

Continued. The lost Scandinavism

active in civil society, not representatives of the state – students, professional groups, cultural associations, and sports organizations, among others. The state had, at least initially, a more modest role. It was only later that the exchange was institutionalized under the various states, municipalities, and other authorities. Civic organizations nonetheless still have an important role.

OLDER SWEDISH HISTORICAL research placed the state at the center of its studies. Later, the classic popular movements come to the fore. The multitude of voluntary groups and institutions that are more difficult to get a grasp on have been paid less attention, although there are groundbreaking studies such as Torkel Jansson's *Adertonhundratalets associationer: Forskning och problem kring ett sprängfyllt tomrum eller sammanlutningsprinciper och föreningsformer mellan två samhällsformationer ca 1800-1870* [Associations of the 19th Century: Research and Problems around a Void Filled to the Brim, Or Principles of Unification and Forms of Association Between Two Social Formations Around 1800-1870] (1985). That the intense exchanges between the countries did not occasion so much Swedish research might thus be a result both of the relatively weak status of the question of the Union, and of the greater attention paid to the state and popular movements. Civil society has not held the same position in the Swedish historical consciousness.

DESPITE RUTH HEMSTAD'S solid investigation, or perhaps because of its interesting results and detailed mapping out of the relevant phenomena, Scandinavism, Nordic cooperation and related issues would appear to constitute a research area with great potential. With luck, the 2014 bicentennial of the beginning of the Union will also be observed in Sweden, even if Sweden, as was the case with the 2005 centennial, lag far behind neighboring Norway.

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Expelled and expeller. On the reality of forced migration

Andreas Kossert
Kalte Heimat: Die Geschichte der deutschen Vertriebenen nach 1945

München: Siedler 2008. 427 pages.

Jan Musekamp
Zwischen Stettin und Szczecin: Metamorphosen einer Stadt zwischen 1945 und 2005

Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde, vorgelegt an der Kulturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), 29. Januar 2008. 347 pages.

Bernd Aischmann
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, die Stadt Stettin ausgenommen: Eine zeitgeschichtliche Betrachtung

Schwerin: Thomas Helms Verlag 2008. 228 pages.

Stig Dagerman
Tysk höst

[German Autumn]. Stockholm: Norstedts 1947 167, [1] pages and later editions. Has been translated to other languages, among them German (Deutscher Herbst).

Hans-Åke Persson
Retorik och realpolitik: Storbritannien och de fördrivna tyskarna efter andra världskriget

[Rhetoric and Realpolitik: Great Britain and the Displaced Germans after World War II] Lund : Lund University. Press 1993 325, [2] pages. CESIC studies in international conflict. Dissertation. German translation: Hans-Åke Persson: Rhetorik und Realpolitik: Großbritannien, die Oder-Neiße-Grenze und die Vertreibung der Deutschen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Frankfurter Studien zur Grenzregion, Band 3. Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg 1997. 215 pages.

A SA YOUNG STUDENT, I chose to write a paper in a political science seminar on the Danish minority in Southern Schleswig. After the war ended in 1945, there was a fundamental change in the national mood of many inhabitants of Southern Schleswig. Danishness increased to a point where those who considered themselves Danish called for a new referendum on the question of which state Southern Schleswig would belong to. This referendum would, according to those identifying themselves as Danish, apply only to Schleswig, and would not include the large number of German refugees from the parts of Prussia and Pomerania that were placed under foreign control.

THE DANISH GOVERNMENT wisely rejected all proposals for a new vote, and Danishness soon declined to more reasonable levels. In my general enthusiasm for the rights of minorities – whether this be the rights of Danes, Germans, or Frisians – I saw the displaced Germans who were lodged in the Danish-German-Frisian peasant country as a threat to the historical multi-ethnic heritage of the area. That those who had been displaced were the ones who had lost the most was neither of relevance to local public sentiment nor of interest to this young student. I may have vaguely recalled that their presence in itself was a cause of the re-vote, but although there were indications of local resistance to those who had recently arrived, that particular argument was used rarely, and, as time went on, more carefully, in the Danish-minded argumentation.

IT IS NO SECRET THAT THE final phase of World War II led to massive expulsions and forced displacements, especially in northern Central Europe. Compared to the amount of research on the geopolitical changes that took place after World War I, it is nonetheless striking that the number of studies of the situation in the German-Polish-Soviet border region during the period 1945-1950 has been so limited. The Swedish historian Hans-Åke Persson points out in his dissertation on British policy towards the displaced people that the issue aroused little attention outside Germany, but his finding applies to some degree to Germany as well. By comparison, there have been extensive studies of the Finnish territorial losses between 1940 and 1944 and the expulsion of Finns from Karelia, which was annexed by the Soviet Union. There are of course explanations for the (relative) German-Polish-Russian amnesia: In Soviet history, the end of the war has been hailed as a victory, and the “enemy’s” hardship and privation was long seen as well-deserved – part of an almost xenophobic view of Germans as fascists. The Polish territorial gains in the west have been seen by the Soviet Union as a victory, as a recovery of that which was Slavic, and the losses in the east as a rightful incorporation of Belarusian and Ukrainian irredenta. From the Polish side, the myth of a Polish kingdom existing a thousand years ago dominated the view of the expulsion of the German population, who have thus been regarded as present-day intruders. In Germany,



PHOTO: THOMAS LUNDÉN

For a few years now, in the town of Anklam near the Polish border, there has been this memorial dedicated to ethnic Germans, expelled in 1945. Organizations in Anklam invite their Polish neighbors to discuss common memorial sites.

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research on the displaced people has been hindered by several factors: the study of the refugees' fate was thought to pose a risk, via "guilt by association", that the researcher would end up in the camp of the "revanchists" who demanded the return of the lost territories. Many researchers did not like the idea of shattering the myth of the happy assimilation of the displaced Germans. Moreover, for social scientists and historians, there were enough other themes to engage in that wouldn't run the risk of falling into disfavor among the ranks of the politically correct.

WITH THE BREAKUP of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the conditions have changed, and many taboos have vanished. The German historian Andreas Kossert, who lives and works

in Warsaw, has had a research interest in deviations from the nation-state norm – such as Jews and Polish-speaking Protestants living in Poland and East Prussia – as well as in the displacement of East European Germans towards the west. His latest book, *Kalte Heimat: Die Geschichte der deutschen Vertriebenen nach 1945*, is a broad depiction of how approximately 14 million ethnic Germans, displaced from their homes in Eastern Europe and from the former eastern territories of Germany, came to be treated in occupied Germany and in the two German states. It is estimated that around 2 million people died during the displacement. In the GDR, the refugees were called *Umsiedler*, "resettlers"; in rural Mecklenburg in 1949, the refugees constituted half the population. Their story could not be told in part because it revealed the Soviet military's abuses towards the end of the war. Aside from a small group of socialist Sudeten Germans, the refugees from the east were considered to have deserved their expulsion because of the Nazi regime's atrocities. An attempt to assimilate these displaced people by the distribution

of agricultural land soon became a thing of the past because of collectivization.

IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, there were of course no official efforts to assign blame, but the reception of the displaced people left much to be desired. The reaction in Southern Schleswig was not unique. By necessity, the displaced people were housed in small towns and villages that had been spared the devastation of the war, and they came as foreign birds into a relatively undisturbed milieu with strong traditional local values. Those who had moved in were at times called "Poles" or, at worst, *Mischlinge*, refugee camps acquired sobriquets such as "Klein-Korea" or "Mau-Mau", after the trouble spots of the time. The refugees consisted largely of war widows with children who were an

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unwanted addition to the agricultural villages, and the few refugees who were farm owners were, at best, demoted to farm laborers. For many of the displaced people, migration meant a trip downward on the social ladder. Kossert quotes a U.S. officer who – with some exaggeration – writes:

In Bavaria or perhaps the whole of Germany there is no difference between a Nazi and an anti-Nazi, Black and Red, Catholic or Protestant. The only difference is between natives and refugees.

The Swedish author Stig Dagerman, who visited Germany in 1945-1946, wrote in his book *Tysk höst* [German Autumn] of the refugees from the east:

Their presence was both odious and welcome – odious, because the arrivals had nothing with them other than their hunger and thirst, welcome, because it fueled suspicions that people wanted to bear, distrust that people wanted to entertain, despair, with which they wanted to be obsessed.

IN PART IN ORDER to assimilate the refugees, the Western occupying powers sought to disperse various groups throughout the three zones (though France refused to accept any of these refugees for quite some time). The family was the only cohesive unit. The displaced people, who together represented very different cultures, therefore came to be mixed with one another and with the local cultures – to the extent that the local cultures allowed others to mix with them. Between but also within the two large churches, discord arose when room was to be made for groups with their own traditions and hierarchies. In northern Germany, the already weak Low German language was weakened further because of mixing with the eastern dialects.

When West Germany recovered, the displaced people contributed to urbanization as well as to class circulation. In the GDR, the displaced people constituted a high proportion of the escapees to West Germany, but the lack of trained people in the East meant that many who stayed had a chance to advance socially, in particular as teachers.

KOSSERT SHOWS IN HIS broadly planned study how the displaced were treated and how their situation was reflected (or rather distorted or concealed) in the public debate, the media, and cultural life in general. One would perhaps like to have seen more quantitative data concerning for example class circulation, marriage, and migration. The image of the fate of the displaced is somber, but paradoxical. Although the treatment of the German refugees is in many ways shocking, at the same time we get an idea of how the mixing of the often tradition-bound local populations with the uprooted and thus perhaps involuntarily and necessarily flexible East European Germans has contributed to Germany's integration, to a leveling out of the antagonism between North and South and between the major Christian communities via the addition of people with other experiences. Paradoxically enough – and this is something Kossert also points out – it is precisely the descendants of the “revanchist” refugees who are now contacting their ancestors' native districts in order to establish peaceful contacts and forge business relations with the more recent arrivals.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE EXPULSION – the requisitioning by the new settlers of the space of those who were displaced – is depicted in a dissertation by Jan Musekamp on one of the German Baltic cities, Stettin, now Szczecin: *Zwischen Stettin und Szczecin: Metamorphosen einer Stadt zwischen 1945 und 2005*. He locates the city's downfall as German in the seizure of power in 1933, with the political cleansing and extermination of the German-Jewish inhabitants. The strategically important town was subjected to Allied bombing attacks, and was conquered by the Soviet Army on April 26, 1945. Until the city was officially turned over to Polish rule in July, many of the evacuated residents had been in the process of returning. While Poland sought to expel them, the Soviet military required the Germans' capacity for work and knowledge of the area, in particular the port, which was a Soviet exclave used for the removal of “spoils of war” (reparations) from the occupied zone to the Soviet Union. (The short interregnum, during which Stettin/Szczecin was separated out by the Soviet occupation authorities from the surroundings, when it was still unclear how the boundaries were to be drawn, is depicted by Bernd Aichmann in his book *Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, die Stadt Stettin ausgenommen: Eine zeitgeschichtliche Betrachtung*.)

While the remaining population of other parts of the new Polish areas was promptly driven across the new border, Szczecin was, starting in the fall of 1945, vacated relatively slowly, yet the evacuation took place under a compulsion that resulted from the Germans being treated more poorly than the newly arrived Poles. In accordance with the Potsdam Conference, the former German areas under Polish administration were to be evacuated. The deportation went slowly, and caused great hardship for those affected. The new local administration, which needed the German workforce, received strict orders from Warsaw to free the area from “the demoralizing influence of the factor of

a foreign nationality”. By 1948, almost all the Germans had been replaced by those who had arrived at the “recovered territories”. According to a still widespread rumor, the new Szczecin residents consisted mostly of refugees from the lost multi-ethnic regions in the east. but in reality, the group was dominated by young, rootless migrants from central Poland, Poznan, and Warsaw.

IN THE EARLY YEARS an anti-German nationalism dominated, based on the myth that the Slavic territory of the Poles was simply being taken back. With the consolidation of the communist regimes on both sides of the border, the formal attitude changed to one of a Stalinist sister nation – the Germans had of course virtually disappeared from the area. But the border remained difficult to cross.

Musekamp devotes a large part of his thesis to the physical transformation of the city. Everything German – street names, tombstones, monuments – would be erased or made Polish, first in a return to a mythical Slavic prehistory, later on in Stalinist social realism. The city's long German history was changed into an empty parenthesis; only in recent years have people carefully started referring back to the German period.

Musekamp's and Kossert's works depict a repressed history. Two German historians, with good knowledge of the Polish language and with a sympathy for the neighboring country, describe a difficult period for both peoples. Both books, including Musekamp's thesis, are well written, almost essayistic, well documented, but are not attempts at theoretical explanation. They of course represent a German view of history, but with a good understanding of the complex and often contradictory forces that ruled the early post-war period in northern Central Europe.

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