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NARRATIVES OF “HOME” AND “HOMELAND”: THE SYMBOLIC CONSTRUCTION AND APPROPRIATION OF THE SUDETEN GERMAN *HEIMAT*

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Heimat, the most beautiful of all gifts,
Given to us by the Lord,
To no longer have a Heimat,
Is the biggest grief in life¹

This four-line stanza was written by the Sudeten German expellee (*Vertriebene*) Josef Goss after his expulsion from Czechoslovakia to Germany in 1946. The lines are part of the poem “Lost Heimat,” and express the idea that forced migration is a disturbance of a God-created order in which peoples’ identities are inextricably bound up with their natural place of birth and residence.

Indirectly, the poem addresses the problem of perceptions of home and homeland in a dynamic world that is characterized by migration, expulsion, travel, transnationalism, and multiculturalism, and it draws attention to the following question: What and where becomes “home” after somebody has crossed state borders and cultural boundaries, either voluntarily or forced by particular circumstances?

This article will examine this question through an analysis of different discourses of home and homeland produced by ethnic Germans who used to live in an area formerly known as the Sudetenland, and who were expelled from Czechoslovakia immediately after the Second World War.² It will provide examples of homeland discourses produced in *Heimat* books, poems, newsletters, and political speeches. The analysis will also examine complex identification processes that have produced territorialized, deterritorialized, and reterritorialized perceptions of self. Finally, the article will move beyond the level of discourse and focus on recent attempts by expellees to symbolically and legally appropriate lost property.

Interestingly, the Sudeten German question of home has regained topicality since the end of the Cold War. During the early 1990s, the transformation of the Iron Curtain into a normal border, the lifting of visa requirements, and the introduction of democracy and a market economy in Czechoslovakia have made the lost homeland far more accessible to the expellees than before, especially to those who live in Bavaria close to the Czech border. Furthermore, the issue of *Heimatrecht*,

the Sudeten German claim to their lost homeland or, alternatively, to financial compensation for their lost properties, has become a central concern in Czech and German foreign politics. The question of “the Sudeten German homeland” also addresses transnational, European issues, such as the rights of minorities within the context of the European Union, the political relationship between individual European Union member states, and the historical validity of past agreements.

Between May 1945 and December 1947, in accordance with the Potsdam Agreement, the postwar Czechoslovak government expelled the majority of the Sudeten German population—over three million people who formed the second largest ethnic group in the country. The Sudeten Germans, most of whom had welcomed the incorporation of the Sudetenland into the Third Reich in 1938, were regarded collectively guilty of the Nazi crimes. Their property was nationalized, they were forced to leave the country and were allowed to take only between 30 and 70 kilos of luggage per person.

The majority of the expellees were sent to Germany. Seventy percent ended up in the western occupied zones, which were controlled by Britain, France, and the United States, and thirty percent were sent to the Soviet-controlled zone. Local communities and families were dispersed, as relatives, friends, and neighbors were placed in camps and houses in locations all over Germany. The Sudeten Germans were confronted not only with local Germans but also with ethnic Germans from the Soviet Union, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Poland, and other parts of Eastern Europe.³ The latter had fled from the approaching Soviet Red Army or had been expelled on the basis of the same Potsdam Agreement. Altogether, almost 10 million ethnic Germans arrived in postwar Germany.

In the new “homeland,” the social and economic conditions were extremely hard. Many expellees found it difficult to come to terms with their sudden displacement, and had problems finding jobs and starting new lives. In October 1946, for example, in the Bavarian district of Tirschenreuth, over 21 percent (1,179 persons) of a total of 5,519 expellees who had settled in the area were still unemployed (Houswitschka and Houswitschka 1995: 137). There were also frequent tensions between the expellees and the locals. Not surprisingly, the Sudeten German feelings of belonging were deeply shaken. Many Sudeten Germans began to idealize the old homeland, and, especially during the first post-expulsion years, believed that they would soon gain the right to return.

Notions of *Heim*, *Heimat*, and *Heimatrecht* have been central to Sudeten German homeland discourses. Before the nineteenth century, *Heim* used to be a legal term for a privately owned house or farm. People who lived or settled in a *Heimatgemeinde* were given *Heimatrecht*, the right to social security in difficult times. In the context of modernization, industrialization, and urbanization in the nineteenth century, *Heimat* began to be used to express Romantic notions of unspoiled life in the countryside. German nationalists made a connection between *Heimat* and *Vaterland*, and in the late 1920s, *Heimat* became a central concept in Nazi ideology. After the Second World War, the Sudeten Germans de-Nazified the

concept of *Heimat*, and used the notion of *Heimatrecht* to claim the right to return to their lost homeland (Bartl et al. 1995: 57).⁴

The unwillingness of most non-expellee Germans (who tried to forget the war as soon as possible) to seriously address the expellee issue, and the rapidly unfolding Cold War hampered Sudeten German attempts to realize their plans. During the past 12 years, however, the European political scene has changed considerably. Representatives of Sudeten German expellee organizations have linked up their demands for *Heimatrecht* to highly topical political concerns, such as the planned eastward enlargement of the European Union. The spokesman of the *Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft*, Bernd Posselt, for example, who is a member of the European Parliament, recently presented a proposal with other German and Austrian parliament members to annul the postwar constitution of Czechoslovakia, in particular the Beneš decrees which legalized the expulsion and the nationalization of Sudeten German property in 1945. The demands have been supported by a number of influential politicians, such as the Austrian right-wing party leader Jörg Haider, the Austrian prime minister Wolfgang Schüssel, the Hungarian Premier Victor Orban (who made similar demands for the ethnic Hungarians expelled from Slovakia), and the popular German Christian Democrat Edmund Stoiber.

Emotional *Heimatrecht* discourses have proved to be powerful. Sudeten German demands have frequently disturbed the development of friendly post-Cold War connections between the Czech Republic and Germany. Despite President Václav Havel's apologies in 1990 for crimes committed against Sudeten German citizens (discussed below), and despite the establishment of the Czech-German Declaration in 1997 (Svašek 1999), many Sudeten Germans and numerous influential German politicians have refused to accept the outcome of the 1945 Potsdam Agreement. As this article will demonstrate, the production of particular *Heimat* narratives has been central to this refusal.

“HOME,” PLACE, AND SPACE

Before focusing on Sudeten German narratives of “home” and “homeland,” I will outline the theoretical perspective taken here. The analysis is based on a particular definition of home, which was introduced by Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson to examine identification processes and perceptions of home in a “world of movement.”

‘Home’ [...] is ‘where one best knows oneself’—where ‘best’ means ‘most’ even not always ‘happiest’. Here, in sum, is an ambiguous and fluid but yet ubiquitous notion, apposite for a charting of the ambiguities and fluidities, the migrancies and paradoxes, of identity in the world today. (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 9)

The authors dissociate the notions of “home” and “physical locality,” arguing that:

[b]eing 'at home' and being 'homeless' are not matters of movement, of physical space, or of the fluidity of socio-cultural times and places, as such. One is at home when one inhabits a cognitive environment in which one can undertake the routines of daily life and through which one finds one's identity best mediated – and homeless when such a cognitive environment is eschewed. (10)⁵

It may be clear that Rapport and Dawson's approach undermines the claims by expellees such as Goss (quoted at the beginning of this article) to a natural connection between cultural identity and geographic location. Their approach deconstructs the semantic unit *identity-place*, and attacks the idea that people have natural or divine rights to certain territories. In their view, people can also be "at home" when living in different, changing physical surroundings.

Today, most anthropologists seem to agree that world views based on the fixed category *identity-place*, such as the ideology of the nation-state, wrongly assume that identities are inescapable destinies, naturally predetermined by kinship ties, ethnicity, locality, and shared culture. There seems to be a widespread consensus that people are rather engaged in multiple identification processes, many of which are not necessarily rooted in genealogical or territorial assumptions (Basch et al. 1994; Baumann and Sunier 1995; Hannerz 1989; Kearney 1995; Malkki 1992).

The development and acceptance of a more dynamic and complex notion of identity formation is partly related to the growth of transnational communities in Europe and the United States during the second half of the twentieth century. Confronted with increasing migration and, consequently, cultural diversity at home, anthropologists opened their eyes to the equally complex cultural and historical dynamics at their fieldwork sites (Holy 1996).

In this context, the theoretical distinction made between place and space is helpful (Giddens 1991; Gupta and Ferguson 1992). Place has been defined as the actual locality where people live, or in other words, as the material surroundings through which they physically move during their daily routine. Space, by contrast, is "the general idea people have of where things should be in physical and cultural relation to each other" (Donnan and Wilson 1999: 9). In other words, as with Rapport and Dawson's notion of home, space is a mental picture instead of a particular locality.

Anthony Giddens (1991) also claimed that in late modernity, people's self-perception is no longer limited by identity-place discourses. He argued that

while the milieu in which people live quite often remains the source of local attachments, place does not form the parameter of experience; and it does not offer the security of the ever-familiar which traditional locales characteristically display. (1991: 146–147)

Evidently, the displaced Sudeten German expellees lost the security of their homeland locale, and the Sudetenland has become an imaginary space. As such, one would expect the expellees to construct notions of home that are fundamentally deterritorialized.

LOSS OF HOME: CLAIMING DETERRITORIALIZED IDENTITIES

Between 1996 and 1999, as part of my research on Czech-German relations in the Bohemian-Bavarian border area, I talked with about 30 Sudeten German expellees of different ages and social backgrounds about their lives in the Sudetenland, their experience of the expulsion, and their post-expulsion existence. Most came from the rural district of Tachau (Tachov) in West Bohemia, which borders the German districts of Tirschenreuth and Oberpfalz, and most had settled in Bavaria. I met some of them during the annual *Sudetendeutsche tage*, a two-day expellee event, which is organized by the *Sudetendeutsche landsmannschaft*. Others, I got to know through Czechs who were active supporters of the Czech-German reconciliation process. I also came into contact with a number of expellees when participating in ceremonies in former Sudeten German villages. I met most of my informants on several occasions, and visited and interviewed them in their German homes. I also collected homeland narratives in the form of written documents, such as newspaper articles, poems, village chronicles, and *Heimat* books. The *Heimat* books that I focus on here concern the villages of Brand, Paulusbrunn and Sorghof in Egerland in the district of Tachau (today Tachovsko), close to the Bavarian border. Only Brand (today Míře) still exists. Paulusbrunn was blown up in 1953 as part of the Czechoslovak defense policy during the Cold War, and Sorghof disappeared in 1972 when the central government decided to build a reservoir on its location.

Some expellees produced discourses of home, which constructed images of deterritorialized selves. One woman from Marienbad emphasized that she had completely lost the connection with her homeland, and that she did not really feel at home in Bavaria either. She experienced her fate as a great loss, and felt robbed of a feeling of stability. In Rapport and Dawson's perspective, the story of her life was one of homelessness, of being a permanent outsider. In her case, deterritorialization was a negative experience.

By contrast, a man who had lived in a Silesian village near the Polish border, and who was a young child at the moment of the expulsion, saw the expulsion as an escape from life in a provincial, narrow-minded community. To him, deterritorialization was a positive experience, and he strongly identified himself with nonterritorial images, such as his role as a successful academic. He loathed the conservatism of the *Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft*, and criticized the selective memory of many expellees.

It is important to note that selective memory is inherent in the notion of *Heimat* itself, which is always a positive evaluation of the connection between identity and place. It reflects a perception of home in which distress and disruption can only come from outside the community. Consequently, people are always expected to feel at home in their *Heimat*, and problems and tensions that occur within the community are marked as anomalies that are best forgotten as soon as possible. As the writers of the *Heimat* book *Paulusbrunn: The Fate of a Destroyed Community in the Bohemian Forest* noted in the preface:

A veil of forgetting will be put over unpleasant incidents because we all want to remember our home village and its inhabitants in the best possible way. (Interessengemeinschaft Heimatbuch Paulusbrunn 1984: 5)

The choice to remember the home village in a positive light was not only motivated by the traumatic experience of sudden loss, but also had its obvious political dimensions. “The best possible way” meant that the unpleasant memories of Sudeten German involvement in aggressive acts against Jews, Czechs, and anti-Nazi Germans were evoked only sporadically, or completely suppressed.

Paulusbrunn did, however, acknowledge the fact that, in the 1930s, the majority of the Sudeten Germans had supported Hitler and had celebrated the incorporation of the Sudetenland into the Third Reich. The book described how 674 of 809 people voted for the pro-Nazi *Sudetendeutsche Partei*, and described the enthusiasm of the villagers for the *Anschluss* as follows: “The German troops were enthusiastically welcomed by the inhabitants from Paulusbrunn, who stood by the side of the road” (*Interessengemeinschaft Heimatbuch Paulusbrunn* 1984:93). The book justified their feelings by claiming that the Germans had had no rights at all in Czechoslovakia, and described the First Republic as a “foreign country”:

Only someone who had to live as a member of a minority without rights—only because he was German—in a foreign country for a period of twenty years, can understand what went on in people’s hearts. (11)

Paulusbrunn mentioned the “dreadfulness” of the Second World War, but mainly as a reference to the expulsion:

At the time, who could foresee that only eleven months later, this dreadful war would break out in which, directly at the beginning [of the war], the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans was pre-arranged and demanded by the Czech government in exile. (11)

In the three *Heimat* books, few words were spent on Nazi oppression or the horror of the Holocaust. One could argue, as some expellees did, that the inhabitants of such small villages had simply been naïve and had not known what was going on. Yet after some persuading on my part, numerous expellees admitted that, directly or indirectly, they had been confronted with Nazi propaganda, and that it had been common knowledge that Jews had been arrested in the nearby city of Tachau. The silence about these issues in the *Heimatbücher* demonstrates that the Sudeten Germans actively chose to perceive “the homeland” as a peace-loving community. Understandably, this attitude was for numerous expellees a good enough reason to completely dissociate themselves from the expellee community. In Rapport and Dawson’s terminology, they did not feel “at home” in uncritical *Heimat* narratives.

CLAIMING TERRITORIALIZED IDENTITIES: PLACE SIGNIFYING SELF

Interestingly enough, most first generation expellees with whom I spoke emphatically claimed territorialized identity, and some noted (as Gross did in his poem) that their link to the homeland was a natural connection, which they simply could not deny.

During the *Sudetendeutscher tag* in 1998, I met Greta Weiss, a woman who participated in the annual parade, a ceremony during which members of smaller regional organizations and folk groups gather outside the main hall dressed up in folk costumes while holding up colorful banners which refer to *Heimat* communities. Together with the other participants, she marched through the hall to the podium, while a band played folk music, a speaker introduced each group, and the public applauded. The folk event must be placed in the context of the homeland claims: the end of the parade marked the beginning of a rally during which the spokesmen of the *Sudetendeutsche landsmannschaft* and renown politicians such as Stoiber held political speeches, and demanded *Heimatrecht*.

Greta was clear about her feelings for the old Sudetenland. "It's a question of blood," she noted. "It's hard to explain but we have a blood relationship with the land."

Strong claims to territorialized homeland identities were also made in hundreds of *Heimatbucher*, a literary genre of post-expulsion popular culture that dealt with the history and culture of the former Sudeten German communities.⁶ The books, written by expellees from all over Sudetenland, included descriptions of historical developments and cultural habits of the former inhabitants, personal memoirs, maps, lists, photographs, and poems, as well as accounts of the expulsion.⁷

In the prefaces of three different *Heimatbucher*, which form the focus of this article, the writers emphasized that they had not forgotten their beloved *Heimatort*, and that they aimed to keep the memory alive. The writers of *Sorghof* argued that

[i]n the consciousness of all people, *Heimat* is a place in which a person is born, spends an untroubled childhood and youth, and which they love and trust, even in times of hardship, privation, and human deprivation. (Erwin et al., year of publication unknown: 17)

As noted earlier, in the territorialized perspective *Heimat* was identical to feeling at home. The other two books, entitled *The Chronicle of Brand* and *Paulusbrun: The Fate of a Destroyed Community in the Bohemian Forest*, also defined *Heimat* as an idyllic place in which, under normal conditions, a person went through the succeeding life stages of birth, childhood, youth, marriage, parenthood, and death. The importance of kinship ties and a strong emotional attachment to the land and the village community is central in these narratives.

The Sudeten German case strengthens the argument made by Hasting Donnan and Thomas Wilson that

every national identity involves singular and often unshakeable views of the nation's relationship to territory, regardless of how deterritorialized we may perceive the ethnic or national group in question to be. (Donnan and Wilson 1999: 64)

Apart from the Sudeten German claims to homeland, other historical events, such as ethnic cleansing in Zaire and former Yugoslavia, the creation of new nation-states in Central and Eastern Europe, and the unification of Germany, have equally reasserted the political usefulness of identity-place discourses. This finding contradicts the view expressed by numerous social scientists who argue that in an increasingly transnational and globalized world, peoples' identities are increasingly detached from places (Appadurai 1990; Kearney 1995; King 1991; and Nderveen Pieterse 1995).

One can of course also argue that migrants' and expellees' claims to territorial identities are in themselves a sign of deterritorialization. After all, the homeland they identify with is not their actual place of residence. In other words, the space they imagine is only indirectly related to the places in which they once lived.

HOMELAND DISCOURSES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF TERRITORIAL IDENTITIES THROUGH POETRY

Poetry seems to be one of the most suitable popular genres for claiming territorial identity and expressing feelings of loss. Not long after the expulsion, associations established by expellees from areas all over the Sudetenland took the initiative to publish newsletters, which frequently contained homeland poems.

In April 1949, people from the old districts of Tachau and Pfraumberg, for example, published the first issue of *Tachauer/Pfraumberger Heimat*. The first issue contained the poem "Question" by Andreas Blaha, written two years after the end of the expulsion. In the poem, the author lamented the loss of *Heimat*, and noted how he longed to see its beautiful countryside. He promised that if he would ever be allowed to return to his homeland, he would "fall on his knees and kiss the earth, as one kisses a mother's hand."

Question

When, oh, can I see again
my valleys, my hills, can I hear how through the beds
my clear streams flow?
I will fall on my knees/for you, my *Heimatland*
I will kiss the earth
as one kisses a mother's hand. (Blaha 1949: 12)⁸

The metaphorical connection in the poem between mother and soil suggests a strong link between kinship and territory, and reproduces the fixed *identity-place* category that has been central to Sudeten German homeland discourse.

A second poem, written by U. Felbinder in 1949 and entitled “Lost Homeland—Song of the People from Egerland,” showed a similar sentimental and politically powerful perception of homeland and self. The author speaks of his intense longing for his family house (*Vaterhaus*) in the lost *Heimat*, thus connecting images of place and identity. He expresses a “never-ending grief,” and blames the Czechoslovak government for his suffering (Felbinder 1949: 8).⁹

In fact, the themes “longing for *Heimat*” and “the spiritual connection between people and land” existed already before the expulsion. Evidently, the expellees’ perception of the homeland has been strongly influenced by nineteenth and twentieth century nation-state ideology, in particular by its German “Blut und Boden” version. The pre-expulsion poem “Send me Soil from Egerland!” that was published in the newsletter *Tachauer/Pfraumberger Heimat*, told the story of a man from Egerland who emigrated to the United States, presumably during the economic crisis in the late 1920s. In the poem, the emigrant writes to a friend back home several times with the request to send him roses, water, and soil. He needs the roses to make a wreath for his bride, water to baptize his child, and earth to bury his wife and child: “And that’s how the poor man received/in a far-away, foreign place/in moments of highest happiness and deepest grief/the blessing of the homeland” (Rosegger 1949: 24).¹⁰ In this case, three different rites of passage that are fundamental to the creation and continuation of kinship networks cannot take place without the physical contact with homeland matter (roses, water, and soil). In other words, homeland substances are necessary to sanctify blood relations, and those who lack access to them cannot be considered whole human beings.

In an extremely nostalgic poem that was written in 1958 and published in the *Heimatsbuch* of Brand, Josef Goss remembers his beloved homeland in a dream, and expresses his feelings of sorrow when he finally woke up:

Lost Heimat

In a dream, I often see
my *Heimat* village,
with the lime tree,
looking down from the hills.
I see the *Heimat*
so rich with the blessings of harvest
where, simple and plain,
stands my father’s house.
I hear the sound of the bells,
ring from the small *Heimat* church
and I hear the sound of singing girls
echo from the mountains.
I see in a ray of sunlight
the forests and the riverbeds

the silent meadows in the valley
 the mountains far in blue.
 But when the dream fades away
 I am caught by a deep longing
 for my *Heimatland*
 I ponder with tears. (Goss 1979b (1958b): 136)¹¹

When placed in the context of other, more outspoken political poems, it becomes clear that the theme of longing for home is not just innocent nostalgia, but that expellee *Heimat* poetry has direct political connotations. The expellee discourse of longing and grief has merged with a political discourse of territorialized belonging, and has found its expression in legal and moral claims for lost property.

The stanza cited at the beginning of this article, for example, is part of Goss' poem "Returning home. The Goal of the Expellees." The title is as telling as the lines that follow:

Heimat, the most beautiful of all gifts,
 Given to us by the Lord,
 To no longer have a *Heimat*,
 Is the biggest grief in life.

This destiny came upon,
 Millions of our Brothers,
 Who, in hardship and misery,
Hope for a speedy return home.

Our *Heimat*'s soil will never,
 Be taken away from us forever,
 Whatever happens,
Our right will remain.

Because nobody can cancel a right
That was given to us by Nature and by God,
 Our destiny will change
 If we will simply keep faith.

Faith, in the Highest Gracious
 Who never forgets the poor,
 Who helps the sick and the tired,
And returns our property.

A goal is never lost
 If not given up by ourselves

Therefore we keep our goal

Returning home is our highest aim. (Goss 1979a (1958a): 135; italics mine)¹²

Published 12 years after the expulsion, the poem shows that the right to go back home was inherent in Sudeten German homeland discourse.

“ENTEXTUALIZING” IDENTITY-PLACE DISCOURSE

Heimatrecht had become the official aim of the Sudeten Germans in 1950, when a number of politically active expellees drew up the *Charter of the Sudeten German Expellees*.¹³ The Charter combined emotional and legal arguments of longing and belonging, and its claim to the homeland was institutionalized by the *Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft*, the biggest organization of Sudeten German expellees, with its seat in Munich. The organization routinized the discourse of *Heimatrecht*, and over the years, various political actors and institutions have put the claims for the Sudeten German homeland on their own political agendas. As noted earlier, during the last 12 years, the discourse of *Heimatrecht* has been linked up to the planned entrance of the Czech Republic into the European Union.

When analyzing Sudeten German claims to their “lost *Heimat*,” it is important to realize that, to many Sudeten Germans, the expulsion was a traumatic experience. Especially during the first few postwar months, also known as the “wild expulsion,” many were maltreated, raped, and murdered. Czech sources mention a death toll of between 20,000 and 40,000 people. The Sudeten German estimates are much higher, claiming that approximately 250,000 Sudeten Germans lost their lives. (Houswitschka and Houswitschka 1995; Stanek 1991; and Svašek 2000a). Not surprisingly, the trauma of the expulsion has strongly shaped Sudeten German memories and their perceptions of home. In numerous cases, the experience of sudden loss seems to have strengthened instead of weakened their identification with Sudeten German soil, and generated a strong determination to regain their property through institutionalized discourses of collective victimhood (Svašek 2002a).

Geoffrey M. White used the term “entextualization” to draw attention to a similar standardization of discourses of suffering through repetition and institutionalization (White 2000). In an article on the emotional remembering of the bombing of Pearl Harbor at the Arizona Memorial in Hawaii, he noted that the traumatic war experiences of American soldiers during the bombing of Pearl Harbor had become life defining moments for some survivors, and emphasized that particular survivor narratives had become institutionalized. His analysis clearly showed how personal stories became the object of public performance in the museum context as survivors told their story to groups of visitors. Narration was a transitional moment in which those who had suffered were able to objectify their painful experiences, and, at the same time, to construct an emotionally and politically powerful image of the United States as an imagined community. In the Sudeten German

case, the discourses of “loss of homeland” fulfill a similar double function (Svašek 2002a, 2002b, 2002c).

RETERRITORIALIZATION: EMBEDDEDNES IN NEW LOCALITIES

The Sudeten German narratives of home often also contained references to processes of reterritorialization. With regard to migrants’ identification with new places, Giddens argues that

[a]ctive attempts to re-embed the lifespan within a local milieu may be undertaken in various ways (...). Only when it is possible to gear regular practices to the specifics of place can re-embedding occur in a significant way. (Giddens 1991: 147)

References to re-embedding were made, for example, when the expelled talked about their marriage with non-expellee spouses, when they described how they had built new family homes in Germany, and when they claimed to have integrated into new local communities.

The Sudeten German expellee Anton Tiersch hinted at the complexity of the identification processes that many expellees have been involved in when he proclaimed during one of our many meetings, “*Hier bin Ich zu Hause. Da bin Ich Daheim*” (see below). Tiersch was born in the Bohemian district of Tachau in 1925, and was expelled at the age of 21. At the time of that particular conversation we were in his home in the Bavarian city of Weiden, the place where he has lived since the expulsion. The table was covered with old photographs and documents, and books about the Sudetenland. We had been talking about his life in Bavaria, and his involvement with the *Tachauer Heimatstube*, a museum in Weiden that collected and exhibited Sudeten German artifacts from the Tachau district.

After the disappearance of the Iron Curtain in 1990, Tiersch made many trips to Egerland. With the sentence “*Hier bin ich zu Hause. Da bin ich Daheim*,” he described his feelings for Egerland and Tachau, and compared them to the way he felt about Weiden. “Here,” he said, referring to Weiden, “I am at home (*zu Hause*).” He emphasized that he liked Weiden and that he felt accepted by the native Bavarians. He further explained that he had built his house himself, and that he had lived in it for many years with his Bavarian wife and daughter, the latter now occupying the second floor with her own husband and two sons. “*Zu Hause*” meant “being at home” in a city he felt at ease in, and “feeling close” to his wife and children. In the second part of the sentence, “there I am at home (*Daheim*),” Tiersch referred to his other “home” in Tachau, Egerland. Using the contrast between the concepts “*zu Hause*” and “*Daheim*,” he expressed his special feeling for his old *Heimat* that connected him to his ancestors and the soil of Egerland. He also used the terms “*Bodenverbundenheit*” and “*Bodenständigkeit*,” meaning a strong and permanent connection to the land.

When I asked him why it was important for the expellees to keep contact with each other and the old homeland, he commented:

I attribute it to the permanent connection we have to the land [...]. We never married anybody who lived far away—thirty kilometres was already too far. You can also say that we partly inbred. We had such a strong connection to the town and the area . . . all acquaintances and relatives were nearby. And I must say, we were fond of our territory. (*Grund und Boden*)

To further strengthen his argument, he gave the example of a man who had travelled to the Czech Republic to take a look at his old house. When he discovered that it had disappeared, he returned to Germany swearing to himself that he would never again set his foot on Bohemian soil. A few months later, however, he attended the school reunion in Tachau, which was part of the hundred year celebration.

Evidently, many older people never managed to reidentify themselves with their new surroundings. A woman who was 10 years old at the time of the expulsion noted:

We were suddenly in a totally new environment. Can you imagine how hard that was for my parents? It was a tragedy. We came from a small village and were now all by ourselves in a city. It was very difficult (...). To my parents it was an awful experience.

TERRITORIALIZATION AND RETERRITORIALIZATION AT EXPELLEE LOCATIONS

Interestingly, particular locations in Germany, which were focal points in the process of continued identification with the old homeland, became highly significant places that helped the expellees not only, as noted earlier, reinforce homeland identities, but also to re-embed in new localities. The *Tachauer Heimatstube* in Weiden, for example, a museum that housed a collection of homeland artifacts from the former Sudeten German district of Tachau, was a place where expellees from Tachau regularly gathered. Even though the contents of the building evoked memories of the past homeland, it was also a concrete physical environment in which they had experiences unrelated to homeland discourse, and in which they chatted about their children, their jobs, their houses and gardens, and other topics related to their post-expulsion life in a new locality.

The organizational structure of the *Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft* also reinforced both pre-expulsion territorialized and post-expulsion reterritorialized identities. Firstly, expellees from particular Sudeten German villages, towns, and cities established their own *Heimatkreise* and *Heimatlandschaften*. *Heimatkreis Tachau*, for example, united the expellees who originated from the Sudeten German district of Tachau, but who now lived in different parts of Germany as well as abroad.

These organizations continued the links between members of the now scattered pre-expulsion communities by publishing newsletters, and regularly organizing meetings and special events, during which their members could celebrate their old territorial identity.

Secondly, expellees who had resettled in particular German villages, towns, and cities created locally based expellee organizations. *Ortsgruppe Wiesau*, for example, which was established in 1948, offered membership to the those who had resettled in the town of Wiesau, as such creating a new, local milieu. Together with *Ortsgruppe Waldsassen* (a similar organization established by expellees who lived in Waldsassen), *Ortsgruppe Wiesau* established the larger *Kreisgruppe Tirschenreuth* in 1949, which represented all members of the various *Ortsgruppen* in the district of Tirschenreuth. The *Kreisgruppen* were in their turn gathered in *Landesgruppen*, and these were represented by the overarching *Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft*.

Together with representatives of their new localities, Sudeten Germans also created *Patenschaften*—symbolic links between individual German cities and expellees from particular regions in the Sudetenland. The establishment of *Patenschaften*, which should be translated as “godparenthoods,” was meant to make the newcomers feel at home in their new places of residence.

On the fourth of August 1956, when the Bavarian city of Weiden became *Patenstadt* to expellees from the former Sudeten German districts of Tachau and Pfraumberg, one of the representatives of *Heimatkreis Tachau* declared:

Patenschaft is something very special! When established between two people, it means the creation of a spiritual, mentally fertilising relationship which influences the protégé in the best and most noble way, and offers him protection and a shelter at times of human hardship. The symbolic *Patenschaft* of the Bavarian state over all the Sudeten Germans, and the *Patenschaft* of cities over regions and towns in the lost homeland have the same meaning. Orphans find their mental shelters in their godparents, and a *Patenstadt* means the same to those without a homeland. In this sense, today’s celebration is the prelude to a close relationship of our compatriots with the inhabitants of our *Patenstadt*. After all, we are one *Stamm* (meaning ethnic group), and for centuries, historical and economic connections have existed between our homeland and Weiden. (Houswitschka and Houswitschka 1995: 254)

The metaphor of semi-kinship (godparenthood) is significant. As with the blood-soil discourse of *Heimat*, it used the emotionally powerful image of “family relations” to make a connection between people and place.

The speech also referred to Bavaria as a place that offered a home and a focus of reterritorialization to “all the Sudeten Germans.” At least two-thirds of the Sudeten German expellees had resettled in this southern German region. According to official numbers, on 1 January 1953, 1,890,149 people out of a total number of 9,175,388 people living in Bavaria were classified as “*Heimatvertriebenen*.” Prominent Bavarians regarded the Sudeten Germans, many of whom were skilled crafts-

men, as a welcomed addition to what had basically been a rural, agricultural economy. Christian Democratic politicians (such as Stoiber and his predecessors) also welcomed the expellees, whose majority supported their party.

PLACE AS PROPERTY: NARRATIVES OF OWNERSHIP

The redefined concept of “home,” as introduced by Rapport and Dawson, is an apt theoretical tool with which to examine processes of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization. Yet an approach that focuses mainly on changing discourses has its limitations, and it is necessary to move beyond the level of narration. If we want to understand why people tell specific stories of belonging to themselves and others, we must also look at homes that are not just imaginary, and examine the legal and political battles surrounding property issues (Svašek 2002b and 2002c).

A look at the *Heimat* books shows that the authors had been partly driven by the possibility that, at some point, the Czechs might be forced to return their property, or compensate them financially for the material and mental damage done during the expulsion. The preface to *Sorghof* made this evident:

With regard to the inhabitants of Sorghof's properties and assets, these records are based on truthful sources, which, one day, may be of considerable value *in the case of reparation payments by our neighbours*. (Scharnagel and Högen year of publication unknown: 5, emphasis mine)

All *Heimatbücher* included detailed maps of villages or towns, which included all buildings and the names of the original house owners. Many also provided lists of the expelled inhabitants and their present place of residence, and exact information about the property they had owned or leased in the old *Heimat*.

Most expellees I spoke with were not interested in regaining their property. By contrast, Hans Weil, who had been expelled from the Moravian town of Mikulov, and had resettled in Austria near the Czech border, thought otherwise. His family had owned two family houses, a shop, a farm, two vineyards, a forest, and 10 hectares of land. He noted:

I want back what is rightly mine. Eighty-five percent of all confiscated German property is still owned by the Czech state, but in my case some property has been privatized. Of course, I would not seek to throw the current owners out immediately, but would be prepared to let them stay on as tenants until such time as my grandchildren, who have expressed an interest, would wish to return.

When talking about his confiscated property in the town of Mikulov, Weil noted:

When our property was confiscated, we were forced to flee for our lives. The Czechs killed over fifty people in our town, by beating them to death, drowning them, or

shooting them. Others, including several school friends, died the following year after working in terrible conditions as slave labor. I was just thirteen at the time and escaped with my mother.

As Weil put it, the least the Czech government could do to compensate his suffering was to return to him what he rightfully owned. Evidently, he also hoped that this would be a financial asset, if not to himself then to his offspring.

After the Velvet Revolution, numerous Sudeten Germans who had been allowed to stay in the Czech Republic after the Second World War (for example because they were known as anti-Nazis, or were married to Czechs) have also tried to get their property back. Jan Fischer, the 49-year-old son of ethnically German parents who used to live in Teplice, explained:

We battled in the courts for years to recover what was confiscated from us, our land, a farm, and a town house. In the end the courts and the local government came to a deal to allow us to buy back what was confiscated from us at a symbolic price, because they didn't want to create a legal precedent for thousands of other German families to get back what is rightly theirs.

Financial gain was obviously one of the reasons why Fischer went through so much trouble. The economic aspect of Sudeten German claimed ownership is easily overlooked when only focusing on narratives of home.

As noted earlier, some of the *Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft's* leading members and supporters, such as Bernd Posselt, who managed to gain influential positions in mainstream German, Austrian, and European political institutions, have frequently raised the issue of Sudeten German ownership. In a recent interview in March 2002 by Czech television, Posselt was questioned about his organization's claim for property restitution. The interviewer wanted to know whether his organization aimed for *Heimatrecht*. Even though the 1950 Charter of German Expellees stipulated that "[t]hrough hard, tireless effort, we will (...) secure for all people their right to a homeland, while guaranteeing their basic human rights and the right of self-determination." Posselt refused to answer the question, and simply stated that such things "should be discussed in the future."

RETURNING "HOME": VISITS TO THE OLD *HEIMATLAND*

As noted earlier, after the end of the Cold War and the abolishment of visa requirements in 1990, it was much easier for Sudeten German expellees to cross the border and visit their old *Heimat* than before. Some had already made trips to their home towns and villages during the Communist period, but most of them did not visit their country of origin until after November 1989. Numerous people went with relatives or close friends, and soon the *Heimatvereine*—associations of expellees which united Sudeten Germans from particular communities—began to organize group excursions.

All expellees who visited the former Sudetenland, alone or in organized groups, described the experience as “highly emotional” (Bartl et al. 1995; Svašek 1999, 2000). Most of them longed to see their former *Heimatort*, their family homes and other old properties.

Numerous Sudeten Germans I spoke with got a chance to enter their *Vaterhaus*. Frequently, the present owners felt sympathy for their cause, and invited them to have a look inside. “The woman who lives there today showed me around,” said Ernst Schwartz, an expellee from Brand who had settled down in Bärnau after the expulsion. “She offered me coffee and cake and was extremely nice, even though we could not communicate very well because of the language barrier.”

In other cases, however, expellees found out that their former houses had been neglected, or that they had disappeared altogether. In his memoirs *Nach Labant—diesmal mit Bahn und Rucksack*, Herbert Goblirsch, another former inhabitant of Labant, described his second visit in March 1990 to his former home as follows:

The fruit trees that we used to climb when we were children are still there, behind the courtyard of our old farmhouse. We plan to walk up through our old field near *Hollergraben*, and to return via the *Kirchenweg* (Church road) but unfortunately the road is too overgrown with thorny bushes that would tear our anoraks. We therefore decided to turn around and go back through the open fields across what was once our old living room which now only exists in our memories. We are confronted with odd feelings, but they don't hurt anymore. (Goblirsch 1990: 11–12)

During their visits to the old *Heimat*, the expellees realized (or confirmed what they had known all along) that their memories no longer corresponded with reality. This confrontation evoked different and contradictory emotions—feelings of sadness, anger, and of relief. It evoked anger at the fact that they had lost everything, and at the Czechs who had expelled them. They were sad because they felt that they would have taken much better care of their family property than the Czechs. In particular, the expellees who had ended up in West Germany, however, also admitted that they were relieved. In a material sense, they had led a much better life than the present inhabitants of the Sudetenland, which had been neglected and underdeveloped during the Communist period. Since the Velvet Revolution, the area has remained a peripheral zone with many new problems such as high unemployment and crime.

A visit to the place of their youth enabled the expellees to symbolically reinforce their roots and, as such, reinforce their territorialized identities. At the same time, many expellees realized or confirmed that “home” was not necessarily connected to the Sudetenland, and that they were actually more “at home” in their new German homeland (Bartl et al. 1995: 56). As such, the experience of being in the homeland also strengthened their reterritorialized identities.

PLACE AND IDENTITY: SYMBOLIC APPROPRIATIONS OF SPACE

To the expellees who visited their *Heimatort*, the *Vaterhaus*, the church, the graveyard, and the war memorial were places that had a particularly strong emotional attraction (Bartl et al. 1995). Some expellees told me that when they had entered the church of their childhood for the first time after their expulsion, they had been overcome by memories and emotions (Svašek 2000). With regard to the *Heimat* ideology of blood and soil, this is not surprising. From childhood on, they had attended the services and had celebrated important annual Christian festivals, such as Christmas and Easter. At church, they had symbolically reinforced their blood relations and their collective link to the village soil when individual members went through important rites of passage, such as christenings, first communions, weddings, and burials. Consequently, the church had been a place where they had shared experiences that were fundamental to the construction of a shared identity.

The war memorials and the graveyards linked the Sudeten Germans to their deceased kin, their dead relatives whom they had been forced to leave behind at the time of the expulsion. Not surprisingly, revisiting the graveyards evoked strong emotions, not only because the expellees experienced this as a symbolic reunion with their beloved kin, but also because the graveyards were often in a terrible state. Especially in the area that had been part of the Cold War defense zone, whole graveyards had disappeared along with the villages. In other areas, many Sudeten German graves had been destroyed by the new settlers. In Brand, for example, most Sudeten German gravestones had been thrown over the graveyard wall into the bushes, or had been used as building material.

Surprisingly enough, many First World War memorials were still standing. In his memoirs, Goblirsch described his surprise when he discovered the memorial in Labant:

We first walk through the village to the war memorial. We notice with surprise that is not only undamaged and well-kept, but that it also seems to be the centre of the village. Two big notice boards and a bench inviting people to sit down, stand in front. From here we have a good view of this part of the village. (Goblirsch 1990: 10)

When Goblirsch returned from his visit to Labant to his present home in Bavaria, he got the idea to renovate the war memorial. In October 1990, he wrote a letter to the Czech Mayor of the village to ask permission to restore the memorial. He first thanked the Mayor for the good care he had taken of the memorial, and argued: "because it survived, the war memorial links the lives of the old and the new inhabitants" (Goblirsch 1991: 33). Goblirsch emphasized that the memorial commemorated First World War victims, a war in which both Czechs and Sudeten Germans had had to

fight against their own will, and had fallen in the name of the Czech *and* the German

nations. Therefore, the memorial should be the symbol of this commonality. Please allow us to realize the memorial's renovation. We perceive it as a sign of goodwill, and as an attempt to build new relations between the old and new inhabitants after 45 years of enmity and distrust, a goal of your President [Havel], whom we respect highly. (Goblirsch 1991: 33)

The Czech local authorities agreed to the restoration, and Goblirsch approached the former inhabitants from Labant for financial contributions. He informed them about his plan to organize a bus tour for all former inhabitants from Labant once the restoration was complete in order to consecrate the memorial. "In a few years," he added, "when the connections with the old *Heimat* have been normalized, we are thinking of adding a plaque to the memorial which commemorates the 596 expellees" (Goblirsch 1991: 37).

The two discourses of "home" were clearly meant for two audiences. On the one hand, the image of Labant as a space that linked Sudeten Germans to Czechs was meant to convince the present inhabitants. It sketched a history of shared fate and a future of reconciliation and cooperation. On the other hand, the letter to the expellees only emphasized the Sudeten German connection to the village, and referred to the expulsion. In this letter, the symbolical appropriation of space in their former *Heimatort* seemed to be more important than the reconciliation with the present owners.

In March 1991, another letter was sent in the name of the "former inhabitants of Labut" to the present inhabitants of the village, in which the former invited the latter to the consecration of the renovated monument. It emphasized that the expellees "had all built a new, good existence in Germany" and that no one planned to return or claim their property. "We know that you are not responsible for our expulsion, and that maybe you yourselves were forced to move to Labut" (Goblirsch 1991: 51). It also constructed an image of shared Sudeten German-Czech territorialized identity:

You found a new home and love it as much as we loved it, and still love it. We share the love for the beautiful land, and therefore, nothing should stand in the way of good relations.

The discourse of home was clearly a discourse of reconciliation, and this was repeated during the consecration ceremony on the third of August 1991. All speakers, including the Czech priest Father Born, his German colleague Father Sommer, and the Czech Mayor Kutcherka emphasized the importance of reconciliation and mutual cooperation.

Yet despite the willingness of the Czechs to allow the expellees to symbolically appropriate their village in the form of annual visits and the restoration of the First World War memorial, their activities were limited. Some expellees from Labant had wanted to add a plaque to the memorial to commemorate those who had been killed or were missing in action during the Second World War. Goblirsch, how-

ever, did not even want to raise the matter, because he knew that most Czechs still perceived the Germans as their former enemies, and that they blamed the Sudeten Germans for their pro-Nazi support. He accepted that the village would never become what it had once been, a traditional locale in which a small community mainly identified itself through images of shared blood and soil.

CONCLUSION

Defined as a personal narration of identity and belonging in a dynamic world (Rapport and Dawson), the concept of “home” is an apt tool of analysis to examine processes of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization. As the analysis showed, these processes have no fixed meaning or moral value in themselves. If “home” is the story of people’s lives, the perception of home is ultimately dependent on people’s personal and collective experience, norms, goals, and evaluations. Evidently, individual people’s perceptions and dispositions are also influenced by changing structural possibilities and limitations, and by their involvement in social and cultural practices of (re-)embedding.

Displaced people, such as the Sudeten Germans, do not necessarily share feelings of “homelessness.” As this article makes clear, most expellees have found cognitive and emotional environments in which they “undertake the routines of daily life and through which (they) find (their) identity best mediated” (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 9). In this context, identity must not be regarded as a fixed label, but rather as a complex and at times paradoxical process or multiple identification that includes fragments of territorialized, deterritorialized, and reterritorialized identity claims. Even within single stories, expellees may make claims to intimate connections with the old homeland, to feelings of homelessness, and to the idea that they feel at home in their new localities.

The Sudeten German identity-place narratives based on the ideological construct of *Heimat* have stressed the continued expellee rootedness in the Sudeten German soil, and have justified political claims for *Heimatrecht*. The wish to regain lost property, which is not based on moral discourse alone but also has economic dimensions, has been inherent in these narratives. In contrast, alternative homeland discourses have emphasized the need for reconciliation with the Czechs and have propagated the idea that both the expellees and the present population have the right to feel at home in what used to be the Sudetenland.

This article has sought to demonstrate that while numerous expellees have actively striven for the return of their properties, others have begun to symbolically appropriate their homeland space through the restoration of *Heimat* churches, memorials, and graveyards. Together with local priests, politicians, and expellee organizations, they have tried to turn these appropriation rituals into mutual acts of forgiveness, and have produced politically highly significant narratives of a shared European Union location which should provide a home to both Germans and Czechs. In conclusion, changing narratives of “home” and “homeland” must always be

contextualized, and analyzed against the background of political, economic, social, and other relevant transformations.

NOTES

1. "Heimat, schönste aller Gaben./Die uns Gott der Herr, hat gegeben./Keine Heimat mehr zu haben./Ist das größte Leid im Leben" (Goss 1979a (1958a): 135).
2. As with most personal narratives, the Sudeten German narratives of home and homeland clearly "interface[d] self and society," and "constitut[ed] a crucial resource for socializing emotions, attitudes, and identities, developing interpersonal relationships, and constituting membership in a community" (Ochs and Capps 1996: 19). Karen Fog Olwig similarly noted that "narratives (...) allow for the elucidation of the sort of communities of belonging with which persons identify in different contexts of life" (Fog Olwig 2002: 128).
3. In the Bavarian district of Tirschenreuth, for example, on 29 October 1946, the total number of refugees and expellees was 12,284, of which 53 percent were from Czechoslovakia, 36.5 percent from Silesia, 2.2 percent from Poland, 0.8 percent from Austria, 0.7 percent from Yugoslavia, 1 percent from Rumania, 0.1 percent from the Soviet Union, and the remainder from other places (Houswitschka and Houswitschka 1995: 137).
4. The notion of "the homeland" is central to Gonzalez' definition of diasporic communities which include "a full cross-section of community members who are dispersed to many diverse regions of the world, and who yet retain a myth of their uniqueness and an interest in their homeland" (Gonzalez 1992: 31; see also Kearney 1995: 559). In light of this definition, the majority of first generation Sudeten German expellees can indeed be regarded as part of a diasporic community. The term would, however, not apply to most of their offspring who, born and raised in particular German localities, and children of mixed marriages between expellees and local Germans, often define themselves as Bavarians, Berliners, and so on.
5. The Sudeten German idea of "home" is a cognitive and an emotional space in which the expellees evoke, share, and interpret memories and emotions. Arjun Appadurai (1996: 8) also emphasized the significance of emotional dynamics to the formation of migrant communities, and argued that individual migrants who associate themselves with such communities "imagine and feel things together." Elsewhere, I stressed the importance of emotional discourses and displays to the establishment and functioning of Sudeten German expellee communities (Svašek 2000a, 2002b), and pointed out the strong link between the construction of expellee social memory and identity (Svašek 1999). The sentimental discourse of "the lost homeland," in particular, has created emotional links between expellees which cross-cut socioeconomic, political, and religious differences.
6. The writing of chronicles was a tradition that existed long before the expulsion. Some authors used notes and parts of manuscripts that had been written before 1946. These texts were smuggled into Germany at the time of the expulsion, and as such, the books are in themselves symbols of the expulsion. In the preface to *Paulusbrunn* the publishers note that: "As a basis for our work we used the chronicle that was started in 1923 by the teacher Mr. Müller who was commissioned by the community administrators. He wrote it until 1938, and Mrs. Maria Ziegler saved it when she took it with her over the border (Interessengemeinschaft Heimatbuch Paulusbrunn 1984: 5; italics mine).
7. Some are relatively short and exist in copy-form only, whereas others are published by real publishers, and contain hundreds of pages.
8. "*Frage/Wann, ach, darf ich wiederschauen/meine Täler, meine Höh'n?/Darf ich hören, wie durch Auen/meine klaren Bächlein gehen?/In die Kniee sinken werde/ich vor dir, mein Heimatland!/Küssen werde ich die Erde,/wie man küsst der Mutter hand*" (Blaha 1949: 12).
9. "*Verlorene Heimat. Lied der Egerländer/Dort hinter dem Tillen/da liegt du mein Egerlan!/Ich kann dich nimmer vergessen,/ich grüss dich mit Herz und Hand./Dort hinter dem Tillen,/gleich hinter dem grünen Wald,/da steht ein hölzern hausein/so traut, wenn auch schon alt./Da wilt' ich stets so gerne-/es war mein Vaterhaus-/an ihm hing all mein Sehnen/in weite Welt da drauss'./Nin*

kann ich nimmer nach Hause/wie einst, zu jeder Zeit,/seit uns der Tschech' vertrieben./Ach Gott, ist das ein Leid!/Das Leid wird nimmer enden,/solang ich leben mag,/und nie verstummen die Frage,/warum uns das geschah" (Felbinder 1949:8)

10. "Schickt mir Erde vom Egerland!/Ein Freund ging nach Amerika/und schrieb mir vor einigen Lenzen:/Schickte mir Rosen vom Egerland,/ich hab' eine Braut zu bekränzen!/Und als vergangen war ein Jacht,/da kam ein Brieflein gelaufen:/Schickte mir Wasser vom Egerland,/ich hab ein Kindlein zu taufen!/Und wieder ein Jahr, da wollte der Freund/ach, noch was anderes haben:/Schickte mir Erde vom Egerland,/muss Weib und Kind begrabe./Un so erfehnte der arme Mann/auf fernsten, fremden Wegen,/für höchste Freud', für tiefstes Leid/des Heimatlandes Segen" (Rosegger 1949: 24).
11. "Verlorene Heimat/Ich sehe oft im Traum/mein Heimatdörfchen wieder,/das mit dem Lindenbaum/vom Berge schaut hernieder./Ich seh die Heimatflur/do reich an Erntesegen,/wo schlicht und einfach nur/mein Vaterhaus gelegen./Ich hör der Mödchen Sang/vom Berge wieder hallen./Ich seh im Sonnenstrahl/die Wälder und die Auen,/das stille Wiesental/die Berge fern die blauen./Doch als der Traum entchwand/ergreift mich tiefes Sehnen,/nach meinen Heimatland/ich denke sein mit tränen" (Goss 1979 (1958): 136).
12. "Heimkehr – Das Ziel der Vertriebenen/Heimat, schonste aller Gaben,/Die uns Gott der Herr, gegeben,/Keine Heimat mehr zu haben,/Ist das groste Leid im Leben./Dieses Schicksal hat getroffen,/Millionen uns'rer Bruder;/Die in Not und Elend hoffen,/Auff die baldige Heimkehr wieder./Niemals kann die Heimateerde,/ewig uns verloren gehen;/Was auch immer kommen werde,/Bleibt doch unser Recht bestehn/Denn ein Recht kann niemals enden,/das Natur und Gott uns gaben,/Unser Schicksal wird sich wenden,/Wenn wir nur Vertrauen haben./Auf des Allerhochsten Gute,/Die der Armen nie vergessen,/Denen hilft, die krank und mude,/wiedergibt, was wir besessen./Niemals ist ein Ziel verloren,/Das wir welbst nicht aufgegeben,/Darum bleibt als Ziel erkoren,/Heimkehr nur als unser Streben" (Goss 1979a (1958): 135, *italics mine*).
13. The Charter of German Expellees included three points: (1) We expellees renounce revenge and retaliation. This decision is sincere and sacred (*ernst und heilig*), and [has been taken] in memory of the infinite suffering of mankind, in particular during the last decade. (2) We strongly support all attempts to establish a united Europe in which ethnic groups can live without fear and oppression. (3) Through hard, tireless effort, we will participate in rebuilding Germany and Europe, and secure for all people their right to a homeland, while guaranteeing their basic human rights and the right of self-determination.

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