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Final Proposal

Among proponents of nationalism, the promise of “national-pride” tends to be regarded as the holy-grail of identity collectivization—whereby by forging a collective identity from individuals, individual triumphs are appropriated as national accomplishments. National-pride is largely uncontroversial; indeed, few people take offense at unsolicited compliments. Yet, the very existence of national pride invites the existence of its antipode: national shame. My first preliminary observation is that national pride and national shame are experienced in fundamentally different manners. Neither stand independently; national pride is as inextricable from the language of victory as national shame is from the language of defeat. Therein lies the distinction: victory is projected outwardly by a nation onto others, but defeat is projected onto a nation. Whereas national pride is experience collectively and electively, national shame is almost invariably imposed externally and experienced individually. Consequently, it's an inescapably discomforting experience.

The experiences of Europe with national shame have been studied extensively under the controversy-battered moniker of “collective guilt.” Used descriptively, “collective guilt” is a statement on the state of the national conscience, particularly that a group of individuals belonging to a national (or formerly belonging to a nation) committed a crime, are self-aware of their culpability, and seek to disencumber themselves of their guilt. Such descriptions are almost invariably embroiled in controversy. Opponents to statements of national guilt often attack such declarations as proscriptive and carrying a political agenda. Politicization has damaged its utility as a framework for studying the processes of repairing the national conscience, and its academic

popularity potentially excludes more nuanced explanations of repair.“National rehabilitation” is a substantially more versatile moniker for the range of mechanisms that nations repair themselves with. I have identified repatriation events as a promising framework for identifying and studying instances of damage to national consciences that challenge traditional notions of national healing. To this end, I've adopted a more expansive definition of repatriation and a comparative study of repatriation events will form the body of my capstone.

I have selected a tentative title, “The Rehabilitation of National Conscience and the Repatriation of Defeat,” and outline for the paper. I begin with a comparison of physical reparations. In 1955, the last German prisoners of war were released from Russian captivity to both East and West Germany, with each reacting drastically differently to the repatriation. Meanwhile, the collapse of European colonialism brought with it the return of millions of colonial settlers back to Europe. This was experienced especially intensely by France after the French-Algerian War, with the immigration of *pieds noirs*. Both of these cases are specimens of classic repatriation events. Lastly, I consider curious case of the expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe after World War II. In the strictest sense, their story is neither a repatriation nor an expatriation. Although they were expelled from their homes in areas formerly part of Germany, these German-identifying people became refugees within Germany's new borders. Clearly, they experience neither a physical expatriation or repatriation, but their writings, which invoke the rhetoric of nationalism, nonetheless describe a painful disenfranchisement from an element of their national identity.

The case raises the question of whether a more robust model for repatriation-like events of national rehabilitation might exist. I thusly attempt to demonstrate that physical migrations are

perhaps better described as ideological migrations. The cases studied within this section blur the lines of what we understand as a repatriation in the physical sense, but remain exemplary specimens of ideological repatriations. First, I consider the relationship between the collaboration of Vichy Frenchmen with Nazi Germany, which complicated the rehabilitation of French nationalism after the war. While collaboration might have been seen as a device of national survival during occupation, the trials and executions of collaborating Frenchmen after the war demonstrates it would later be interpreted as 'expatriation'. This case shares parallels with the repatriation of *pieds noirs* in that the attempted repatriation of a segment of the nation in fact challenged the integrity of the national conscience. Here, however, no migration takes place.

The second repatriation event I will consider here—perhaps Europe's largest—was even more jarring but again involved few physical migrations: the reunification of Germany. The Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marks the logical beginning of the timetable for discussing this event, and its consequences continue to unfold. The Fall of the Berlin Wall was hailed at first as the reunification of Germany itself. The cheers of "Farewell to the island! Germany is one! The people have triumphed!" deluged both media and conversation in West Germany.[1] In those first days of free transit, over sixty thousand East Germans entered West Germany and rehearsed the first scenes of discontent to come. Trabbants flooded West German Streets.[2] "At the banks and post offices, long queues of East Germans stood in line for their 'welcome money.'"[3] In the midst of this upheaval, Cees Nooteboom recalled a growing trepidation: "They may be Germans, but they're *different* Germans."[4] To the chant of "We are the people!," the 'Ossis' had forged the national identity that enabled the Wall's destruction. More than a physical division of a single

1 Nooteboom, 81.
2 Sarotte, 43.
3 Nooteboom, 81.
4 Ibid.

city, the Berlin Wall, as a shared hardship, the Wall bound together two diverging nations.

Thus far, I have attempted to demonstrate that events for which the experiences of repatriation and expatriation can be identified (although not necessarily in that order), are also moments of great upheaval for the national conscience. If broadly applicable it might not just be said that these two elements are canaries for turmoil in the national conscience, but that turmoil of the national conscience may be understood by identifying a repatriation an an expatriation event. As a testbed, I'll consider the implications of the de-communization of Poland, namely the reintroduction of previously-taboo discourse into Polish academia. The ongoing debate in Poland over interpretations of the Jedwabne pogrom is the poster child of this experience. The historical debate is straightforward: a discourse between academics over differing interpretations of a set of Polish primary sources that provide an incomplete time-line of the Jedwabne pogrom. A researcher might be disappointed to learn that this debate has had virtually no new developments since it was sparked by the 2003 publication of *Neighbors*, by Jan Gross—that is to say, no new primary sources have been discovered. However, when studied historiographically, the controversy gains an explosive dimension: the lines of secondary and primary sources are blurred as the secondary sources of historical study become the primary sources of historiographical study. Entangled in this controversy are fundamental questions about Polish identity. Gross's supporters and detractors alike decry each other as 'anti-Polish'. It is clear that a Polish crisis of identity exists. I hope to establish that it can be modeled by identifying moments of repatriation and expatriation.

Primary Sources

BArch, DO 2/49, folios 140-143; reprinted in Dierk Hoffmann and Michael Schwartz, eds., *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*. Bd. 8: 1949-1961: *Deutsche Demokratische Republik. Im Zeichen des Aufbaus des Sozialismus* [*History of Social Policy in Germany since 1945*, Vol. 8: 1949-1961: *German Democratic Republic. Under the Sign of the Build Up of Socialism*]. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004, no. 8/118. (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=5696)†

This official document describes the mechanisms used by the GDR to cope with the influx of refugees. According to this document, East Germany struggled to assimilate refugees into life in the GDR. Although further research is required, I noticed parallels between this and East Germany's difficulty assimilating returning PoWs, another topic of my research.

Dönhoff, Marion Gräfin, “Heimat im Osten” [“Homeland in the East”], *Die Zeit*, May 18, 1950. (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=4476)

Dönhoff's article in *Die Zeit* is a primary account on the sentiments of expellees. Her rhetoric invokes the great trope of nationalism: racial history. Although she and the subjects she writes about identify unapologetically as German and *are* still in Germany, their expulsion from their homes in the East is felt as expatriation.

Nooteboom, Cees. *Roads to Berlin*. Translated by Laura Watkinson. New York ; London: MacLehose Press, 2013.

Nootebom's *Roads to Berlin* is a personal account of the reunification of Germany. Whereas

† I followed the citation guidelines of the GHDI (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/use.cfm)

Sarotte's *1989* is a top-down analysis of the democratization and capitalization of Eastern Europe, *Roads to Berlin* documents the effects of decommunization from the perspective of a West Berliner.

Ritter, Gerhard A. and Merith Niehuss, *Wahlen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Bundestags- und Landtagswahlen 1946-1987* [*Elections in the Federal Republic of Germany: Bundestag and State Parliament Elections, 1946-1987*]. Munich: Beck, 1987, p. 31. (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=2301)

This table of statistical information details the primary areas that expelees from the east settled in the Federal Republic. It provides an effective basis for further research by allowing me to identify the areas most affected by repatriations and pursue addition research into those locales.

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The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland, an edited collection of writings and speeches by polish pundits, priests, and academics in the wake of *Neighbors*. Each element of the collection has utility as a primary source and as a secondary source. Moreover, Polonsky's editorials are a valuable secondary source, lending context to the works in the collection. I believe that his description of academic upheaval after the fall of communism in Poland describes a kind of internal, political repatriation.

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The rehabilitation of West Germany is the topic of Robert Moller's *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic*. The international revulsion of the atrocities of World War II left Germany with little choice but to expel much of the preceding half-century from their identity; West Germany processed an *unusable* history. Moller contends that far from ignoring their wartime experiences with silence, post-War Germans were in fact conducting a “search for a usable past.” In particular, the chapter “Prisoners of Memory” explores the release of the last prisoners of war by Russian and their repatriation by West Germany in 1959. The Germans who returned in the 1955 homecoming were, like “woolly mammoths [..] locked eternally in the ice,” confronted by a country altered inconceivably from that which they departed no less than a decade prior.[5] West Germans, similarly, were confronted en masse by a token of an inconceivable, terrible past. Overall, Moeller concludes that such conflicts were footnote to a broadly unifying experience; the return of the last POWs was a pattern of healing, not reopening, old wounds. In particular these “old Germans” provided valuable assurance to the citizens of the Federal Republic that they had not strayed too far from germanity. To the “economic renewal” of West Germany, “POWs were uniquely positioned to add a 'moral renewal.'”

5 Ibid., 90.

Morina, Christina. “Instructed Silence, Constructed Memory: The SED and the Return of German Prisoners of War as ‘War Criminals’ from the Soviet Union to East Germany, 1950-1956.” *Contemporary European History* 13, no. 3 (August 1, 2004): 323–43.

In *Instructed Silence, Constructed Memory: The SED and the Return of German Prisoners of War as ‘War Criminals’ from the Soviet Union to East Germany, 1950–1956*, Christina Marina reported that East Germany had a wholly different reaction to the return of prisoners of war. The return of West German POWs helped legitmize an element of German culture lingering from the Nazi years: anti-communism. In East Germany, Morina contended, they could serve no such utility. Regardless of how common East Germans felt, the return of PoWs was incompatible with the top-down scheme of rehabilitation embraced by the East German government.

Sarotte, Mary Elise. *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

The last great challenge to German identity came on the back of Europe's largest repatriation event: the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. That year of German history is the focal point of Mary Elise Sarotte's *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe.* She continues the theme of top-down rehabilitations of national identity, but at a multi-national level, comparing the post-Cold War visions pursued by the U.S., West Germany, East Germany, and the Soviet Union. She concludes that the most visionary paths for Post-Cold War Europe were not the ones embraced, and concludes with a reflection on the trials endured by post-unification Germany.

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In *After the Algerian War*, Eric Savarse explored the identity crises faced by repatriated French-Algerians. Their arrivial in France was “broadly associated by trauma”, as they bore unshakable associations to a doomed colony and a doomed war. Contrary to the traditional narrative in which the label “pied-noirs” was developed by mainland frenchmen, Savarse contends that repatriated french cultivated the identity as a label for their “shared suffering in exile”.

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