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SOPHIE-CHARLOTTE SCHIPPMANN

“HÖCHST UNERWÜNSCHTE AUSLÄNDER”¹: THE FATE OF ETHNIC GERMAN EXPELLEES IN POST-WAR AUSTRIA

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the Second World War there were more than 1,5 million displaced persons in Austria.² Around 300.000-632.000³ of those were *Volksdeutsche*⁴ and *Reichsdeutsche*⁵ who had fled or had been expelled from their homes in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Poland and the former eastern territories of the German Reich under Polish administration.⁶ They made up around

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Sophie-Charlotte SCHIPPMANN, M.A., is a graduate of the University of St Andrews; she is completing another degree at the Humboldt University in Berlin.
cschippmann@yahoo.de

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¹ Translates as “Highly unwanted foreigners” (Unless stated otherwise translations in this article are produced by the author.). Public statement of the *Kommunistische Partei Österreichs* (KPÖ; Communist Party of Austria) on the expellees in 1946 as cited in Patrick-Paul Volf, ‘Der Politische Flüchtling als Symbol der Zweiten Republik – Zur Asyl- und Flüchtlingspolitik seit 1945,’ *Zeitgeschichte* 11-12 (1995), p. 9.

² Verband der Volksdeutschen Landsmannschaften Österreichs (ed.), *Festschrift anlässlich des Festaktes “60 Jahre Vertreibung – 50 Jahre VLÖ”* (Vienna: Verband der Volksdeutschen Landsmannschaften Österreichs, 2004), p. 103.

³ In contrast to Germany there are no accurate statistics concerning the influx of expellees into Austria (Kirche in Not Deutschland, ‘Vor 60 Jahren: Die Lage der Heimatvertrieben in Österreich,’ 2012, p. 1). The *Verband der Volksdeutschen Landsmannschaften Österreichs* (VLÖ; Association of Ethnic Germans in Austria) cites 300.000 (VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 103), while Cornelia Znoy cites 632.000 (Cornelia Znoy, ‘Die Vertreibung der Sudetendeutschen nach Österreich 1945/46’ (Diploma dissertation, Universität Wien, 1995), p. 61).

⁴ German-speaking people who before 1938 had been residing outside the boundaries of countries with a majority of German speakers.

⁵ People who were German citizens between 1933 and 1945.

⁶ From now on called expellees, despite the fact that some of these were technically refugees as they had fled their home countries before expulsion orders were issued. However, the German term *Vertriebene* has become established as referring to both refugees and expellees together.

7% of the Austrian post-war population. As the Potsdam Agreement had not required Austria to take in these expellees, there were two ways for Austria to deal with this influx of people: it could either try to deport them or it would have to actively integrate⁷ them. This essay will demonstrate that Austria wanted to deport the expellees and thus refused to integrate them in the immediate post-war period⁸. Firstly, the connection of the expellees to Austria and their desire to remain there will be demonstrated. Afterwards, the desire of the Austrian government to deport the expellees will be documented and explained. Between 1945 and 1955 Austria was not a sovereign state due to its occupation by the Allied powers. During this time period, the Austrian government could not have decided on a policy for the expellees that the allied powers fundamentally disagreed with. Thus, support for the deportation of expellees among the Allies will also be documented and explained. It will then be shown how these aspirations culminated in the 1946 deportations of many of the expellees. Lastly, the impact of the continued focus on deportation on the integration process of the remaining expellees will be examined.

ASPIRATIONS OF THE EXPELLEES TO REMAIN IN AUSTRIA

Most of the expellees who arrived in Austria from autumn 1944 onwards were hoping to stay.⁹ The majority were *Volksdeutsche* from southern Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Romania and Hungary.¹⁰ The history of their settlement was intrinsically connected to Austria-Hungary and its ruling dynasty. The majority of the expellees in Austria had settled in the Danubian Basin from the late 17th century onwards on invitation of the Habsburgs after the Austro-Ottoman wars had depopulated the area. The Danubian Basin was part of the Habsburg crown lands and became part of Austro-Hungarian Empire after the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806. From the beginning of their settlement to the break up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, the expellees provided the backbone of the Habsburg rule in these more distant territories.¹¹ Thus, at the time of their expulsion, *Volksdeutsche* from the Danubian Basin¹² often had a stronger sense of belonging to Austria, as the successor state to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, than to Germany.¹³ Consequently many of those expellees wanted to stay in Austria. However, it was up to the Austrian government and the Allies to make this possible.

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⁷ For the purposes of this essay, integration is defined as the proposition of measures that aim to provide a group of newcomers with equal rights, an equal share in the national economy, the distribution of property, politics, and cultural life.

⁸ Immediate post-war period roughly refers to 1945-1950.

⁹ Peter Wassertheurer, 'Die Heimatvertriebenen in Österreich nach 1945 – Eine gelungene Integration?', *Donauschwaben Mitteilungsblatt* 1 (2010), p. 3.

¹⁰ US High Commission to Austria, 'Statistical Report of DP & Refugees in Austria,' 1. October 1953, as cited in Znoj, 'Die Vertreibung,' p. 126.

¹¹ 'Liebe Hubers kommt,' *Spiegel* 37 (1949), p. 12.

¹² A more accurate name for them would actually be *Alt-Österreicher* ("Old Austrians," whereby Old Austria refers to the Austro-Hungarian Empire). However, in post-war Austria they were officially referred to as *Volksdeutsche*, probably in order to prevent a close association with Austria and subsequent claims to a right to remain there.

¹³ Znoj, 'Die Vertreibung,' pp. 61 and 122.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EXPELLEES WITHIN AUSTRIA

Both the Austrian and the Allied administrations were involved with the expellee problem. As both formed sort of a parallel government in occupied Austria, it is important to determine to what extent each side was responsible for shaping policy on this issue.

A provisional Austrian government formed on 27th April 1945 before the war was even over. It was established by the Soviets and its decisions were heavily dependent on the approval of the occupying power. It claimed to represent all of Austria but the Western Allies did not recognize it until October 1945. After that point the government had jurisdiction over all of Austria but important decisions were still dependent on the agenda of the Allies. In the first months after the war it is especially difficult to establish whether the decisions of the Austrian government represented their own intentions and ideas or those of one or all of the Allied powers. However, the Austrian government was not afraid to voice its opinion in this time period and so it is possible to establish what their agenda was by looking at public statements and papers designed to lobby their interests with the Allies.

The Allies began to grant the Austrian government supervision for certain issues early on. Considering the expellees the Executive Committee of the Allied Control Commission maintained in October 1945, that those "not living in camps will be the responsibility of the Austrian state."¹⁴ The responsibility for those in camps followed, by the end of 1946.¹⁵ On 15th January 1946 the Western Allies concluded a contract with the Austrian government that granted the latter supervision of the migratory flow of the expellees and refugees.¹⁶ It thus seems like the expellees fell under the authority of the Austrian government. However, in the Second Control Agreement, which generally loosened allied dominance of Austrian politics, the Allies particularly retained ultimate control over the fate of the expellees: "Betreuung und Abtransport von Kriegsgefangenen und versetzten Personen sowie Ausübung der rechtlichen Gewalt über dieselben."¹⁷ Lack of information prevents a definite answer on how the responsibility over the expellees was divided.¹⁸ It is fair to say, however, that Austria was at least involved in the day-to-day decisions that concerned expellee housing, food provisions, and employment. Through this Austria had the possibility to take steps that would have contributed to the integration of expellees. On the other hand, the Allies certainly had the last say on the general approach to the expellee problem. Especially issues as fundamental as the removal of the expellees would have required their agreement. In order to understand Austria's approach to the expellee problem it is hence necessary to look at the opinions of both the Austrian government and that of the Allies.

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¹⁴ Executive Committee Allied Control Commission, "Influx of Germanic Peoples from neighbouring states," 30 October 1945, as cited in Znoy, 'Die Vertreibung,' p. 115.

¹⁵ In the Soviet Occupation Zone Austria had been responsible for this from the beginning. The same was the case in the French Occupation Zone, which contained few expellees anyway. The Americans assigned the administration of the camps to the Austrians in June 1946, and the British followed in October 1946 (Znoy, 'Die Vertreibung,' pp. 115-119).

¹⁶ Oskar Feldtänzer, 'Fluchtländ Österreich' in Landsmannschaften der Donauschwaben in Österreich (ed.), *60 Jahre Donauschwaben in Oberösterreich* (Wels: Denkmayr Linz, 2004), p. 52.

¹⁷ Translates as "Care and deportation of prisoners of war and displaced persons, and exercise of legal authority over the same" ('Abkommen zwischen den Regierungen des Vereinigten Königreiches, der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika, der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken und der Französischen Republik über den Kontrollapparat in Österreich' (Second Control Agreement), Vienna, 28 June 1946.).

¹⁸ The lack of information on this topic might be due to irregular file production in the immediate post-war period, which would have documented exchange between the Allies and the Austrian administration on the matter. In addition, up until 1947 the Allies gave the Austrian authorities only verbal instructions concerning the expellees ('Bericht des Bundesministeriums für Inneres,' 11 October 1947, as cited in Znoy, 'Die Vertreibung,' p. 112.).

ASPIRATIONS OF THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT TO DEPORT THE EXPELLEES

In the first months after the war the Austrian government was not so much concerned with deporting the expellees than with letting them enter in the first place. In October 1945 the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) published a position paper that appealed to the Allies to bring about an immediate stop to the immigration of expellees into Austria:

“Immer wieder werden Züge mit volksdeutschen Flüchtlingen von den Besatzungsmächten, und zwar hauptsächlich von der Roten Armee, nach Österreich gebracht. Die Alliierten wären zu ersuchen, in Hinkunft davon abzusehen und Flüchtlinge über österreichisches Gebiet in ein anderes Land nur dann zu bringen, wenn kein anderer Weg möglich und die Aufnahme der Flüchtlinge im Bestimmungsland gesichert ist.”¹⁹

Austrian and Soviet soldiers were deployed to close the border with Czechoslovakia and Hungary.²⁰ However, these efforts proved futile and so the Austrian government moved from demanding a stop to immigration of expellees to demanding their removal from its territory.

In July 1945 the BMI released a statement claiming that concerning the expellee problem there was “only one solution, namely, to remove [them] from Austria.”²¹ The department of the BMI that was responsible for the expellees, the *Umsiedlungsstelle*, had the sole task of organising their deportation.²² Leading Austrian politicians such as Chancellor Karl Renner made statements, in which they voiced their firm opposition to a permanent settlement of the expellees in Austria.²³ When talking about the influx of expellees in 1945 Renner used vocabulary that made it seem like a hostile invasion that had to be repelled: “Dem Vernehmen nach sind auch nach Oberösterreich nicht weniger deutschsprechende Tschechoslowaken *eingebrochen*. Nach Wien haben sich rund 18.000 *eingeschlichen*.”²⁴

Reasons for this attitude

The main reason for the Austrian government’s aspiration to deport the expellees was most likely the potential financial costs of expellee integration. Post-war Austria’s economy was suffering from the consequences of the war and reconstruction efforts were exacerbated by the removal of economic equipment worth 2-2.5 billion dollars by the Soviets.²⁵ In the first year after the war Austria was thus struggling to provide for its native

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¹⁹ Translates as „Again and again trains with ethnic German refugees are brought to Austria by the occupying powers, mainly by the Red Army. We urge the Allies to refrain from this in the future and to only transport refugees through Austrian territory to another country if no other route is possible and the acceptance of the refugees at their destination is secured” (Bundesministerium für Inneres, ‘Grundsatzpapier zur Mitwirkung der Alliierten in der Flüchtlingsfrage,’ 20 October 1945, as cited in Peter Wassertheurer, *Flüchtlingsland Österreich* (Vienna: E. Dörner, 2010), p. 2).

²⁰ Znoj, ‘Die Vertreibung,’ pp. 100-101.

²¹ Emilia Hrabovec, ‘Austro-Czechoslovak Relations and the Expulsion of the Germans’ in Charles Ingrao and Franz A.J. Szabo. (eds.), *The Germans and the East* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008), p. 393.

²² Znoj, ‘Die Vertreibung,’ p. 111. This is already evident in its name, which translates as “Resettlement Centre.”

²³ Wassertheurer, ‘Die Heimatvertriebenen,’ p. 3.

²⁴ Translates as “According to reports, a similar amount of German-speaking Czechoslovaks has fallen upon Upper Austria. Around 18,000 have sneaked into Vienna” (Karl Renner, *Drei Monate Aufbauarbeit der provisorischen Staatsregierung der Republik Österreich* (Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1945), p. 11, as cited in Wassertheurer, *Flüchtlingsland*, p. 2). Emphasis added.

²⁵ Steve Beller, *A Concise History of Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 250.

population and reluctant to care for an extra half a million expellees. A mass of discontent, hungry and homeless expellees would only exacerbate the already existing threat to political stability that the socio-economic situation in post-war Austria posed. As the constitution of the International Refugee Organization specifically excluded persons of German ethnic origin from its mandate, Austria could not count on their help with the expellee problem.²⁶ The Austrian government was thus continuously complaining about the costs of care and maintenance concerning the expellees.²⁷ In 1946 the expenses amounted to 69.5 million Schilling.²⁸ However, it has been argued that the financial costs were not as burdensome as the Austrian government made them out to be. Expellees were charged rent for their rooms in the camps and also contributed to the economic recovery through their labour, which both compensated for Austrian government expenses.²⁹

Another reason for the determination to remove the expellees from Austrian territory was the fact that their presence did not fit in with the *Opfermythos*³⁰ that had developed in post-war Austria and which the government was perpetuating. The *Opfermythos* maintained that Austria had been Nazi Germany's first victim as the *Anschluss* had been a hostile invasion unwanted and resisted by Austria. Compliance of Austrians with the Nazi regime was portrayed as forced.³¹ Austria was thus not responsible for the deeds of the Nazis. Hence, acceptance of the *Opfermythos* as reality by the Allies would bring many advantages to post-war Austria. Firstly, it would accelerate a return to sovereignty, and secondly it would exempt Austria from reparations and restitution payments.³² In addition, Austrian parliament members with a Nazi past would not have to be afraid of becoming subject to de-nazification procedures. This provided an extra incentive for the parties to perpetuate the *Opfermythos*.³³ The Allies were already inclined to see Austria as a victim of Nazi Germany and had stated so themselves in the Moscow Declaration of 1943, which declared "Austria, the first free country to fall a victim to Hitlerite aggression."³⁴ However, the Moscow Declaration also reminded Austria, "she has responsibility which she cannot evade for participation in the war on the side of Hitlerite Germany."³⁵ This shows that the Allies were not ignorant of Austrian support for Hitler and the *Anschluss*. Post-war Austria could thus not be sure that the *Opfermythos* would be accepted.

In order to maintain it Austria had to dissociate itself from anything that did not fit the image of Austria as a victim of Germany. However, by taking in expellees Austria could be seen as sharing the legal succession of the Third Reich.³⁶ The intake of expellees had been dictated to Germany in the Potsdam Agreement and so the presence of expellees in Austria made it seem as if Austria was being punished in an equal measure and hence equally guilty. By getting rid of the expellees, Austria could avoid this and it could also

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²⁶ 'Constitution of the International Refugee Organization,' New York, 15 December 1946. However, Austria started to receive international help for its expellees after the creation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 1951 (Volf, 'Der politische Flüchtling,' p. 8).

²⁷ Volf, 'Der Politische Flüchtling,' p. 9.

²⁸ Znoj, 'Die Vertreibung,' p. 94.

²⁹ Oskar Feldtänger, 'Die Donauschwaben in Oberösterreich' in Landsmannschaften der Donauschwaben in Österreich (ed.), *60 Jahre Donauschwaben in Oberösterreich* (Wels: Denkmayr Linz, 2004), p. 72.

³⁰ Translates as 'Victim myth.'

³¹ Beller, *A Concise History*, p. 255.

³² Günter Bischof and Martin David, 'Austrian and Czech Historical Memory of World War II, National Identity and European Integration' in Charles Ingrao and Franz A.J. Szabo (eds.), *The Germans and the East* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008), p. 377.

³³ Pelinka, Anton, 'Taboos and Self-Deception: The 2nd Republic's Reconstruction of History' in Anton Pelinka (ed.), *Austrian Historical Memory & National Identity* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997), p. 99.

³⁴ 'Joint Four-Nation Declaration' (Moscow Declaration), Moscow, 30 October 1943.

³⁵ 'Moscow Declaration.'

³⁶ VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 107.

disassociate itself historically from Germany. The expellees had colonized their former homelands in the name of a monarch whose domain included modern-day Austria and Germany among others. By neglecting responsibility for the expellees, Austria was also neglecting its shared history with Germany up to 1945.

Another means for perpetuating the *Opfermythos* was the disassociation from National Socialism and any proponents thereof.³⁷ The expellees and especially the Sudeten Germans amongst them were quite strongly associated with National Socialism because of their support for the pro-Nazi Sudeten German Party and their demand for German annexation of the Sudetenland.³⁸ It is likely that Austria worried that granting residency to such people might appear like support for their Nazi past and presumably present. Deportation of expellees was a clear way to avoid such a notion. In addition, Austria worried that the Nazi mindset of the expellees would influence native Austrians. The BMI warned of "sudetendeutscher Propaganda und politischen Umtrieben der Sudetendeutschen,"³⁹ which could potentially lead to a resurgence of National Socialism in Austria and would contradict the *Opfermythos*' denial of Austrian support for it.

ASPIRATIONS OF THE ALLIES TO DEPORT THE EXPELLEES

The Allies were generally supportive of these demands for expulsion. In September 1945 they decided to apply the Potsdam Agreement to the expellees in Austria.⁴⁰ Article 12 of the Potsdam Agreement had ordained the "transfer to Germany of German populations, or elements thereof, remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary."⁴¹ The movement of the expellees into Austria was thus in discordance with the Potsdam Agreement and applying the Potsdam Agreement to the expellees in Austria meant their deportation to Germany.⁴² In October 1945 the Executive Committee of the Allied Control Commission published a statement, in which it followed through with this idea by urging "the Allied Commission for Germany to accept into Germany all Reichsdeutsche, Sudeten Germans and Volksdeutsche in that order as soon as possible." The Executive Committee also expressed its belief, "that this will provide the only satisfactory solution to this problem."⁴³

While the Allies were thus all generally in favour of the resettlement of the expellees in Germany, they disagreed profoundly on how and to what extent this was to be achieved. While the Western powers were mostly in agreement with each other and also cooperated with the Austrian authorities, the Soviets often dealt with issues affecting their zone single-handedly. There were hence differences in their approach to the expellee problem and it makes sense to consider the Soviets and the Western Allies separately.

The Soviets were most dedicated to the deportation of the expellees.⁴⁴ They were clear from the beginning of occupation, that they did not want any expellees to remain in their zone. They refused to provide the expellees with food and housing in an attempt to

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³⁷ Ibid., p. 107.

³⁸ VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 106.

³⁹ Translates as "Sudeten German propaganda and political intrigue" (Znoy, 'Die Vertreibung,' p. 106).

⁴⁰ Wassertheurer, *Flüchtlingsland*, p. 3.

⁴¹ 'Agreement of the Three Power Conference of Berlin' (Potsdam Agreement), Potsdam, 1 August 1945.

⁴² However, this does not serve as a justification for the removal of expellees from Yugoslavia and Romania, which were not mentioned in Article 12 of the Potsdam Agreement ('Potsdam Agreement').

⁴³ Executive Committee Allied Commission for Austria, 'Influx of Germanic Peoples from neighbouring states,' 30th October 1945, as cited in Znoy, 'Die Vertreibung,' p. 115.

⁴⁴ Znoy, 'Die Vertreibung,' p. 121.

make staying in the Soviet Occupation Zone so uncomfortable that the expellees would leave on their own volition.⁴⁵ Without waiting for a joint decision they began to make preparations for the transfer of expellees from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary to Germany.⁴⁶ Whether the expellees preferred to stay in Austria was not relevant. Exceptions were few and only made on an individual basis.⁴⁷

The Western Allies were opposed to a forceful eviction of all expellees. The Americans had begun to organize train transfers to Germany in the summer of 1945. However, those were on a purely voluntary basis.⁴⁸ In October 1945 they officially decreed that *Volksdeutsche* did not have to leave Austria if they did not want to.⁴⁹ In contrast to the Soviets, the Americans planned the resettlement in cooperation with the Austrian government and the expellees themselves. They created a committee of expellees, the *Komitee der heimatlosen Volksdeutschen aus den Ländern der ehemaligen österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie*⁵⁰, to advise and help them with the population transfer.⁵¹

Reasons for this attitude

There is not much evidence on the motivation behind allied aspirations to deport the expellees, but some assumptions can be made. It is likely that the Allies wanted to resettle the expellees in Germany to create the clear separation between Austria and Germany that the Moscow Declaration had demanded. The presence of a group of people in Austria that were also associated with Germany could provide fertile ground for reanimation of Austro-German unification movements.⁵² However, in order to prevent desires for unification it would have made sense to let expellees that identified more strongly with Austria remain there. Maybe this explains the American refusal to deport expellees against their own will.

The fact that the Soviets were pushing more strongly for expellee deportation than the Western Allies might be explained by the fact that the expellees would most likely be resettled in the western zones of Germany.⁵³ Thus, for the Soviets, deporting the expellees from their Austrian zone of occupation meant getting rid of them entirely. The Soviets would be completely relieved of the financial burden and threat to political stability that

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⁴⁵ Volf, 'Der politische Flüchtling,' p. 10.

⁴⁶ These were the countries that were referred to in the Potsdam Agreement. However, it is unlikely that this means that the Soviets were inclined to let expellees from Yugoslavia or Romania stay in Austria. The majority of expellees from these areas had merely not arrived in Austria yet as they were detained by their respective regimes.

⁴⁷ Znoy, 'Die Vertreibung,' pp. 122-124.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 85.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 118.

⁵⁰ Translates as 'Committee of homeland-less ethnic Germans from countries of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy.'

⁵¹ Znoy, 'Die Vertreibung,' p. 119.

⁵² After the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918 almost all political parties of Cisleithania (The predominantly German-speaking areas.) advocated unification with Germany. On 12th November 1918 the *Gesetz über die Staats- und Regierungsform von Deutschösterreich* proclaimed the Republic *Deutschösterreich* (Translates as 'German Austria'), which was to be part of the German Republic: "Deutschösterreich ist ein Bestandteil der Deutschen Republik" (Translates as "German Austria is a part of the German Republic") ('Gesetz vom 12 November 1918 über die Staats- und Regierungsform von Deutschösterreich,' *Staatsgesetzblatt für den Staat Deutschösterreich* 1 (Vienna, 15 November 1918)). This decision was only reversed because the victorious Allies of the First World War forced the new state to sign the *Treaty of St-Germain* on 10 September 1919, changing the name to Austrian Republic and forbidding unification with Germany ('Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Austria' (Treaty of St-Germain), St-Germain-en-Laye, 10 September 1919).

⁵³ This assumption is based on the knowledge that when the deportations did begin in early 1946 expellees were allowed to choose their zone of destination. It cannot have come as a surprise to the Soviets, that the majority chose the western zones of Germany (Znoy, 'Die Vertreibung,' p. 130).

these expellees posed. For the Western Allies, however, deportation of expellees from Austria into Germany did not unburden their country as a whole from dealing with them. There was hence much more to gain from such a deportation for the Soviets – unless it was carried out to the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany.

THE 1946 DEPORTATIONS

Thus both the Austrian government and the Allies had aspirations to deport the expellees. In order to transform these into action the Western Allies and the Austrian administration jointly planned an extensive deportation of expellees to Germany starting in February 1946. Despite the approval of the Western Allies, the main responsibility for the execution of the deportations remained with the Austrian BMI.⁵⁴ Officially the Soviets also endorsed this plan, however, they had already gone ahead with the deportation of expellees from their zone and signalled that they were not inclined to adhere to the deportation guidelines that were established in the plan.⁵⁵ According to these guidelines certain groups of expellees had the right to be exempt from deportations. These were firstly *Volksdeutsche* that had a close connection to Austria such as Austrian citizenship prior to November 1918, relatives who were presently holding Austrian citizenship and a vicinity of their homeland to the Austrian border. However, exemption would not be granted to *Volksdeutsche* who were not self-sufficient and a financial burden to Austria. On the other hand, exemptions were given more freely to *Volksdeutsche* contributing to the Austrian economy in sectors, in which it was lacking employees:

“In Betracht kommen bei diesen Volksdeutschen insbesondere aus der Landwirtschaft stammende Arbeitskräfte (Bauern, Landarbeiter) und manuelle Arbeiter des Handwerks und der Industrie, besonders wenn sie sich durch fachliche Spezialkenntnisse auszeichnen. Geistige Berufe sind nur dann zu berücksichtigen, wenn sie mit besonderen individuellen Fähigkeiten, die für die österreichische Wirtschaft nützlich wären, verbunden sind.”⁵⁶

Post-war Austria was in dire need of labour because of war losses, the departure of forced labourers, and the detention of Austrian prisoners of war.⁵⁷ This is why the guideline secondly exempted *Volks-* as well as *Reichsdeutsche* expellees who were considered vital for the Austrian economy. However, these expellees were only to be exempt for as long as they held their present job.⁵⁸ The guidelines hence provided for the deportation of all expellees that were a burden to the Austrian economy, with the possible exception of a few *Volksdeutsche* originating from the immediate border regions. Around 160.000-220.000⁵⁹ expellees were sent to Germany⁶⁰ under these guidelines before the deportations had to be halted in the autumn because of overcrowding in the camps in the

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⁵⁴ Znoy, ‘Die Vertreibung,’ p. 127.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 127.

⁵⁶ Translates as “Of these ethnic Germans, especially workers from the agricultural sector (farmers, farm hands) and manual workers of crafts and industry, particularly if they have specialist knowledge in their field, should be considered. Intellectual professions should only be included if they are connected to individual expertise that would benefit the Austrian economy” (Bundesministerium für Inneres, Umsiedlungsstelle, ‘Richtlinie über die Deportation der Reichs- und Volksdeutschen,’ Vienna, 19 February 1946).

⁵⁷ Wassertheurer, ‘Die Heimatvertriebenen,’ p. 3.

⁵⁸ ‘Richtlinie.’

⁵⁹ There are no exact statistics on this matter. The VLÖ speaks of 160.000 (VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 103), while historian Wassertheurer speaks of 220.000 (Wassertheurer, *Flüchtlingsland*, p. 3).

⁶⁰ Both the Western and the Eastern zones were willing to take them in, however, the expellees were allowed to choose and the numbers resettling in the Soviet Occupation Zone were hence much smaller.

western occupation zones of Germany. This means that a large proportion of the expellees the Austrian government and the Allies had hoped to resettle remained in Austria. In addition, there were still new expellees flowing into Austria, such as the Danube Swabians from Yugoslavia from 1947 onwards, who brought the number of expellees in Austria back up to around 440.000.⁶¹ These would largely remain in Austria since the western zones of Germany accepted only very limited numbers of expellees from Austria after 1946. However, at the time this was not predictable and the Austrian administration as well as the occupying powers in Austria expected a resumption of the deportations in the near future.

ABSENCE OF INTEGRATIVE MEASURES FOR THE EXPELLEES

Hence, the Austrian government and the Allies still thought to solve the expellee problem by deportation and not integration. The 1947 draft for the Austrian State Treaty⁶² still included the deportation of expellees as an important objective.⁶³ When the need for expellee labourers declined after the return of Austrian prisoners of war, the Austrian administration was even less inclined to keep them. Addressing this problem in 1949 Federal Minister of the Interior Oskar Helmer demanded deportation of the majority of expellees: "Österreich kann nur einen Bruchteil [der Vertriebenen] in den österreichischen Staatsverband aufnehmen. Für den weitaus größeren Rest verlangen wir den Abtransport."⁶⁴ While official transports were not possible anymore, the Austrian border patrol often turned a blind eye to expellees crossing illegally into the western occupation zones of Germany.⁶⁵ In addition to the Austrian government, up until 1949 the Soviets also continued to demand further deportations of expellees from their zone.⁶⁶ After 1946 there is no evidence for similar statements from the Western Allies. While they apparently did not promote further deportations of the expellees, there is also no evidence that the Western Allies put pressure on the Austrian government to solve the problem of the expellees by integrating them.

Hence, neither the Austrian administration nor the Allies deemed it necessary to find ways to integrate the expellees into the Austrian society. Consequently, very few measures and laws aiming at the integration of expellees were proposed. Helping the expellees make a new home in Austria would impede their quick removal once deportations became possible again. Thus up until the early 1950s, when it became clear that there was no possibility of deporting more expellees, the Austrian government, with no objection from the Allies, prevented legal, socio-economic, political and social integration.

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⁶¹ VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 103.

⁶² The document establishing the independence of the Second Austria Republic, signed 15 May 1955 by Austria and the Allies.

⁶³ VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 105.

⁶⁴ Translates as "Austria can only absorb a fraction [of the expellees] into the Austrian Federation. We demand the deportation of the far larger remainder" (Felix Ermacora Institut, 'Die Volksdeutschen in Österreich nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg' in Martin Graf and Anneliese Kitzmüller (eds.), *Die Wiederaufbauleistungen der Altösterreicher in der Zweiten Republik* (Wr. Neudorf: Unzensiert, 2010), p. 27).

⁶⁵ 'Liebe Hubers,' p. 12.

⁶⁶ Felix Ermacora Institut, 'Die Volksdeutschen,' p. 20.

Legal integration

The ultimate legal integration of expellees would have been the extension of citizenship, which would have granted them equal rights with native Austrians. However, the July 1945 citizenship law required applicants to have lived in the territory of the First Austrian Republic for at least four years or to be married to an Austrian citizen. In addition, foreigners could only gain Austrian citizenship if they were not judged a burden to the Austrian state.⁶⁷ Thus, under this citizenship law it was almost impossible for expellees to become naturalized; up until April 1948 only 9.111 expellees had been granted Austrian citizenship.⁶⁸ The majority among them were experts and specialists of crucial importance to the Austrian economy.⁶⁹ It wasn't until the early 1950s that the number of naturalizations began to increase. By 1951 around 140.000 expellees had become Austrian citizens, which amounts to around 33% of them.⁷⁰ Preference was given to *Volksdeutsche* with close connections to Austria as identified in the guidelines for deportation: while 73,1% of expellees from Czechoslovakia had been naturalized by spring 1954, this was the case for only 28,5% of those from Yugoslavia and for only 21,5% of those from Romania.⁷¹ It was not until July 1954 that the *Optionsgesetz*⁷² granted all *Volksdeutsche* expellees⁷³ the possibility to acquire Austrian citizenship. Through this law, which had been approved by the Allied Council, expellees could become naturalized through a simple declaration of loyalty to the Austrian Republic.⁷⁴

Extending easy access to citizenship to the expellees would have made their deportation impossible. But the Austrian government could have granted the expellees equal rights, while withholding citizenship and consequently the right to remain in Austria indefinitely. This was the approach demanded by the Austrian *Landsmannschaften*⁷⁵ and after June 1950 by their umbrella organization *Zentralkomitee der Volksdeutschen*^{76,77} However, in the immediate post-war period these demands were largely ignored and expellees were discriminated against in labour, welfare and education legislation.

The 1948 *Ausländerbeschäftigungsverordnung*⁷⁸ legalized the practice of giving native Austrians preferential treatment in employment. Expellees needed a special permit for any job they wanted to take up, which was only granted if there was no native Austrian available.⁷⁹ This restricted expellees to occupations, in which Austria was lacking employ-

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⁶⁷ 'Gesetz vom 10. Juli 1945 über den Erwerb und Verlust der österreichischen Staatsbürgerschaft' (Staatsbürgerschaftsgesetz), *Staatsgesetzblatt für die Republik Österreich* 16 (Vienna, 14 July 1945).

⁶⁸ Theodor Schieder (ed.), *Das Schicksal der Deutschen in Jugoslawien*, vol. 5 of *Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa* (Bonn: Bundesministerium für Vertriebene, Kriegsgeschädigte und Flüchtlinge, 1961), p. 126.

⁶⁹ Wassertheurer, 'Heimatvertriebene,' p. 3.

⁷⁰ Kirche in Not Deutschland, 'Vor 60 Jahren,' p. 1.

⁷¹ Verband der Volksdeutschen Landsmannschaften Österreichs, 'Die Rechtliche Situation der Heimatvertriebenen in Österreich nach 1945,' 2007, p. 2.

⁷² Translates as 'Opting law.'

⁷³ The *Optionsgesetz* defined those as German-speakers that had become stateless in the aftermath of the Second World War. This means that *Reichsdeutsche* still had no chance of becoming Austrian citizens. ('Bundesgesetz vom 2. Juni 1954 betreffend den Erwerb der Staatsbürgerschaft durch Volksdeutsche' (*Optionsgesetz*), *Bundesgesetzblatt für die Republik Österreich* 33 (Vienna, 5 August 1954)).

⁷⁴ However, in order to exercise their option the expellees had to sign an indemnity, which included the waiving of claims towards social benefits ('*Optionsgesetz*'). The *Optionsgesetz* thus did not make them entirely equal to native Austrians.

⁷⁵ Translates as 'Homeland Associations.' There was one for each homeland region of the expellees in Austria.

⁷⁶ Translates as 'Central Committee of the Volksdeutsche.'

⁷⁷ Felix Ermacora Institut, 'Die Volksdeutschen,' p. 48.

⁷⁸ Translates as 'Non-citizen employment Regulation.'

⁷⁹ 'Volksdeutsche sind eine Schande,' *Spiegel* 2 (1951).

ees, meaning lowly agricultural and other unskilled labour.⁸⁰ Engaging in higher qualified occupations as doctors, pharmacists or lawyers was prohibited for expellees.⁸¹ In order to protect native artisans, their expellee counterparts were prevented from setting up businesses and even from carrying out their trade in the form of cottage industry.⁸² It took until July 1952 before the expellees were granted equal treatment under most labour laws ranging from a free career choice to equal maternity leave.⁸³

In the immediate post-war period expellees were also denied equal treatment under welfare laws. Expellee invalids, war victims and pensioners were not granted financial support.⁸⁴ This only began to change gradually in the early 1950s starting with the January 1951 *Notstandshilfe*⁸⁵ law, which provided equal social benefits for long-term unemployed expellees.⁸⁶ In 1953 the expellee war damaged, war widows and war orphans were also given equal legal treatment.⁸⁷ However, it took until November 1971 and numerous laws until all expellees were granted pensions that credited their employment before 1945.⁸⁸

Until 1951 expellees were also discriminated against in terms of education legislation. Until 1948 expellee children were not allowed to attend school at all and thereafter they had to pay a fee that was 100% higher than the equivalent for native Austrian children.⁸⁹ Consequently, most expellee children could not afford education beyond primary school and were restricted to low-paying employment.⁹⁰ The situation improved with the equalization of all school fees in 1951.⁹¹

Political integration

Political integration of expellees also did not take place until the early 1950s. The first governmental institution dealing particularly with expellees was the above-mentioned *Umsiedlungsstelle* in the BMI. However, it was not designed to provide the expellees with a voice in Austrian politics but to make arrangements for their deportation. In July 1950 a *Ministerkomitee*⁹² was introduced to deal with issues concerning the expellees. It was supposed to make decisions in consultation with the newly created *Beirat zum Ministerkomitee zur Lösung der Flüchtlingsfragen in Österreich*,⁹³ which acted as the representative of the expellees. The *Beirat* was staffed by naturalized expellees, half of which were party members of the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs* (SPÖ)⁹⁴ and

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⁸⁰ In 1946 42% were working in the agricultural sector, only 3,4% were self-employed (Feldtänzer, 'Die Donauschwaben,' p. 71.).

⁸¹ Wassertheurer, *Flüchtlingsland*, p. 6.

⁸² 'Volksdeutsche sind eine Schande.'

⁸³ VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 109.

⁸⁴ 'Volksdeutsche sind eine Schande.'

⁸⁵ Translates as 'Emergency Assistance Law.'

⁸⁶ 'Bundesgesetz vom 31. Jänner 1951 über die Gewährung der Notstandshilfe an Volksdeutsche,' *Bundesgesetzblatt der Republik Österreich* 15 (Vienna, 9 April 1951).

⁸⁷ VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 110.

⁸⁸ The 1961 *Auslandsrenten-Übernahmegesetz* (Translates as 'Law for the Takeover of Foreign Pensions') had provided this for most professions, but the situation for formerly independent expellee farmers was only resolved with the *Bauern-Pensionsversicherungsgesetz* (Translates as 'Farmer's Pension Insurance Law') in January 1971 (VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 107).

⁸⁹ 'Liebe Hubers kommt,' p. 12.

⁹⁰ Felix Ermacora Institut, 'Die Volksdeutschen,' p. 21.

⁹¹ VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 109.

⁹² Translates as 'Ministerial Committee.' It was headed by the Federal Minister of the Interior.

⁹³ Translates as 'Federal Advisory Council to the Ministerial Committee for Refugee Affairs.'

⁹⁴ Translates as 'Social Democratic Party of Austria.'

the other of the *Österreichische Volkspartei* (ÖVP)⁹⁵. It soon became evident that the party loyalty of the *Beirat* members overrode their expellee identity and they were too willing to make concessions to the *Minsterkomitee*. The fact that equal rights for expellees in all areas was not one of their initial official demands, shows that the founding of the *Beirat* did not mean that the expellees had received a voice in Austrian politics. However, as time went on the *Beirat* did contribute to the passing of laws that paved the way towards legal equality of the expellees.⁹⁶

The political parties initially showed no interest in the expellees as potential voters and did little to provide them with a forum in their own ranks. This is why the right-wing party *Verband der Unabhängigen* (VdU)⁹⁷ was able to draw so much expellee support in the 1949 elections.⁹⁸ It was the only party that addressed the needs of expellees and demanded equal rights for them. This threat of a potential political expellee force caused the other political parties to provide some space for the interests of the expellees in their party structure. The SPÖ created the *Interessensgemeinschaft Volksdeutscher Heimatvertriebenen*⁹⁹ in 1949 and the ÖVP followed in 1950 with the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Heimatvertriebenen*.¹⁰⁰¹⁰¹ This seems to have been effective, because the VdU could not repeat its 1949 election successes.

Socio-economic integration

The basis for socio-economic integration had been created through the equalization of labour, social and education rights in 1952. However, granting equal rights was not enough to create equal employment and living situations for the expellees. Having lost all their belongings and savings expellees in both Austria and Germany were less able than the natives to bring about their own advancement (e.g. open a business, provide their children with higher education) and thus were restricted to the lower social classes. They thus needed additional support in order to gain equal opportunities. This is why West Germany passed the *Lastenausgleichsgesetz*¹⁰² in 1952, which was supposed to enable the expellees to regain their pre-1945 social standing. Expellees were reimbursed for lost property and their advancement was facilitated through grants for education and business initiatives.¹⁰³ Initially, the Austrian government denied the demands of its expellees and their organizations for any similar measures. It only began to endorse the idea of a *Lastenausgleich*¹⁰⁴ after West Germany had pledged in the November 1961 *Finanz- und Ausgleichsvertrag*¹⁰⁵ to contribute to it financially.¹⁰⁶ 125 million DM were provided

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⁹⁵ Translates as 'Austrian People's Party.'

⁹⁶ Volf, 'Der Politische Flüchtling,' p. 11.

⁹⁷ Translates as 'Federation of Independents.'

⁹⁸ It gained 11,7 % in national elections and even higher percentages in the chamber of labour elections (Felix Ermacora Institut, 'Die Volksdeutschen,' p. 34).

⁹⁹ Translates as 'Ethnic German Expellee Interest Group.'

¹⁰⁰ Translates as 'Expellee Work Group.'

¹⁰¹ The KPÖ also had such a body called *Komitee antifaschistischer und fortschrittlicher Volksdeutscher* (Translates as 'Committee of Anti-Fascist and Progressive Ethnic Germans'), but it was not as relevant as the parties' general influence waned after the first free elections in November 1945. Until then SPÖ, ÖVP and KPÖ had been equally represented due to the influence of the Soviets.

¹⁰² Translates as 'Equalisation of Burdens Law.'

¹⁰³ 'Gesetz über den Lastenausgleich' (Lastenausgleichsgesetz), Bonn, 14 August 1952.

¹⁰⁴ Translates as 'Equalisation of burdens.'

¹⁰⁵ Translates as 'Finance and Equalisation Law.'

¹⁰⁶ West Germany was required to do so through Part 6 Article 5 of the 1954 version of the *Überleitungsvertrag* (Translates as 'Transition Agreement'), which required the Federal Republic of Germany to reimburse own-

by West Germany to reimburse Austrian expellees for lost household effects and work equipment. The West German government was also prepared to reimburse for other items, but only if Austria also contributed 200 million DM to the initial effort. However, Austria was not willing to do and only provided around a fifth of the demanded funds.¹⁰⁷ After this no further reimbursements were made to the expellees in Austria by neither West Germany nor Austria. They received only a third of what expellees in West Germany were granted, which was certainly not enough to bridge the socio-economic discrepancies between expellees and natives.¹⁰⁸

Until the 1950s Austria was also doing little to improve the housing situation of the expellees. In 1952 20% of them (around 75,500) were still living in camps.¹⁰⁹ These camps were mostly in former POW or labour camps and closed down factories. They were often overcrowded and provided only inadequate sanitary facilities and heating.¹¹⁰ For another 20% of expellees still living in non-camp emergency accommodation in 1952 living conditions were often not much better.¹¹¹ The first efforts in helping the expellees to find alternate accommodation came from both the Protestant and the Catholic Church.¹¹² The Catholic Church funded the first housing settlement exclusively for expellees in 1950.¹¹³ The initial attitude of Austrian administration towards these projects is revealed by the fact that the city of Salzburg, where the first settlement was erected, even refused to provide the building ground for free.¹¹⁴ Settlement building really took off in the late fifties and eventually the government developed a housing scheme, which by 1964 had spent 383.5 million Schilling on the construction of 2,961 housing units. While there had still been 36 camps in 1960, by 1964 there were only 7 left.¹¹⁵

Social integration

The negative rhetoric about the expellees employed by the politicians who were urging for deportation in the immediate post-war period had a negative effect on the acceptance of expellees by natives and subsequently their integration into local communities. This was quite intended by the government in order to facilitate the removal of the expellees from their new Austrian home. KPÖ Federal Minister of the Interior Franz Honner urged to "inform the Viennese population through the press about the real state of affairs concerning the refugees in order to prevent them from having a misplaced compassion for them."¹¹⁶ Especially the KPÖ spread rumours that the expellees were former Nazis,

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ers of private property that had been confiscated by the three powers, other allied states and neutral states in the aftermath of the Second World War ('Vertrag zur Regelung aus Krieg und Besatzung entstandener Fragen' (Überleitungsvertrag), Paris, 23 October 1954).

¹⁰⁷ VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 119.

¹⁰⁸ VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 119.

¹⁰⁹ Kirche in Not Deutschland, 'Vor 60 Jahren,' p. 1. However, in the Soviet Occupation Zone all camps except for one ('Melk') had been closed down during the preparations for the 1946 deportations. The expellees from the Soviet Occupation Zone were all transferred there before being deported to Germany (Znoy, 'Die Vertreibung,' pp. 93-94).

¹¹⁰ Znoy, 'Die Vertreibung,' p. 93, and Feldtänzer, 'Die Donauschwaben,' pp. 77-78.

¹¹¹ Kirche in Not Deutschland, 'Vor 60 Jahren,' p. 1.

¹¹² Wildmann, Georg, 'Beitrag der Kirchen zur Integration der Heimatvertriebenen in Österreich.'

¹¹³ Frank, Fritz, 'Erinnerungstag der Heimatvertriebenen in Oberösterreich.'

¹¹⁴ 'Volksdeutsche sind eine Schande.'

¹¹⁵ *Stenographisches Protokoll der 52. Sitzung des Nationalrates der Republik Österreich* (Vienna, 1 July 1964), p. 2784.

¹¹⁶ Hrabovec, 'Austro-Czechoslovak Relations,' p. 390.

lazy, criminal and dangerous.¹¹⁷ As the KPÖ was under the tutelage of the Soviet Occupying Power, which had helped it to be part of the April 1945 government, it is likely that the Soviets were at least approving of the generation of a negative attitude towards the expellees amongst the population. However, there is no evidence that any of the Allies themselves used similar politically motivated polemics regarding the expellees.¹¹⁸ Without efforts of the government to create understanding for the plight of the expellees, the native population was bound to be antagonistic towards a group of foreigners, with whom it had to share scarce food and living space. Although there were also incidences of native support for expellees, verbal harassment was common and expellees were often discriminated against at food distribution places and sometimes even forced out of towns.¹¹⁹ Such behaviour obviously hampered social integration.

It was the expellee organisations and not the government that began to take on the task of sensitizing the natives in the early 1950s. In August 1950 the *Donauschwäbische Landsmannschaft*¹²⁰ held the first “Tag der Donauschwaben”¹²¹, on which it presented its culture and traditions but also the history of their expulsion to the natives. Exhibitions with similar agendas were also organized in larger Austrian cities.¹²² The Austrian government allowed these events and eventually showed its support by having high-ranking politicians such as Chancellor Leopold Figl attend them.¹²³ However, the long period of social exclusion and legal discrimination made it difficult for the expellees to forge a new home in Austria and impeded their social integration. It caused expellees to feel apart from the natives even after they had achieved citizenship and were allowed to stay. This is evident in the continued illegal immigration to Germany even after 1954.¹²⁴

CONCLUSION

This essay has shown that Austria did not want to integrate its expellees in the immediate post-war period. Austria’s preferred solution to the expellee problem was their deportation. This is very obvious in the period until the early fifties in which it openly demanded deportations and was able to follow through with some in 1946. Austria was supported in this endeavour by the Allies, especially the Soviets. Austria did introduce some integrative measures from the early fifties onwards, however, it is apparent that it was very reluctant to do so. The Austrian government stalled integrative efforts, as it did not want to impede the quick removal of expellees if further deportations became possible. In addition, it can be argued that the Austrian government hoped that dragging out the integration process might prompt expellees to emigrate of their own accord. It took until 1971 to provide the expellees with equal rights in all areas and Austria remained wanting in assisting the socio-economic as well as social integration of the expellees. In the end

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¹¹⁷ Volf, ‘Der Politische Flüchtling,’ p. 9, and Znoy, ‘Die Vertreibung,’ p. 102.

¹¹⁸ Znoy, ‘Die Vertreibung,’ p. 120.

¹¹⁹ Feldtänzer, ‘Die Donauschwaben,’ pp. 70-71.

¹²⁰ Translates as ‘Danube Swabian Homeland Association.’

¹²¹ Translates as ‘Day of the Danube Swabians.’

¹²² Felix Ermacora Institut, ‘Die Volksdeutschen,’ p. 22.

¹²³ VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 114.

¹²⁴ In 1956 there were still 2.557 expellees from Upper Austria alone that immigrated to Germany (Felix Ermacora Institut, ‘Die Volksdeutschen,’ p. 50).

around 350.000¹²⁵ expellees remained in Austria and they and their descendants are by now well integrated. It would, however, be interesting to conduct further research into how much longer Austrian expellee integration took in comparison to Germany.

“HÖCHST UNERWÜNSCHTE AUSLÄNDER”:
THE FATE OF ETHNIC GERMAN EXPELLEES IN POST-WAR AUSTRIA

Summary

The large influx of ethnic Germans from the East into Germany at the end of the Second World War is a well-known and researched fact. However, there were also about 300.000-632.000 expellees that ended up in post-war Austria. In contrast to Germany, Austria was not required by the Potsdam Agreement to take them in and consequently advocated their deportation. It was not only the financial burden associated with the expellees but also Austria's aim to convince the allies of the "victim myth" that motivated Austria to favour deportation over integration. Taking in ethnic German expellees would highlight Austria's close past with Germany and could even be perceived as an acceptance of legal succession of the Third Reich. The allies initially supported Austria's decision but except for a large number of deportations in 1946 the plan was not carried to its conclusion. Around 350.000 expellees were able to remain in Austria. However, the fact that they were not granted equal rights in all areas until 1971 shows they were not welcome in Austria for a long time.

Keywords: Austria, German expellees, *Heimatvertriebene*, integration, post-war period, *Opfermythos*

„HÖCHST UNERWÜNSCHTE AUSLÄNDER”:
LOS PRZESIEDŁONEJ LUDNOŚCI NIEMIECKIEJ W POWOJENNEJ AUSTRII

Streszczenie

Fakt, że pod koniec II wojny światowej do Niemiec licznie napływali ze wschodu etniczni Niemcy jest dobrze znany i zbadany. Jednak od około 300 000 do 632 000 przesiedlonych trafiło także do powojennej Austrii. Na Austrii, inaczej niż na Niemczech, nie ciążył nałożony w tzw. deklaracji poczdamskiej obowiązek ich przyjęcia, wobec czego Austria opowiedziała się za ich deportacją. Z przyjęciem przesiedleńców wiązały się dla niej ciężary finansowe, ale nie tylko: Austria chciała też przekonać aliantów do swego „mitu ofiary”. Austriacy przychylali się raczej do deportacji, a nie do integracji. Przyjęcie niemieckich przesiedlonych rzuciłoby nowe światło na ścisłe związki Austrii z Niemcami w przeszłości, a nawet mogłoby być postrzegane jako akceptacja sukcesji prawnej po Trzeciej Rzeszy. Alianci początkowo popierali stanowisko Austrii w tej sprawie. Jednak pominiawszy liczniejsze deportacje, jakie miały miejsce w roku 1946, plany nie zostały urzeczywistnione. Około 350 000 przesiedlonych pozwolono pozostać w Austrii. Niemniej fakt, że nie przyznawano im równych praw we wszystkich sferach życia aż do roku 1971 świadczy o tym, iż przez długi czas nie byli oni w tym kraju dobrze widziani.

Przekład z języka angielskiego
Jacek SERWAŃSKI

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¹²⁵ These figures are again contested. The VLÖ cites 350.000 (VLÖ, *Festschrift*, p. 103), while the former president of the Austrian National Council, Andreas Khol, speaks of 360.000 ('Khol beschließt "Gedenkreise im Gedankenjahr,"' *Parlamentskorrespondenz* 532 (Vienna, 31 May 2006)).