
Galicia
AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Lusatian Neisse
Bober
Oder
Bartsch
Warta
Elbe
Vltava
Glatzer Neisse
Vistula
Grünberg Zielona Góra
Glogau Głogów
Lüben Lubin
Trachenberg Żmigród
Bunzlau Bolesławiec
Liegnitz Legnica
Leubus Lubiąż
Trebnitz Trzebnica
Görlitz Zgorzelec
Löwenberg Lwówek
Breslau Wrocław
Oels Oleśnica
Dresden
Lauban Lubań
Jauer Jawor
Hirschberg Jelenia Góra
Schweidnitz Świdnica
Zobten Sobótka
Schreiberhau Szklarska Poręba
Brieg Brzeg
Grüssau Krzeszów
Waldenburg Wałbrzych
Reichenbach Dzierżoniów
Oppeln Opole
Glatz Kłodzko
Habelschwerdt Bystrzyca Kłodzka
Neiße Nysa
Beuthen Bytom
Zabrze
Königshütte Chorzów
Gleiwitz Gliwice
Kattowitz Katowice
Ratibor Racibórz
Rybnik
Cracow
Pleß Pszczyna
Troppau Opava
Polnisch Ostrau Polska Ostrawa
Bielitz Bielsko
Teschen Cieszyn Těšín
to Austr. Silesia
Prague
Silesia circa 1910
Capital
Administrative center
Important city
City outside of Silesia
National border
State border
Provincial border
Administrative border
River
Nineteenth-century Prussian and Austrian Silesia
0 25 50 75 km
0 25 50 mi
© Marc Friede, Herder-Institut Marburg, Germany

Figure 6

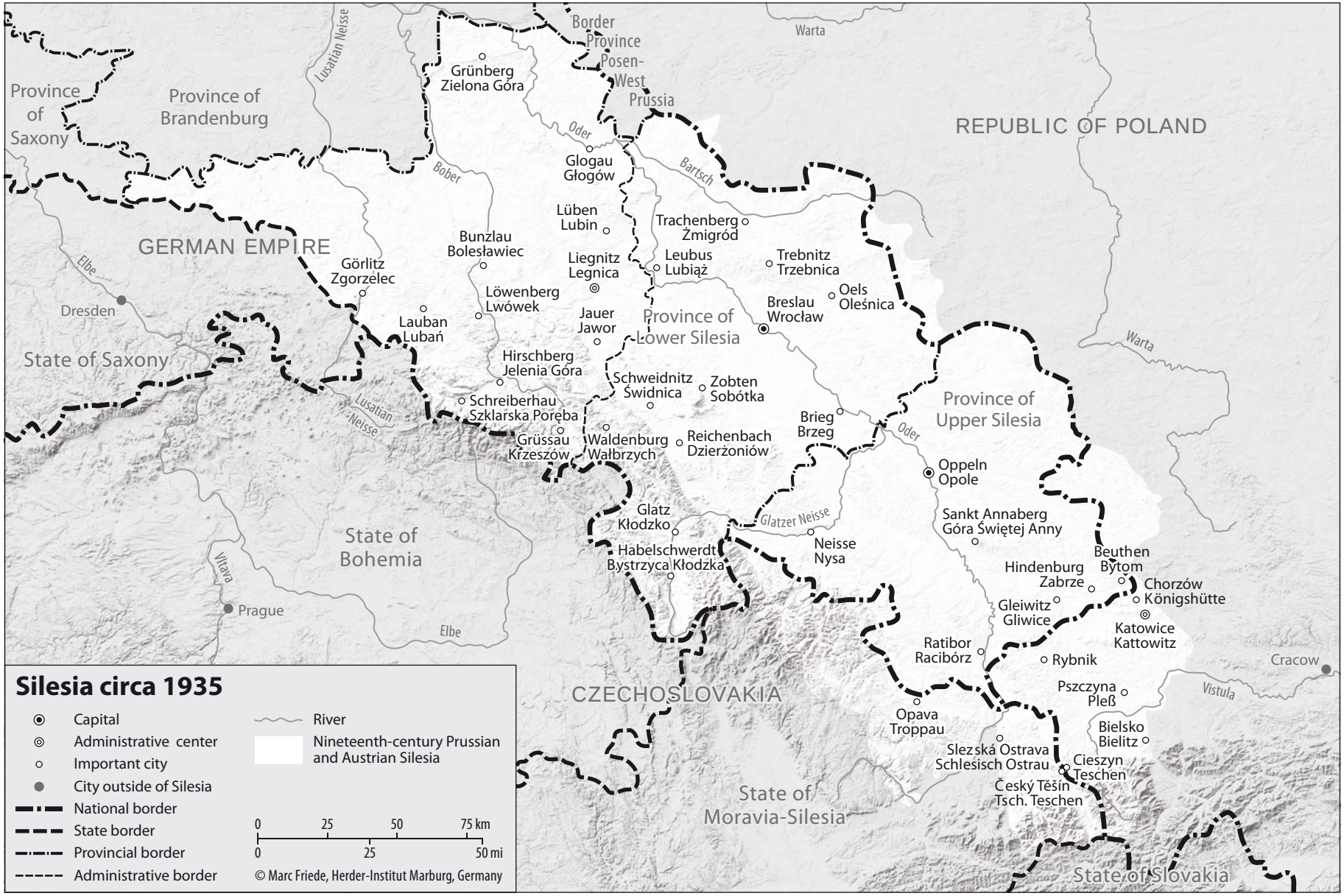
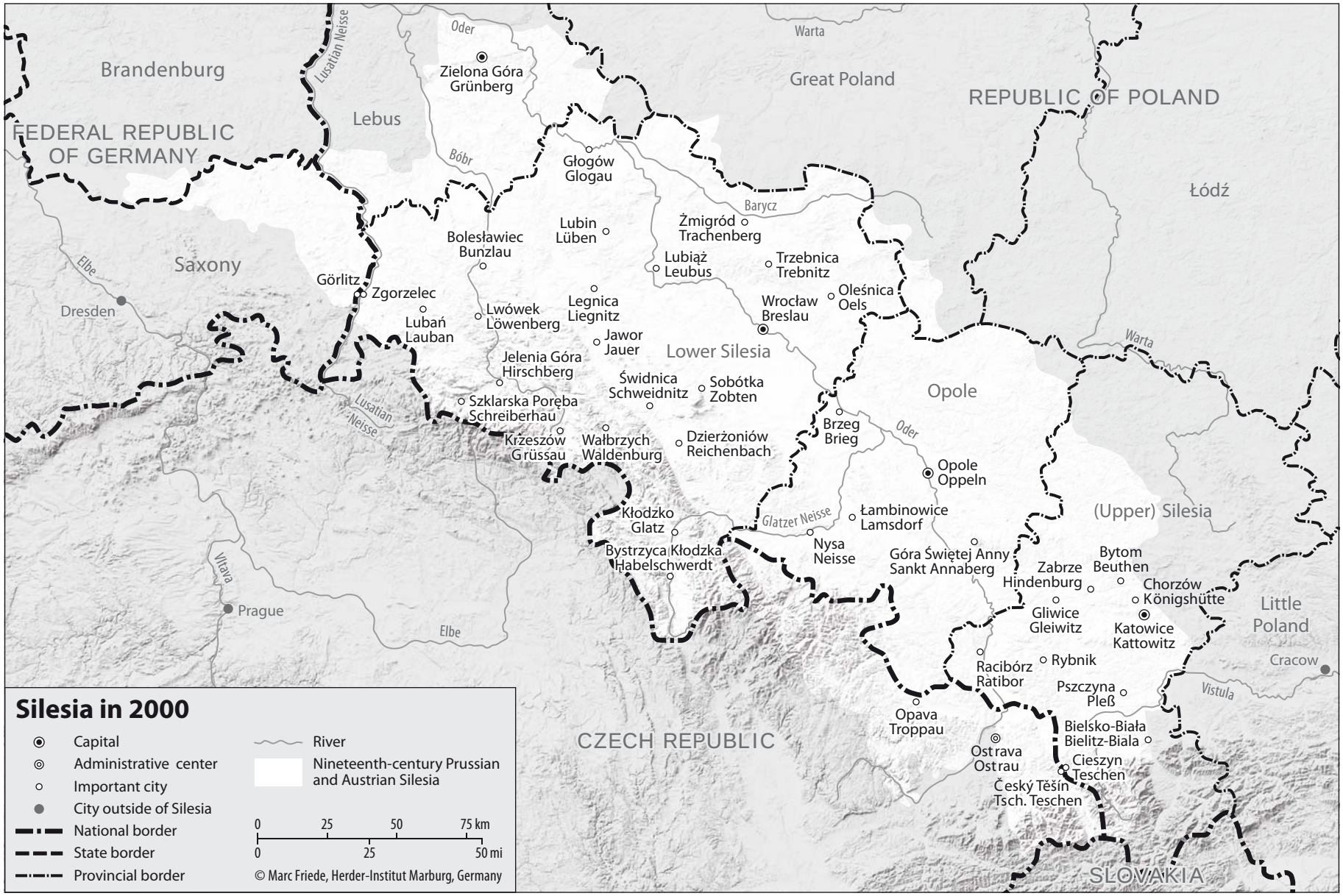

Province of Saxony
Province of Brandenburg
Lusatian Neisse
Grünberg Zielona Góra
Border Province Posen-West Prussia
Warta
REPUBLIC OF POLAND
Oder
Glogau Głogów
Bober
Bartsch
GERMAN EMPIRE
Lüben Lubin
Trachenberg Żmigród
Bunzlau Bolesławiec
Liegnitz Legnica
Leubus Lubiąż
Trebnitz Trzebnica
Elbe
Görlitz Zgorzelec
Löwenberg Lwówek
Oels Oleśnica
Dresden
Lauban Lubań
Jauer Jawor
Breslau Wrocław
Province of Lower Silesia
State of Saxony
Hirschberg Jelenia Góra
Schweidnitz Świdnica
Zobten Sobótka
Schreiberhau Szklarska Poręba
Province of Upper Silesia
Brieg Brzeg
Lusatian Neisse
Grüssau Krzeszów
Waldenburg Wałbrzych
Reichenbach Dzierżoniów
Oppeln Opole
Glatz Kłodzko
Glatzer Neisse
Sankt Annaberg Góra Świętej Anny
State of Bohemia
Habelschwerdt Bystrzyca Kłodzka
Neisse Nysa
Beuthen Bytom
Hindenburg Zabrze
Chorzów Königshütte
Vltava
Prague
Gleiwitz Gliwice
Katowice Kattowitz
Elbe
Ratibor Racibórz
Rybnik
Cracow
Pszczyna Pleß
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
Vistula
Opava Troppau
Bielsko Bielitz
Slezská Ostrava Schlesisch Ostrau
Cieszyn Teschen
Český Těšín Tsch. Teschen
State of Moravia-Silesia
State of Slovakia
Silesia circa 1935
Capital
Administrative center
Important city
City outside of Silesia
National border
State border
Provincial border
Administrative border
River
Nineteenth-century Prussian and Austrian Silesia
0 25 50 75 km
0 25 50 mi
© Marc Friede, Herder-Institut Marburg, Germany

Figure 7


Brandenburg
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
Saxony
Lebus
Great Poland
REPUBLIC OF POLAND
Łódź
Lower Silesia
Opole
(Upper) Silesia
Little Poland
CZECH REPUBLIC
SLOVAKIA
Oder
Warta
Lusatian Neisse
Bóbr
Barycz
Elbe
Glatzer Neisse
Vltava
Vistula
Zielona Góra
Grünberg
Głogów
Glogau
Żmigród
Trachenberg
Lubin
Lüben
Bolesławiec
Bunzlau
Lubiąż
Leubus
Trzebnica
Trebnitz
Görlitz
Zgorzelec
Legnica
Liegnitz
Wrocław
Breslau
Oleśnica
Oels
Dresden
Lubań
Lauban
Lwówek
Löwenberg
Jawor
Jauer
Jelenia Góra
Hirschberg
Świdnica
Schweidnitz
Sobótka
Zobten
Szklarska Poręba
Schreiberhau
Brzeg
Brieg
Krzeszów
Grüssau
Wałbrzych
Waldenburg
Dzierżoniów
Reichenbach
Opole
Oppeln
Kłodzko
Glatz
Łambinowice
Lamsdorf
Nysa
Neisse
Bystrzyca Kłodzka
Habelschwerdt
Góra Świętej Anny
Sankt Annaberg
Zabrze
Hindenburg
Bytom
Beuthen
Chorzów
Königshütte
Gliwice
Gleiwitz
Katowice
Kattowitz
Prague
Racibórz
Ratibor
Rybnik
Pszczyna
Pleß
Cracow
Opava
Troppau
Ostrava
Ostrau
Bielsko-Biała
Bielitz-Biala
Cieszyn
Teschen
Český Těšín
Tsch. Teschen
Silesia in 2000
Capital
Administrative center
Important city
City outside of Silesia
National border
State border
Provincial border
River
Nineteenth-century Prussian and Austrian Silesia
0 25 50 75 km
0 25 50 mi
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The breadth of materials applied in this study and their multifaceted purpose makes it difficult to differentiate between secondary and primary sources in the traditional sense. Therefore, the placement below is in part subjective, with most secondary materials being those written after 1970. The dissertation also benefited from private materials acquired through advertisements placed into fourteen *Heimat* periodicals in December 2007 (November 2008 for the *Briegische Briefe*). These materials are noted as interviews or unpublished documents throughout the dissertation.

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- DM 102 VEB Reisebüro der DDR, Generaldirektion
- DO 2 Zentralverwaltung für deutsche Umsiedler
- DQ 2 Ministerium für Arbeit und Berufsausbildung
- DY 13 Die Liga für Völkerfreundschaft
- DY 24 Freie Deutsche Jugend FDJ
- DY 30 Zentrales Parteiarchiv der SED
- DY 31 Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlandes
- DY 34 Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund
- DY 6 Nationalfront
- DY 60 Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands
- NY 4036/744 Nachlass Wilhelm Pieck
- NY 4182/1160 Nachlass Walter Ulbricht
- SgY 30 Lebensberichte

Bundesarchiv, Koblenz (BAK)
- B 137 Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen
- B 145 Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung
- B 150 Bundesministerium für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und Kriegsgeschädigte
- B 190 Deutsche Stiftung für europäische Friedensfragen e.V.
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- B 290 Ostpolitischer Deutscher Studentenverband e. V.
- B 373 Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Landesflüchtlingsverwaltungen
- N 1085 Nachlass Magnus Freiherr von Braun
- Z 18 Kirchliche Hilfsstelle München 1945-1950
- Z 35 Deutsches Büro für Friedensfragen Bestand

Deutsches Adelsarchiv, Marburg (DAA)

Evangelisches Zentral Archiv, Berlin (EZA)

Haus Schlesien, Königswinter (HS)

Heimatgruppe Bunzlau, Siegburg (HB)

Heimatstube Oppeln, Bad Godesburg (HO)

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- Bibliothek des Herder Instituts Presseausschnittsarchiv (BHI PAS)
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