# Baltic Germans in the Wartheland 1939 – 1945. Personal Accounts and Experiences of Conflict.

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## Introduction

### Topic and Background

"People may forget, language does not", said Vieda Skultans, the author of "The Testimony of Lives. Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia", while reflecting on how writings about certain periods of time influence the people talking about the same period.[1] The present work narrates the story of Baltic Germans who wrote about their experiences depending on the Nazi regime's language and did not disconnect from it in their after-war recollections. This work focuses on the Second World War period and the story is told from the perspective of German narratives from that time but also includes after-war memories. Thus, this study concentrates not only on Baltic Germans' war experience but also on the problems of narratives during conflicts and radical changes. It describes the biographies of sufferers (the term "victim" is not ideal here and still requires answers and solutions)[2] who, with methods, were removed from their homeland and ceased to exist as a national community after the war. But since these methods were not repressive, more often, this work is a study of Nazi enthusiasts or "willing subjects".[3]

After the Great War, ethnic Germans were the biggest minority in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe.[4] With continued international instability caused by, among others, diverse minorities' issues, *Auslanddeutsche* (or *Auslanddeutschtum*) were to be a "satellite" and support of interests for Germany in Europe. Meanwhile, in the 1930s, Adolf Hitler was learning how to introduce new changes: he planned the resettlement of ethnic Germans, and with his Reichstag speech of 6 October 1939, he initiated, in practice, Germanizing and demographic engineering. After the invasion of Western Poland in September 1939, considerable mass population transfer started and revealed the plans of the National Socialists. Baltic Germans, as the first displaced group, arrived at their final destination of the newly created *Reichsgau Wartheland* in occupied Western Poland. They were to be the pioneers who would encourage other German groups to resettle and unite as *Volksgemeinschaft* in a Greater Germany.

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[1] Vieda Skultans, The Testimony of Lives. Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia, London: Routledge, 1998, 15.

[2] Bill Niven discusses the German victimhood and refers to the debates on Nazism which focuses on German involvement in crimes against Jews and others during the Second World War, see: Bill Niven, Introduction. German Victimhood at the Turn of the Millennium, in: Bill Niven, (ed.), Germans as Victims. Remebering the Past in Contemporary Germany, Houndmills, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 1–25.

[3] Alfred J. Rieber, Repressive Population Transfers in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern. A Historical Overview, in: Alfred J. Rieber (ed.), Forced Migration in Central and Eastern Europe 1939-1950, London, Portland/OR: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000, 1.

[4] Joseph B. Schechtman, European Population Transfers, 1939–1945, New York: Oxford University Press, 1946, 6, 24.

First, Balts created an elite community with 800 years of history in Baltic areas and significant influences in this region. Second, they developed a high sense of German identity,[5] even though it was on a regional level. Third, they lived through Russian Revolution, and after it, they experienced the loss of their privileged position with fatal financial consequences. Finally, they lost their status as a dominant class, and their nationalism had to face the new nationalisms of the newly independent states of Latvia and Estonia (created in 1918). In the 1930s, German Balts showed interest in National Socialist ideas, and Reich's invitation to "return home" resonated with their desire to live in German Heimat. They became Reich's citizens, settled in annexed Polish territory and were ready to colonize the German *Lebensraum* in the East. Whether aware or not, as co-perpetrators, Balts were facing a new reality in the Wartheland, learning to create their new Heimat and living with other German groups and the locals; after the Second World War, they ceased to exist as a community.

When it comes to the narrative, historically speaking (from the perspective of the historical event), this work is about how the Biographers presented and chose specific topics. They described their Heimat in the Baltics and the organization of the resettlement. On the other hand, they ignored their relationship with Hitler or life in Warthegau (in their after-war recollections). In other words, the narrative is about the period before and during the resettlement that the Balts wanted to remember and the time in Wartheland that they tried to forget. This work is about influences that shape the narrative but also about the narrative itself as a limiting factor for further stories because one is limited to the story one had told before. Thus, it is about contexts (among others, historical and political events, resettlement during the Second World War and National Socialism) that are an inevitable part in personal accounts.

Contexts help to keep an "open end", leaving space for further discussions. For instance, the fact that until 1960s, the church in Germany was seen and understood only as a victim of the Nazi regime gives a broader perspective of analysing the personal accounts when it comes to the topic of religion. Similarly, the information that Baltic Germans' relocation in 1939 was organized and supported by Nazi authorities gives a deeper understanding of what the "dictated option", "resettlement", or "expulsion" could mean then and today.

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[5] The meanings and discussions about the term "national identity" can be found, among others in: Roger Brubaker, Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany, Cambridge/MA: Harvard University Press, 2001; Benedict R. Anderson, Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London: Verso, 1990; Harro Honolka, Irene Götz, Deutsche Identität und das Zusammenleben mit Fremden. Fallanalysen, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag GmbH, 1999.

Contexts that are relevant to the interpretation of war resettlement experiences, in this case, are the history of the German minority in Baltic areas, National Socialism in Germany, the creation of independent Latvia and Estonia, organization of mass popular transfer, innovation and laws introduced in *Reichsgau Wartheland*, forced unification of European German minorities, realities and everyday life during the Second World War and the time in which people write recollections. For the last one, to analyse the accounts composed after the war, the history of Germany after 1945 would have to be considered. It could be just a few years later compared to war recollections. Still, there were significant historical changes, like the mass expulsion of Germans, joint condemnation and rejection of National Socialism, revealing, officially, war atrocities or awareness/acceptance of the new post-Holocaust identity.

One of the most meaningful contexts for narrative in this work was forced migration. The Baltic German community was caught in it, including political and social reality changes. During the first two years of the war the Eastern Europe was divided by Nazis and Soviets with its aftermath of mass expulsions, deportations and killings. The demographic profile of the entire region changed. Alfred J. Rieber summarises it in a very accurate picture:

> On the German side, Himmler was put in charge of a systematic campaign to clear the Jewish and Polish populations out of the territories annexed by Germany (an enlarged Frontier Zone) and Wartheland, and dumping them in the German-administered General Government. In the short period before the invasion of the Soviet Union, the SS deported under brutal conditions over 700,000 Poles and 500,000 Jews and resettled in their place 370,000 Reichsdeutsch and 350,000 Volksdeutsch, the latter having been involuntarily transferred by German-Soviet agreements from the Soviet-occupied Baltic states. Another six million Poles in the annexed territories, stripped of their property and exploited as a reservoir of labour, waited in terror for an unknown destination.[6]

These crimes, violent conflicts, ethnic cleansing and uprooting of people from their homeland would have a long-lasting impact on millions. There is no doubt that people suffered deep trauma during the war, but this work focuses on a group of privileged Baltic Germans. They also suffered mass relocation, but their experience differed from those recognized as enemies

[6] Martin Broszat, Nationalsozialistisch Polenpolitik, 1939–1945, Stuttgart: DVA, 1961 and Robert L. Kohn, RKFDV. German Resettlement and Population Policy 1939–1945. A Hisotry of the Reich Commission for the Strenghtening of Germandom, Cambridge/MA: Harvard University Press, 1978 as cited in Rieber, Repressive Population, 14.

of Nazi rule. Did they see that their movement had a direct effect on others? How did they understand the conflict? And were they transferred involuntarily?

**State of Research**

Historiography concerning Baltic Germans is rich and presents many aspects from the beginning of their settlement, i.e., the Middle Ages, to the *Umsiedlung* to the Western occupied territories in 1939. Their history usually ends with the resettlement at the beginning of the war. Firstly, as the main scholars and experts for the region, I would like to list Michael Garleff with his work "Die baltischen Länder: Estland, Lettland, Litauen vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart"[7] and Andres Kasekamp who wrote "A History of the Baltic States".[8] Narrowing the topic to the German minority I would like to mention works of Andrzej Topij who wrote the history of this community in Estonia and Latvia from 1918 to 1939/41.[9] This work was especially helpful in studying the development in the National Socialist attitude and separatist tendencies before 1939.

Anja Wilhelmi studied autobiographies of German women in Baltic lands 1800–1939 and published "Lebenswelten von Frauen der deutschen Oberschicht (1800–1939). Eine Untersuchung anhand von Autobiografien".[10] With exhausted work based on more than 160 autobiographies Wilhelmi focuses on the experience of women of the German upper class who lived in Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire. Wilhelmi's work is a detailed study of personal experience, and it was beneficial for this work in terms of methodology, meaning reading autobiographies. Present work continues to interpret the background from and after 1939 and includes biographies written by men (without special division into male and female perspectives).

Concerning Nazi times, Elizabeth Harvey wrote a study about women from the Third Reich working as volunteers in the Wartheland.[11] "Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization" examines the function of female activism within Nazi dictatorship. Harvey's book was handy for this work since it gave insights into civilian responses to the treatment of the Polish and Jewish populations. There is also a considerable approach presented by Catherine

[7] Michael Garleff, Die baltischen Länder: Estland, Lettland, Litauen vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart, Regensburg: Verlag Pustet, 2001.
[8] Andres Kasekamp, A History of the Baltic States, London: Palgrave, 2018.
[9] Andrzej Topij, Mniejszość niemiecka na Łotwie i w Estonii 1918–1939/41, Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Uczelniane Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1998.
[10] Anja Wilhelmi, Lebenswelten von Frauen der deutschen Oberschicht im Baltikum (1800–1939). Eine Untersuchung anhand von Autobiografien, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008, 10.
[11] Elizabeth Harvey, Women and the Nazi East. Agents and Witnesses of Germanization, New Haven/CT: Yale University Press, 2003.

Epstein, who wrote "Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland. Model Nazi".[12] Based on the life of the Reich Governor of Warthegau, she wrote a biographical portrait of the man who oversaw the segregation of Germans and Poles and played a role in the foundation of the first ghetto, in one of the most extensive forced labour programs and the first mass gassing of Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland. In the context of Harvey and Epstein's books, this project gives more insights into civilian responses to the treatment of the Polish and Jewish populations. And the insights from this project, in the majority, provide perspectives from the war-time documents.

The period of Wartheland and other occupied Polish territories was well documented by Polish scholars like Czesław Madajczyk with his "Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce"[13] (Politics of the Third Reich in Occupied Poland) or edited by him "Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan: Dokumente".[14] Similar study on German rule in occupied Poland was conducted by Czesław Łuczak who published, among others, "Polska i Polacy w drugiej wojnie światowej"[15] (Poland and Poles during the Second World War), "Dzień po dniu w okupowanej Wielkopolsce i na ziemi łódzkiej (Kraj Warty): kalendarium wydarzeń 1939–1945"[16] (Day after day in occupied Great Poland and Łódź region (Wartheland): a calendar of events 1939–1945) or "Położenie ludności polskiej w tzw. Kraju Warty w okresie hitlerowskiej okupacji"[17] (The situation of the Polish population in the so-called Wartheland during the Nazi occupation). Both, Madajczyk and Łuczak wrote from Polish perspective and their research is a classic one of politics, sometimes economy and chronological events. In this way, this project does not relate to their study as no statistics, demographical, occupational and other structures are taken into consideration. Nonetheless, their works serve as presentation of people's reaction to these political and administrative structures and changes.

When it comes to Hitlerism, which is another important context for this work, "European Population Transfers, 1939–1945" by Joseph B. Schechtman must be mentioned. Schechtman, considered a writer and political activist (not a historian), observed the interrelation between

[12] Catherine Epstein, Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland. Model Nazi, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
[13] Czesław Madajczyk, Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1970.
[14] Czesław Madajczyk (ed.), Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan: Dokumente. Einzelveröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin, Band 80, München: De Gruyter Saur Verlag, 1994.
[15] Czesław Łuczak, Polska i Polacy w drugiej wojnie światowej, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 1993.
[16] Czesław Łuczak, Dzień po dniu w okupowanej Wielkopolsce i na Ziemi Łódzkiej (Kraj Warty): kalendarium wydarzeń 1939–1945, Poznań: Lektor, 1993.
[17] Czesław Łuczak, Położenie ludności polskiej w tzw. Kraju Warty w okresie hitlerowskiej okupacji, Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1990.

the removal of Polish and Jewish elements from concrete areas and the settlement of a mass of German colonists. He says that the deportations were "a kind of function of the transfer operations"[18], which means, according to Schechtman, they served as the means to plan certain relocation of people. Within the vast body of literature on Nazi Germany and National Socialist resettlements, one should notice "Himmler's Auxiliaries. The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933–1945" by Valdis Lumans.[19] Through examination of the service of the Ethnic German Liaison Office (*Volkdeutsche Mittelstelle* or *VoMi*) Lumans shows the experience of German minorities outside the boundaries of the Third Reich, i.e., in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. He also stresses how they were exploited by the same Third Reich to fulfil Hitler's foreign policy and Himmler's new racial order. *VoMi* differentiated between German communities in different countries; for example, in Poland, the presence of Germans was used as an excuse for aggression. *VoMi* was also to restrain the emotions of the minorities whose enthusiasm about Nazi Germany was high. Bruce F. Pauley, in his review, wrote that Lumans "cautiously concludes that *Volksdeutsche* were probably even more attracted to National Socialism than the citizens of Germany" although they were "physically removed from their ancestral homes for Hitler to cement his relations with Benito Mussolini and Joseph Stalin".[20]

The theme of "the Final Solution" or Holocaust is not at the centre of my work. Nonetheless, I would like to mention the work of Götz Aly[21], who stressed the existence of an interrelation between the expulsion of Jews and the settlement of ethnic Germans. In the context of my work, "particularly important for the Baltic Germans was the availability of urban space where Jews were disproportionately concentrated". While the Germans, who were brought to incorporated Polish territories, "were widely acknowledged to have been the recipients of Jewish property on a large scale", Aly is the first to have cast *them* in the role of "the wrecking ball".[22] In this context this project shows how Baltic Germans dealt with the topics of people being transported to the East or the locals expelled from their homes.

Finally, I want to mention "Umgesiedelt – Vertrieben. Deutschbalten und Polen 1939–1945 im Warthegau" edited by Eckhart Neander and Andrzej Sakson. This volume contributes to

[18] Schechtman, European Population Transfers, 326.

[19] Valdis O. Lumans, Himmler's Auxiliaries. The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities, 1933–1944, Chapel Hill/NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.

[20] Bruce F. Pauley, Review of, Himmler's Auxiliaries by Valdis O. Lumans, in: The American Historical Review, vol. 99, no. 2 (1994), pp. 596–597, here 596.

[21] Götz Aly, Final Solution. Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

[22] Richards Olafs Plavnieks, "Wall of Blood": The Baltic German Case Study in National Socialist Wartime Population Policy, 1939–1945 (Master thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill/NC 2008), 20.

presentations that were held at a conference in Poznań in 2009. One of the main reasons for this conference was the fact that the question of Baltic Germans in Warthegau had not had so far "its research".[23] Scholars presented their studies in various articles, for example: "Polnische Zeitzeugen berichten", "Rettung vor dem Bolschewismus?" Die Ansiedlung der Deutschbalten im Warthegau", "Volksdeutsche im Warthegau" or "Die Situation der Polen im Warthegau". For instance, Matthias Schröder, in his article "Rettung vor dem Bolschewismus?", points out the importance of the 'inner psychological factors'. Besides the perspective "from above", the "from below" aspect can help create a typology of the resettlement. Was it emigration or expulsion? A chance or forced action (*Zwangscharakter der Umsiedlung*)?[24] Schröder talks about context and comparison, which is why the resettlement was not an expulsion when compared to the events of 1945, nor was it an evacuation since this term is reserved for deportations (for instance, of Poles and Jews from Warthegau). On the other hand, the emotional part of the resettlement forced many Baltic Germans to speak from the perspective of a victim, and the period of *Nachumsiedlung* (of about 16,000 Germans) can receive a rightful term of flight (*Flucht*) from the Baltics. Still, it is difficult to classify Baltic Germans as victims, but this thesis shows that the idea of victimhood existed in German texts and how Biographers constructed it.

Usually, the story of the Baltic German minority during the war is described together with other resettled German groups, like the Germans from Volhynia or Bessarabia (*Wolhyniendeutsche*, *Bessarabiendeutsche*) and, for instance, particular issues of "Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums" present the facts about the number of relocated people, places of their destiny and several selected topics (ex. National Socialism, Paul Schiemann's views, Bolshevism[25]). On the other hand, descriptions of recollections or biographies occur mainly as single works of certain Baltic Germans as authors, and they were written after the war.[26] Moreover, historiography often focuses on the terms like "Heimat"[27] with its concepts of identity,

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[23] Eckhart Neander, Andrzej Sakson (eds.), Umgesiedelt-Vertrieben. Deutschbalten und Polen 1939–1945 im Warthegau (Tagungen zur Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung, veranstaltet von der Deutsch-Baltischen Gesellschaft e.V., Darmstadt und dem Instytut Zachodni, Poznań), Marburg: Verlag Herder Institut, 2010.

[24] Matthias Schröder, "Rettung vor dem Bolschewismus"? Die Ansiedlung der Deutschbalten im Warthegau, in: Neander, Sakson, Umgesiedelt-Vertrieben, pp. 52–65, here 59.

[25] Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums, Lüneburg: Kluge & Ströhm, (in Lüneburg since 1954).

[26] For example: Renate Adolphi, Erinnerungen meiner Mutter Gertrud Adolphi geb. Blumenbach. 1893 bis 1918 und 1939 bis 1945, Lüneburg: Eigenverlag, 2004; Gustav Rosenstein (ed.), "Ihr steht schon auf unserer Liste". Die estnische Exildichterin Salme Raatma. Biographie, Husum: ihleo, 2015.

[27] Here for example: Peter Blickle, Heimat. A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland, New York: Camden House, 2002; Celia Applegate, A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat, Berkeley/CA: University of California Press, 1990.

modernity, nation or "losing Heimat", and "expulsion"[28], like the expulsion of Sudeten Germans (*Sudetendeutsche*) in 1945).

When historiography established the basic facts, catalogued the hardships and researched the organizational structure of the regime(s) from the 1950s through the 1970s, studying the war experience began with empirical studies. Later the explorations of subjectivity and identity were added. But only during the first decade of the twenty first century the memory studies, as an academic discipline, turn to areas of Eastern Europe. The Introduction of "Narratives of Exile and Identity" points out three reasons for it. First was the gradual dissemination of the methodology of the memory studies; second, the growing awareness of population displacement as a subject of study; and finally, the Europeanization and transnationalization of the memory of atrocities performed by totalitarian regimes.[29]

In 1998 Vieda Skultans published her work on the memory of the Gulag in Latvia. Her new insight into the analysis of the social function of deportee testimonies demonstrated that the reports are not only of the individual but of collective experience.[30] It happens because personal experience is completed with stories heard from others. Through Skultans's work the "life stories" have been promoted, and in 2003 Anne Applebaum's definitive history of the Gulag, with testimonies of prisoners and exiles in a context of Soviet repressions and their memory, was published.[31] In this context the stories of Baltic Germans present entirely different reality since the Biographers belonged to the "regime's side" and they cannot be regarded as victims. Their stories come from opposite perspective, which is why their experience of harm is different.

In 1945 during the Potsdam Conference, Attlee, Truman, and Stalin agreed to an "orderly and humane" population transfer of several million people. However, it is noticed that this kind of expression would not be used by today's world's leaders. After the atrocities in former Yugoslavia, there is more realization about the intimate relationship between displacement and violence and the transfer of populations is not seen any more as a tool to solve minority issues

[28] For instance: Detlef Brandes, Der Weg zur Vertreibung 1938–1945. Pläne und Entscheidungen zum "Transfer" der Deutschen aus der Tschechoslowakei und aus Polen, München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2005.

[29] Violeta Davoliūtė, Tomas Balkelis (eds.), Narratives of Exile and Identity. Soviet Deportation Memoirs from the Baltic States, Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2018, 3.

[30] Davoliūtė, Balkelis, Narratives of Exile, 4.

[31] Anne Applebaum, Gulag: A History, New York: Doubleday, 2003.

or to "garden the state".[32] Norman Naimark notices as well the complexity of the racial cleansing and "uprooting people from their homes"[33].

The bibliography for reading personal documents is also vast and it includes various themes like narratives, interpreting emotions or issues taken from the field of oral history, for instance the methodology of interviewing (for the purposes of history). Here, I want to mention only the three most relevant works. First is abovementioned "Narratives of Exile and Identity. Soviet Deportation Memoirs from the Baltic States" edited by Violeta Davoliūtė and Tomas Balkelis. This volume turns to memory studies in Eastern Europe, particularly the experience of population displacement. Its main reason was to show how the view of the experience of the Soviet deportation is multidimensional and multifaceted and how writing about it does not have to follow the current public discourse.[34]

The next example of the forced displacement experience is, also mentioned previously, "The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia" written by Vieda Skultans. She "brought a new level of insight into the analysis of the social function of deportee testimonies, demonstrating that these were not only the reports of individual but of collective experience, based not only on personal experience but on stories heard from other deportees".[35] Skultans reflects on how writings about certain period influence the people talking about the same period. She confirms that the narratives she studied were affected by recent political developments which, in her case, was the political disintegration of the Soviet Union. She also paid attention to the language and how the language of public discourse alters the language of narratives. Thus, Skultan's work is "about memories of memories and stories of stories".[36]

How the place people live in is significant to their identity explores Stephanie Taylor in her "Narrative of Identity and Place". She talks about relocation and migration and how people's connections to birthplace, home and countries are broken. Her narrative-discursive approach investigates women's identity with place. Similarly to Skultans, Taylor points out the influence of discursive practices. She mentions the theory that authors who tell their stories (speakers) cannot experience or think outside of the discursive order. But there is also an argument that says it is possible to take a different position as a speaker and draw on multiple discursive sources.[37] Multiple interpretations of where one lives remain central to the life narrative. A

[32] Davoliūtė, Balkelis, Narratives of Exile, 8 ("gardening state" is a term introduced by Zygmunt Bauman in 1989).
[33] Norman Naimark, Fires of Hatred, Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe, Cambridge/MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.
[34] Davoliūte, Balkelis, Narratives of Exile, 3, 10.
[35] Ibidem, 4.
[36] Skultans, The Testimony, 15–16.
[37] Stephanie Taylor, Narratives of Identity and Place, London, New York: Routledge, 2010, 55.

fragile and idealized definition of "home" (like Heimat for Baltic Germans) becomes a place to position himself positively.

In the context of works by Davoliūtė and Balkelis, Skultans, and Taylor in this project, Baltic ego-documents show how the Biographers could not distance themselves from the after-war public discourse. This may mean that the experience of non-victims is being worked through differently. At the same time, the political development did not influence the after-war texts because the Marburg Survey (which is described later in this work) did not expose any reflection on the current events. For instance, there is no remark, in 1958 when the Survey was taken, about the Jewish population although in 1952 the Federal Chancellor Adenauer and Israel's Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett signed a reparations agreement.

At the end of this research orientation, I would like to mention Maris Saagpakk with her article "Die Umsiedlung in deutschbaltischen Autobiographien"[38] and doctoral dissertation "Deutschbaltische Autobiographien als Dokumente des Zeit- und Selbstempfindes: Vom Ende des 19. Jh. bis zur Umsiedlung".[39] Saagpakk calls the migration an organized flight of German-Balt minority and, based on autobiographical texts, she shows the resettlement as historical and personal experience. She shortly presents the main topics that German Balts reflected about the resettlement, National Socialism, hopes for the future and separation from the Baltic Heimat. The autobiographies come from the after-war time and lead to conclusions that resettlement marked a dramatic turning point for the German minority. Additionally, Saagpakk talks about the studies of autobiography and compares the various uses of the terminology. Her studies are directly relevant to my work, but the analysed content ends with the resettlement in 1939 and does not refer to the war period and the time in the Wartheland. In this way, the presented project studies the different time (even though there are references to pre-war time and some themes do overlap), discusses different themes, is based on war-time archival sources. It uses different approaches to the interpretative methodology of personal accounts.

**Research and the Main Argument**

The sources accessing individual and collective meanings, values, and social knowledge (*sozialles Wissen*) Winfried Schulze calls documents of life (*Ego-Dokumente*). He says that the "ego-sources" can show how the historical changes were understood and worked out by single

[38] Maris Saagpakk, Die Umsiedlung in deutschbaltischen Autobiographien in: Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung (ZfO), vol. 62, no. 56 (2007), pp. 50– 67.

[39] Maris Saagpakk, Deutschbaltische Autobiographien als Dokumente des Zeit- und Selbstempfindes: Vom Ende des 19. Jh. bis zur Umsiedlung (doctoral dissertation, Tallinn University 2007).

individuals.[40] What counts is a relationship between the event and the individual which answers to what prompted this individual to produce a description of it. The individual (ego) could write on purpose, or without it. The "ego" may stay hidden or revealed. In the case of this work, individuals are perpetrators, or at least "on the side of" who talk and, according to Gabriele Rosenthal, are in the "biographical need of war stories" (*biographische Notwendigkeit für Kriegserzählungen*), which occurs when the witnesses believe that their stories have meaning. Additionally, such biographical stories serve Western countries the opportunity to deal with the Nazi past (*Normalisierung der Nazi-Vergangenheit*).[41]

Scholars assume that during the time of any regime when communication in a public and private sphere is dominated by political or/and war-time propaganda, narratives, diaries, letters and other personal accounts are marked with censorship and self-censorship. Can one assume personal documents written in the times of freedom offer more authentic records since there is no regime or authorities to limit or question them? The answer is no, because considering other factors, like belief in ideology, proves that the author may still follow the propaganda from the past. The central thesis of this work argues that in this sense the nature of personal accounts of Baltic Germans from the time of the war is more authentic than their memories or recollections composed in the after-war period.[42] People who truly believed in the then ideology and supported National Socialism, tended to speak more openly and with more details about their opinions from everyday life, and they did not neglect the historical events that occurred at that time. On the other hand, German Balts who decided to write their accounts after the war seemed to be more reserved and moderate in their expressions. They silenced some topics or elaborated the themes that may seem relevant, but after analysis, they are not.

To find evidence that supports this argument, this research aims to discover specific patterns of personal texts. For instance, how various Authors express their relationship to certain events, to the Third Reich and other subjects they want to tell about, and the motivation behind composing each ego-document. When we acknowledge the National Socialism context, we ought to remember that this period required a unique communication style. In this way, this

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[40] Winfried Schulze, Ego-Dokumente: Annährung an den Menschen in der Geschichte? Vorüberlegungen für die Tagung "EGO-DOKUMENTE", in Winfried Schulze (ed.), Ego-Dokumente. Annährung an den Menschen in der Geschichte, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996, pp. 11–34, here 13, 20, 28.

[41] Gabriele Rosenthal, Erzählbarkeit, biographische Notwendigkeit und soziale Funktion von Kriegserzählungen. Zur Frage: Was wird gerne und leicht erzählt, in: Zeitschrift für Biographieforschung und Oral History und Lebensverlaufsanalysen (BIOS), vol. 6 (1993), pp. 5–24, here18.

[42]At this point, it is worth mentioning that David Welch discussed how the public opinion of the Third Reich responded to the then propaganda. He focuses on two groups: the industrial working class and German youth and analyses the special reports by Nazi agents who were reporting about the mood of the people, in: David Welch, Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft: Constructing a People's Community, in: Journal of Contemporary History, 39 (2004), pp. 213–38.

study also shows how Baltic Germans were presenting (to) themselves and pays attention to the form, namely, how the text was written, which should be adequate to the events it describes (*Form des Lebenserzählung*). Meanwhile, it also underlines breakthroughs and catastrophes (*Umbrüche und Katastrophen*).[43]

This work avoids describing what Baltic Germans wanted to say. Instead, the sources were analysed with the help of theories and the study tries to escape the language used by the Biographers, in the sense of propagandist expressions or clichés. That is why, I suppose, many Authors would disagree with my narration, which is acceptable because the aim of this work was not to write a reportage, which as genre, focuses on the protagonist's perspective, leaving comments and interpretations to the reader.

Examining if there are any new aspects or a phenomenon of Germans collectively following and creating the myth of the Führer is another aim of this work. It is to see how German Balts were part of Hitler's national community, and how they maintained their relationship towards the Nazi authorities. Other questions are: what were the main themes that Authors were elaborating on, how they portrayed themselves and which values they shared? Were Balts aware that their influx to occupied territories impacted other groups and whether they protested against Nazism? Finally, analysing their narratives includes the question of how Biographers were writing from the perpetrator's side perspective and if there was a sign in their post-war recollections of working through their war experience.

This work touches on a sensitive issue of Baltic Germans receiving the violent aspects of the war, like the mass relocation, the settlement in foreign territories or the expulsion in 1945. At the same time, the Authors of the analysed here sources belonged to the perpetrator's side of the conflict. I write about them trying to remember the precondition "that one can only discuss German victimhood within the parameters set by the perpetrator discourse".[44] Each discourse, whether victim or perpetrator-centred, can be exploited if the other is ignored. In order not to take this path, the question arose "whether the historians and their professional toolboxes are capable of acting as a counter-force to a wider cultural memory intent on raising the issue of victimhood".[45] This research is also a question of how to narrate about controversial issues and how to talk about the German minority who found itself on the regime's side.

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[43] Volker Depkat, Autobiographie und die soziale Konstruktion, in: Werner et al. (ed.), Geschichte und Gesellschaft, vol. 29, no. 3 (2003), pp. 441–476, here 443.

[44] Stefan Berger, On Taboos, Traumas and Other Myth. Why the Debate about German Victims of the Second World War is not a Hisotrian's Controversy?, in: Bill Niven (ed.), Germans as Victims. Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 210–224, here 220.

[45] Berger, On Taboos, 223.

**Chapter Outline**

The first chapter of this work presents shortly the history of the German minority in the Baltics, the creation of Wartheland and gives a few remarks on personal accounts. This is to provide the primary context for the following text analysis.

Vieda Skultans, in her work about testimonies of people deported to Soviet Russia, says that, in a way, her project was "hijacked by the narrators". She means that what she presented was not as she initially had planned because the witnesses were "telling their stories as they wanted".[46] Similarly, in one way or another, they were Baltic German Authors who had led my research because I was analysing the issues they were raising. Therefore, the second chapter discusses the German idea of Heimat and how Balts were experiencing homeland in the context of resettlement. Using Celia Applegate's thesis that "Heimat may have had the last word"[47], I argue that the correct understanding of this idea could have saved the German minority from supporting and identifying with the Nazi regime. As Balts aspired to be a nation and part of *Volksgemeinschaft*, Nazism won them locally. Nonetheless, the locality of Warthegau broke the special connection with other Germans and the Führer. Additionally, the sources show that years after the war, they were not ready to talk about their new Heimat in the Wartheland.

The next chapter studies the emotional conditions of resettled German community, including the basic feelings of happiness, sadness and fear. Analysing the expressed emotions, I intended to establish what was valuable, harmful and ignored by Balts, how they understood bonds between people and the relationship to the Third Reich. I also try to show how one "presents the self within society" and check how emotions were building the power relations.[48] Personal experiences of the Second World War illustrate the war's impact on people and their understanding of the conflicts. These personal struggles happened within various areas: family, neighbourhood or other nationalities and life-changing decisions under the pressure of the state, i.e., the dictatorship of the Third Reich. Finally, I point out the changes in expressing emotions between the war texts and those written after the war. At this point, it is important to note that while quoting documents from 1939/1940, I kept the original spelling. It is to emphasize that Germans who lived in the Baltic States held the citizenship of the actual residence, and the language of that place was usually the first they used, for instance, Latvian or Estonian. Their

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[46] Skultans, The Testimony, 13

[47] Applegate, A Nation, 226.

[48] The issue of emotions as power relations is well explained in the article by Joanna Bourke. She exhausts the topic of fear and anxiety and explains the approach of emotions with its language game, "emotionology" and "anesthesiology": Joanna Bourke, Fear and Anxiety. Writing about Emotion in Modern History, in: History Workshop Journal, vol. 55 (2003), pp. 111–133.

spelling or grammar mistakes suggest a lack of fluency in German and thus reveal the struggles of expression during the Nazi period.

The fourth chapter discusses how Baltic Germans reacted to Nazi plans of creating a "national community" and how, their self-identity and national awareness had transformed in the context of the then propaganda. Lisa Pine asks whether the national community was more of a propaganda construct or reality.[49] She says that the people often responded with a more radical attitude than expected. For instance, Hitler's myth was not only a propaganda product, but the followers also contributed with the ideas of his "charismatic authority" or "exceptional powers".[50] With a few examples, I support this argument and show with which Nazi ideas Balts were enthusiastic the most.

In this part, I also discuss the issue of the Christian Church. As I mentioned before, the sources were leading my research, and Baltic Authors presented themselves as followers of the Christian religion. Church, together with Wehrmacht, as Lisa Pine notices, was a significant institution within German society and was profoundly affected by National Socialism. It not only influenced the lives of millions of Germans but attracted controversy in terms of its responses to the then regime.

The last chapter presents the analysis of how German Balts were othering, especially, where they placed themselves among others. In this part, I show how writing about others became a tool to present the German minority in a particular light, valuable for the Third Reich. At the same time, it was also used to express hidden disagreements like leaving the old Heimat of *Baltikum* or to express fears (like the possibility of losing the war) and disappointments (living conditions in the Wartheland or losing the privileged position as Balts).

Perception of Russians, Poles, be it negative or positive, and Jewish people – negative – revealed the inner conflict of German Biographers. The language of inclusion and exclusion kept changing, focusing usually on self-presentation and identifying German values. Finally, in Wartheland, deprived of their Baltic history and identity, Balts became the others: they could not experience the attachment to new territory nor homogenized society in Wartheland.[51] In this part, I study the enemy-based rhetoric which produced racism and xenophobia and made Balts reject the others naturally. I also show that, for the moment, this ethnocentric ideology did not let the Authors see how Nazism itself had rejected their own Baltic group.

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[49] Lisa Pine, Hitler's "National Community". Society and Culture in Nazi Germany, London: Bloomsbury, 2007, 25.

[50] Ibidem, 25.

[51] M. Evans, Languages of Racism within Contemporary Europe, in: B. Jenkins, A. S. Spyros (eds.), Nation and Identity in Contemporary Europe, London: Routledge, 1996, 44.

At the end of this work, there is an Epilogue that sheds light on the management of post-war memories in Germany. It describes the rhetorics of victimisation and explains why there is a debate on German expellees. Since for Baltic Germans the flight in 1945 was not from the Heimat that they had been settled in for generations (as it was from the Baltics) the expulsion of 1945 is not a part of this work. The Epilogue stresses that this topic deserves separate research because of the vast amount of 1945 flight recollections.

**Sources**

There are three significant primary source collections that I analysed for this work. The first collection comes from the State Archive in Poznań, Poland (Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu, APP) and is called *Erlebnisberichte* (experience reports). Baltic Germans wrote these personal accounts in 1939 and 1940 and they were an answer for *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* announcement of a somewhat competition, attracting with financial rewards, to write their resettlement experience. It was communicated through a newspaper Ostdeutscher Beobachter from 2nd February 1940 and entitled: "Umsiedler – Erlebnisberichte gesucht"[52]. Presumably, Balts were asked to write their stories to inspire or even persuade other German communities to relocate to newly occupied territories. These texts belong to the popular genre of the National Socialists to encourage and foster the *Gemeinschaft*.[53]

This text corpus is about 400 typed pages addressed to the propaganda ministry (according to the one stamp on only one document). The material consists of 27 entries written by women, 23 by men and the gender of 26 other Authors is challenging to identify (there are either initials or only family names). Each entry presents the experience of resettlement and the first days, weeks and months in Wartheland. Some documents were composed by children, but it is also possible that the Author was writing from a perspective of a child because the methods of propaganda must be taken into consideration. These compositions were usually written as a description of events, and they often express the emotions of the Author. There are also songs, poems and picturesque elaborated portrayals of nature or urban areas.

The sources from State Archive in Poznań are similar to propagandistic articles published during the war. Here one could mention the series of "Volksdeutsche Heimkehr", edited during the war by Hans Krieg, like "Baltischer Aufbruch zum deutschen Osten" or "Ostland kehrt Heim"[54]). Knowing about these sources allows me to conclude that material from Poznań was

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[52] Janusz Sobczak, Hitlerowskie przesiedlenia ludności niemieckiej w dobie II wojny światowej, Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1966, 281.

[53] Kathryn Sederberg, Writing Through Crisis: Time, History, Futurity in German Diaries of the Second World War, in: Biography, Vol. 40, No. 2 (2017), pp. 323–341, here 323.

[54] Hans Krieg (ed.), Volksdeutche Heimkehr, Berlin, Leipzig: Nibelungen Verlag, 1940.

planned for the same reason. These recollections were not published because, I presume, there was not enough time (with the amount of duties authorities might not manage to publish them before the war ended) or the ministry of propaganda did not find them useful.
The second part of the primary records comes from the State Archive in Berlin (Bundesarchiv Berlin, BAB). This collection of reports was written by women (including young students) who worked within the National Socialist Women's League (*Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft, NS Frauenschaft*). They came as Nazi agents to Eastern territories and intended to segregate Germans from non-Germans and to persecute Poles and Jews. They were to assist the German minority in Poland and newly resettled ethnic Germans. They were especially helping to set up German schools and kindergartens and worked as teachers, advisers or political organisers. In these roles they were relevant to the everyday life of Baltic Germans in the Wartheland. In total, several thousand German women were recruited through various agencies. They were trained to check the loyalty of the ethnic Germans and to monitor their behaviour towards the non-German population (like enforcing social distancing). Sources written from the perspective of women who were sent to occupied Poland show how Nazi policies were embraced.[55]
These women students had been recruited for summer vacation work in the occupied territories of western Poland. For instance, Elizabeth Harvey writes about Irene K. from the University of Heidelberg who, as one of around 200 students, arrived in the Reichsgau Wartheland in 1940.[56] Harvey quoted her impressions of Leslau and observed the typical "focus change" or "shifting the gaze": concentrating on German achievements, Germanization and the beauty of the landscape and gaps in descriptions when it comes to the dominant non-German population. The similarity to such a description will be visible in the analysis of the post-war memories of this work.
BAB archival hold used for this work had been written between 1940 and 1944 and divided into various categories. Women students had to submit reports on their work, and they were written for assignment coordinators or supervisors.[57] Themes of the sources used for this work include, among others, marriage between different German groups, spiritual life, joy about the children, culture, the art of cooking or attitude towards the war. There are no authors' names as the collection focuses on the aforementioned topics. Some reports were written by female students, and there are also a few reports from the teacher's perspectives ("Der Lehrereinsatz

[55] Elizabeth Harvey, Women and the Nazi East. Agents and Witnesses of Germanization, New Haven/CT: Yale University Press, 2003.
[56] Elizabeth Harvey, "We Forgot all Jews and Poles": German Women and the "Ethnic Struggle" in Nazi-Occupied Poland, in: Contemporary European History, Vol. 10, No. 3, Theme Issue: Gender and War in Europe 1918–1949 (2001), pp. 447–461, here 447.
[57] Harvey, "We Forgot all Jews and Poles", 452.

im Osten, Erlebnisberichte”). In total, there are 14 categories (topics) written on about 280 pages. Women students had contacts with all ethnic Germans, including the Baltic community, and their work immediately impacted all Germans gropus that they served. Both sides were new in the Wartheland: the students from the Reich and the ethnic Germans, so these texts come from the perspective of strangers who were new to the place and the people they were working with.

The third collection of sources I call the Marburg Survey. It comes from the archive of Herder Institute in Marburg and is a material of 42 transcribed interviews within the project of the Baltic Historical Committee (*Baltische Historische Kommission*, BHK). William von Bremen, a German from the Baltics, was sending the survey to other Baltic Germans living there in Germany, with inquiries about their old heimat, political and economic situation and reaction to the resettlement. He received from his interviewees either an audio tape or written answers. After transcription (probably von Bremen was also responsible for that), the text was sent to the Author again for final confirmation. So, the sources I was dealing with were these transcribed and authorized materials.

The Marburg Survey took place in each Author’s place because they were answering from home, and most of the material was compiled in 1958. The survey was intended to be published, but finally, because of political reasons, this idea was abandoned, and today, this project is also not mentioned on the BHK website. Authors were engaged in the process of resettlement and usually prominent personalities of the German minority, like pastors, school principals, doctors, lawyers and persons working in the cultural sector. On about 600 pages, interviewees answer the following questions: the relationship between Germans, Estonians and Latvians, impossible future in the Baltics after 1939, the Third Reich, loyalty towards the “hosting Baltic countries”, and others.

The last significant archival hold comes from the archive of Carl-Schirren-Gesellschaft in Lüneburg. The association is famous for caring for Baltic German cultural property and heritage. In Lüneburg, I found memories of Baltic Germans written ten, twenty, thirty and more years after the war. Archival material consisted of many texts already published, especially in *Jahrbuch des Baltischen Deutschtums*. Other sources were used by, already mentioned, Anja Wilhelmi to present the female perspective of life (of the German upper class in *Baltikum*). Some of the texts used for this work were published in a different or limited form. The material used for this project was written by sixteen Authors on about one hundred eighty pages and presents the themes like “life stories”, “stories from my childhood”, “youth in the shadow of the war”, or “autobiography”.

Finally, I want to mention other sources studied for this work. Usually, they served as an addition to the understanding of the context. The materials come from *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* in Munich and again from Herder Institute in Marburg (the collection of wartime articles from *Baltische Briefe* and *Ost-Rundschau* "*Baltischer Beobachter*").

**Methodology**

When answering the questions around origins, nature and consequences of forced migration, and resettlement, Alfred J. Rieber points out two significant methodological difficulties: context and terminology.[58] Since narrative must be interpreted within the context, the context is, in a way, also the theme of this work and that is why I referred to it at the beginning of this introduction. At this, point the terminology must be explained.

**Terms, capitalization and cursive font**

I want to start with the words used in the title of this work. I operate the term "Baltic German" alternately with German Balts, Baltendeutsche – a term primarily used by Nazi authorities - and Deutschbalten - the name this community would like to be referred to now as it distances it from the Nazi period. I use the cursive font when I do not translate German words or expressions. I also use the word Author, (Auto)Biographer or (Auto)Biography with capitalization to discern the Baltic Germans from authors of secondary literature and scholars. Occasionally, I write the word *Baltikum* instead of the Baltics– to stress the German expression of the beloved homeland in the Baltic area. Finally, for resettlement, I use by turn: *Umsiedlung*, *Ansiedlung*, (mass) relocation, (mass) population transfer or settlement. Personal accounts I also name as ego-documents, documents, memories, memoires, reports, narratives or (auto) biographies. To Wartheland, I often refer to Reichsgau Wartheland, Warthegau, new German territories, Polish occupied territories, western occupied territories or annexed territories.

To avoid confusion concerning the terms for "population movement" I would like to mention that Rieber defines the population transfer as an exchange of citizens between governments to achieve more significant or complete degree of national homogeneity.[59] Nonetheless, I use the term "population transfer" meaning "resettlement". But again, "resettlement" is defined as "colonizing areas that have been emptied or depopulated in one way or another by elements of the dominant nationality". At the same time my study concerns the rule of minor nationality because Germans had not outnumbered the locals in considered annexed territories. This confusing distinction between terms like expulsion, deportation, refugees, resettlement or

[58] Rieber, Repressive Population, 1.
[59] Ibidem, 3.

ethnic cleansing emphasizes that, especially for interpreting experience, some terms do not fall into any category and that the context and individual approach play the critical role. Additionally, one needs to remember that in narratives, there is not only a political, social or economic context but also a personal one.

The sources I analysed for this study are Germans' narratives, i.e., their interpretive approach of what the Authors had seen, understood and been able to convey in a written form. But likewise, the context and terminology, not every approach to the narrative can fall into the same category. For example, Josselson and Lieblich, psychologists and editors of the "Narrative Study of Life" volume, present narrative as a tool of inquiry, in other words, a narrative methodology, and I find my approach, in numerous ways, similar to theirs. They put the investigative process this way:

> Through narrative, we come in contact with our participants as people engaged in the process of interpreting themselves. We work then with what is said and what is not said, within the context in which life is lived and the context of the interview in which words are spoken to represent that life. We then must decode, recognize, recontextualize, or abstract that life in the interest of reaching a new interpretation of the raw data of experience before us.[60]

Susan E. Chase points out that scholars debated the nature and significance of narrative in personal documents such as diaries and letters, but most of them always came to the conclusion that "all forms of narrative share the fundamental interest in making sense of experience, the interest in constructing and communicating meaning".[61] This precisely reflects the examined sources of this work however, I must stress again that for my study I did not interview. I did not ask questions according to the development of the discussion and, could not ask for additional explanations if needed. I was dealing with the written text of Authors who were, while producing them, interpreting themselves and the events. Within the qualitative approach, I used the tools of interpretive social research.

[60] Ruthellen Josselson, Amia Lieblich (eds.), Interpreting Experience. The Narrative Study of Lives, Thousand Oaks/CA: Sage Publications, 1995, ix.

[61] Susan E. Chase, Taking Narrative Seriously. Consequences for Method and Theory in Interview Studies, in: Ruthellen, Lieblich, Interpreting Experience, pp. 273–292, here 273.

**Qualitative content analysis and interpretive methods**

There is an excellent diversity of qualitative methods. In the case of this work, I am closer to "methods where interpretations and generalizations are not based on the frequency of occurrence of certain social phenomena but the logic of generalizing from an individual case", for instance, a personal biography. Qualitative social research follows "a logic of discovery" which means that hypotheses and cases are generated during the research process (leading to grounded theories) and if they were any hypotheses beforehand, they could be ignored.[62]

As in the qualitative method, the approach is "open", meaning I did not use any standard questionnaire or experiment for every subject. My systems were changing according to the situation because I wanted to show the actors' perspective, not mine – the researcher's. Additionally, I remembered that "the researcher is interested not only in the perspectives and stocks of knowledge of which the actors are consciously aware but also in analysing their implicit knowledge and the interactive creation of the meaning of which they are unaware".[63]

And so I started with an extensive research question: "what do Baltic Germans want to say about their relocation and war experience?" this question influenced the whole process of what I was focusing on and what I wanted to know. Also, the hypothesis was allowed to change, so my question of "what I want to ask" did as well.

Rosenthal understands qualitative content analysis (QCA) as coding in grounded theory; it structures the text material with the aid of general categories. In other words, with the help of categories, the text is divided up and reorganized according to criteria set up by the researcher. However, the interpretive method is a sequential and reconstructive method which means that

> the interpretation of the text is based essentially on its own temporal structure or sequential gestalt. The analysis examines the way the text is structured, and every sequence is considered in its embedment in the overall gestalt of the text. This makes it possible to uncover not only the manifest content of the text, but also its latent content, the meaning that is hidden "between the lines". Only with interpretive methods it is possible to infer deeper, and at first hidden, layers of meaning from the surface of the text.[64]

[62] Rosenthal, Interpretive, 13–14.
[63] Ibidem, 15.
[64] Ibidem, 17.

For this work, I considered exceptional cases that either do or do not frequently occur in the analysed ego-documents. I took into account individual text elements and rare instances, i.e., singularity, and examined the text's latent meaning. As qualitative social research proposes, I followed "a logic of discovery" which means that I generated some hypotheses during the research process. For instance, with the category of "Volksgemeinschaft", I intended to ask how German Authors were presenting themselves as a national community and which factors they regarded as needed to be one. But specific themes that were co-present, I was able to detect only after studying another category – emotions. In this way, new issues appeared: a strategy that Baltic Germans used to transfer themselves into the national community: writing poetry. Another example concerned the post-war recollections where I observed an avoidance of the theme "Jews". At first, it seemed like an irrelevant topic in the Baltic Germans' history until I asked about the references to "Jewish people" and the strategies to avoid them.

Ideologeme as fundamental ideology units helped me to select quotations for this work. Quoted sources (including the lyrical expressions) show representative parts of the entire analysed material. The following are the typical expressions in wartime personal accounts: *alte Heimat, Führer, Volk, Vaterland, Deutschland, Ruf, Leben, Volksgruppe, Rückwanderung, Kulturarbeit, zu Hause, Freude, wir fahren, Nationalsozialismus, Entscheidung, Nachbarschaft, Rücksiedlung, Umsiedlung, Fremde, Schutz, Krieg*. In the after-war texts, the content revolves around: *Wartehalnd, Ansiedlung, Baltikum, Familie, Umsiedler, alte Heimat, Arbeit, Haltung, unsere Kinder, Vergangenheit, Herzen*. With these terms, Balts could express their ideology, norms, religion and worldview.[65]

Many new issues may appear as the research unfolds and Rosenthal reminds what the interpretive method can achieve: it investigates phenomena that are unknown, exposes life worlds that have been very little studied, and does not require existing theoretical concepts. "Quantitative social research enables us to draw attention to certain phenomena that frequently occur, increasing trends, or rare phenomena, which, however, cannot say anything more about. Using interpretive methods, we can then examine these phenomena and reconstruct casual connections and latent meanings in the concrete individual case".[66] In this work, apart from analysing the content and discussing the openly presented themes, I tried to detect and understand the issues that had been somehow unrealized. Meanwhile, I was aware of the limitations in this case: my own little knowledge, my socialization in a particular social and

[65] The classifications and definitions of ideologeme are discussed in: Taras Lylo, Ideologeme as a Representative of the Basic Concepts of Ideology in the Media Discourse, in: Social Communication, vol.1 (2017), pp. 14–20 (01.05.2023), retrieved from: https://sciendo.com/pdf/10.1515/sc-2017-0002.

[66] Rosenthal, Interpretive, 18.

historical context and general collective discourses. There were also other, more "technical", considerations that I mentioned below.

The Baltic Authors wrote about their reality, and this project re-interprets their texts. Paul Ricoeur said that "the text's career escapes the finite horizon lived by its author. What the text says now matters more than what the author meant to say (…)".[67] In this way, the text may exist apart from the intentions of those who produced it. That is why this study also intends to see whether the Baltic texts are telling more than their Authors intended.

**Other factors to consider**

While studying and analysing the sources, four main factors emerged to consider: the construction of a report and diary along with memory and limited freedom of speech. To use reports, or *Berichte,* as a source, it is essential to understand the kind of text. Having difficulties defining *Erlebnis-* or *Ereignisbericht* – the description of experience or an event – I decided to verify it by examining first what those reports are not. First, despite constant references, experience or event reports are not biographies. In general, to clarify and simplify, the Baltic Authors do not try to reconstruct or "compile" their life. They do not write *Lebensgeschichten* and do not select the most important, according to them, "milestones of history". Contrary to the Balts' sources, traditional autobiographies are concern with longer periods of life it is possible to draw up the development of the author's views.

Volker Depkat's comparison of views of two biographers, Arnold Brecht and Ferdinand Friedensburg, shows the reasons for autobiography.[68] Both Brecht and Friedensburg were politicians, democrats and government officials in the Weimar Republic, and they both were dismissed from the state service in 1933. After returning from the United States, Brecht was involved in work on the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Friedensburg, in June 1945, was among the founders of the Christian Democratic Union in Berlin. According to Depkat, Friedensberg postulates that writings respecting the special periods, like National Socialism, should serve social communication in a concrete environment. On the other hand, Brecht stresses the meaning of the form and how the text is written, which should be adequate to the events it describes (*Form des Lebenserzählung*). The Friedensberg's question may seem similar (*wie ein Mann in unserer Lage und dieser Zeit sein Leben schildern soll?*[69]), but what he means is the importance of writing and historically underlining breakthroughs and

[67] Ibidem, 17, 19.
[68] Depkat, Autobiographie und die soziale Konstruktion, 443.
[69] Ibidem, 442.

catastrophes (*Umbrüche und Katastrophen*). Although an experience or event report is not an autobiography, it may successfully use its analytical questions: how important is the event for the author, how to write about it and whether it serves as a communicative means to other groups or individuals. In this light, texts written by the Baltic Authors reflect the idea of an autobiography. They respect a special period and underline historical events like the population transfers or the Nazi dominance and territorial aggression. There is also the form of the text which is adequate to the events it describes: the solemn submission to National Socialism through the poetic content.

When it comes to a diary, the definition includes the following characteristics: regularity, personal, contemporary and a record.[70] According to it, the texts by Baltic Germans cannot be understood as diaries because the regularity factor is missing: each Author wrote his entry once. Still, the composition is personal because the individual controls access to it and decides whether to maintain or destroy the records. "Entry" is not distorted by memory problems because it was made at the time, or close enough to the time when events occurred. Finally, all stories can be called records since they include events, activities, interactions, impressions and feelings.[71] The author's motivation is also taken into account. Similarly to diaries, the German recollections bear witness in which author presents himself as an "ordinary person" undergoing extraordinary events and shows his suffering in a way that the reader is offered an insight and understanding of it. The sources for this work portray one particular occasion: the resettlement and imagining of a new Heimat. Many Authors describe it so it is possible to identify patterns of behavior and to see what kind of meanings the Authors ascribed to the event and how rational it was for them.[72]

Whenever research on autobiographies is carried out, the problematic issue remains in memory factors. Autobiographers, with their impulses, stimulations and meanings, try to describe as objectively as possible, according to them, the reality with a dedication to details and attention to critical events. This faithfulness to the facts, no matter how strongly postulated by the writers, often needs to remember different memory factors and compositional techniques. The construction process of autobiographies is a complex one: it includes forgetting, be it unconsciously or unintentionally and making mistakes, like unintentional incorrect naming or dating, it could be classified as unsystematic or systematic.[73] Keeping this aside, let me assume

[70] Andy Alaszewski, Using Diaries for Social Research, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2006, 2.
[71] Ibidem, 2.
[72] Ibidem, 19, 37.
[73] Saagpakk, Deutschbaltische Autobiographien, 29–30.

that the Author does remember the events and his memory is no issue still, the question remains whether he has the freedom to tell the story.

Ego-documents written under the dictatorship appear to be more vigilant. By and large, the limited freedom of speech dominates the content of any composition. There is also an analysis of propagandist text controlled by National Socialists.[74] As a help for analysing the pieces written under the regime, the examination of documents from the Stalinism era seems applicable. Here especially, works by Jochen Hellbeck turned out to be very helpful[75] because the centre of his research is individual life story in cataclysmic events of the twentieth century, like Stalin's terror regime or the Second World War. His study revealed how the authors of various ego-documents became co-authors of the regime because they wanted to contribute to be worthy to participate in historical events. Furthermore, Hellbeck examines how the authors responded to the dominant ideology of the totalitarian system. Similarly other authors studying the Soviet regime show how, for instance, the Bolshevik students presented themselves to others as managers of impressions. No matter how private the texts were, between friends or family members, they were penetrated by official values.[76]

Research about National Socialism, similarly to that around the Stalinist era, revolves around revisionism and the relationship between the *Mitläufer* or *Aufsteiger* and the system which, for political loyalty, offered career and social status to its people.[77] Inseparably, there is an issue of imagination of self-awareness (*Vorstellungen vom Selbsverständnis)* under dictatorship and conviction (*Überzeugung*) of people placed in the system (which in other words would be a question of how much did the system succeed to plant its mechanism in inward human being - *im Inneren des Menschen*[78]). What follows is the matter of the reliability of the captured information: one has to be constantly aware of censorship, self-censorship, and writing under pressure or control, fear of consequences after writing the truth. These were usually reflected in the personal accounts referring to the everyday life in National Socialism.

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[74] For example: Joseph Wulf, Literatur und Dichtung im Dritten Reich. Eine Dokumentation, Gütersloh: Sigbert Mohn Verlag, 1963; Walter Knoche, The Political Poetry of the Third Reich: Themes and Metaphors, Columbus/OH: The Ohio State University, 1968; Charles W. Hoffmann, Opposition Poetry in Nazi Germany, Berkeley/CA: University of California Press, 1962.

[75] For example: Jochen Hellbeck, Revolution on My Mind, Cambridge/MA: Harvard University Press, 2006 or interviews from the battlefield: Jochen Hellbeck, Die Stalingrad Protokolle. Sowjetische Augenzeugen berichten aus der Schlacht, Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 2012.

[76] Igal Halfin, Red Autobiographies: Initiating the Bolshevik Self, Seattle/WA: University of Washington Press, 2011, 9–10.

[77] Jochen Hellbeck (ed.), Tagebuch aus Moskau 1931–1939, München: DTV, 1996, 1.

[78] Ibidem, 17. Here author refers to the work of Michael Foucault, who shows the net of power structures influencing the people (with ideas, norms and "truths") and their understanding of themselves.

## Note about the language

All passages from the sources are quoted as in the original. Spelling, grammar mistakes or lack of umlauts (sound alternation) are original and could indicate authors' struggle to express themselves in "national" language. Almost all of the Authors were either Latvian or Estonian citizens, and German was not their mother tongue. Establishing relation to the Third Reich and declaring the wish of belonging could not, for obvious reasons, be expressed in other than German language.

Additionally, as mentioned before, for this text and to avoid confusion (to know whereof I speak), whenever I refer to the primary sources that are the main texts for this work, I always write Biographers or Authors with the capital letter.

## Privacy

Because German law protects the privacy of individuals, in this work, I have not identified German Authors of unpublished texts; authors of published works are not anonymised. Nonetheless, the identity of the individual, like the exact name or address that appears in the sources, is not relevant for this research.

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**Chapter 1. Resettlement 1939 in Historical Context and Few Remarks on Personal Accounts**

"Die
Umsiedlung ist ein einziges kurzes Wort
aber eine lange Geschichte".[1]

**1.1. First Context: Historical Events and Creation of Wartheland**

The German minority in Baltic Region coexisted with other nations since the twelfth century. Their long history there started with the Teutonic Order and "the Reich's self-imposed cultural mission in the East". German Balts' presence as cultural, political and social élite was marked with the following: activities of the intellectuals (*Literaten*), life around the cathedral school (*Domschule*) in Riga, Universität Dorpat (later the University of Tartu), Reformation, dealing with the Russification, managing the provinces for Imperial Russia, significant changes of the 1905 Revolution (with the rise of national identities) and life under the Bolshevik regime. Finally, in 1918 Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania became independent Baltic countries, and the position of the German minority had to be redefined.[2] In 1919, because of the agrarian reform, the German minority lost authority and influence, which meant they were transformed from the powerful community into the national minority.[3]

In the 1920s and early 1930s, Baltic Germans still played a significant role in the Baltics and continued to influence the political and economic life of the countries they lived in. The national diversity of the Baltic region was substantial; in 1935 in Latvia, within the whole population of 1,950,502, there were 1,472,612 (76%) Latvians, 233,336 (12%) Russians, 93,479 (5%) Jews, 62,144 (3%) Germans, 48,949 (2.5%) Poles, 22,913 (1%) Lithuanians, 7,014 (0.3%) Estonians, and about 10,000 (about 0.51%) others. In 1934 in Estionia, within the whole population of 1,124,413, there were 992,000 (88%) Estonians, 92,656 (8%) Russians, 16,346 (1.5%) Germans, 4,434 (0.7%) Swedes, and 13,336 (1%) others.[4]

The following two tables show the German minority within the whole population since the nineteenth century in Estonia and Latvia[5]:

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[1] APP/800/146/375, B. H., Die Umsiedlung, Posen, date unknown.
[2] Erik Thomson, Baltic Tragedy, in: Central Europe Journal, no. 19 (1971), pp. 310–319, here 311.
[3] John Hiden, Martyn Housden, Neighbours or Enemies? Germans, the Baltic and Beyond, Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2008, 1.
[4] Topij, Mniejszość, 53–54.
[5] Tables 1 and 2 from: Wilhelmi, Lebenswelten, 39.

| Year | Germans[6] | Germans |
|---|---|---|
| 1881 | 46,779 | 5.3% |
| 1897 | 33,362 | 3.5% |
| 1922 | 18,319 | 1.7% |
| 1934 | 16,346 | 1.5% |

Table 1, German minority within the whole population of Estonia.

| Year | Germans | Germans |
|---|---|---|
| 1881 | 134,070 | 11.2% |
| 1897 | 120,191 | 6.2% |
| 1920 | 58,133 | 3.6% |
| 1935 | 62,144 | 3.2% |

Table 2, German minority within the whole population of Latvia.

With the six representatives in parliament, Germans had some impact on the political life of the country. Paul Schiemann, as an indisputable leader, and other German MPs were to protect the rights of their minority: issues around education, the life of the church and agrarian reform. In Estonia, German politicians tried to establish the position of Germans as *Kulturträger* because they saw themselves as someone who could “win the country for the West”.[7] Moreover, there was also the Baltic Germans’ tradition of protecting other nationalities of Latvia[8] which means there was an idea to support other communities or minorities as well.

In this cultural mission, German Balts created so-called upper-class society (the noble class, the clergy and the wealthy bourgeoisie with access to education) while Latvians, Estonians and others were a part of the peasantry or the poor from the urban areas. There were German schools in Latvia and Estonia, there was a life revolving around German church centres and many different cultural associations. Germans, as *Kulturträger*, created and enjoyed German theatre (*Deutscher Theaterverein*); they issued 24 titles of various magazines and newspapers, which was 50% of all press in Latvia. They were publishing books and running bookstores. There

[6] The nineteenth-century Germans in the Baltics, one can call the Baltic German population group, in: Wilhelmi, Lebenswelten, 297.
[7] Topij, Mniejszość, 133.
[8] Ibidem, 119.

were more than one hundred German clubs in Latvia and Estonia, the famous ones were: *Gelehrte Estnische Gesellschaft, Estländiche Literärische Gesellschaft, Institut für wissenschaftliche Heimatforschung* and many others.[9] One could say the Baltic Germans did not only assimilate with the Baltics, but they created it and were an active part of it. Their presence and activities in Estonia and Latvia shaped this region culturally and influenced it in many ways.[10]

The Latvian perspective also shows that the presence of Baltic Germans was significant. It was visible especially during the nineteenth century when Latvians were preoccupied with constructing their national identity. This process was highly connected to writing history and thus to literacy because "nationalism is about entry to, participation in, identification with, a high literate culture" and "in Latvia literacy was associated with being German, and history had been written by Baltic Germans".[11] Moreover there was an idea that Latvians were *undeutsch*. Their status did not go beyond peasanthood. Educated peasants were assimilated into the Baltic German classes. A German priest expressed an opinion at the Catholic church of St. Jacob: "An educated Latvian cannot remain a Latvian because Latvians are only a peasant class. Their language is not needed – one does not need to speak the Latvian language in order to be able to plough". In 1897 another author expressed a similar view:

> There has not yet been a highly educated Latvian. Whoever is educated and calls himself a Latvian is deceiving himself. They have not drawn their learning from Latvian sources. It is not possible to be both Latvian and educated – an educated Latvian is a contradiction in terms.[12]

One of the biggest challenges that the Latvian nationalist movement faced was overcoming the Baltic German legacy of ideas about peasantry.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Latvian and Estonian national movements and the policy of Russification, shook the privileged position of Baltic Germans. Finally, the end of the Great War, with its political and social changes, led to the Declaration of Independence for Latvia and Estonia.[13] This was followed by radical agrarian reform, and prominent Baltic Germans had lost most of the arable land and moved to the "more progressive and volatile urban

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[9] Ibidem, 274, 293.
[10] Rich German history in the Baltics is a particular theme explored by many historians, for example Andrzej Topij, John Hiden, Michael Garleff, Matthias Schröder, Wilhelmi Anja.
[11] Skultans, The Testimony, 143.
[12] Ibidem, 145.
[13] Topij, Mniejszość, 12.

centres".[14] In the international realities of 1918, the aspirations of new or restored states, and wishes to construct genuinely plural and multi-national societies, German Balts started to experience anxiety concerning their future in the Baltics. This spirit of restlessness became fertile ground for a new movement, sympathies for National Socialism and the idea of the Third Reich was the one that the German groups started to turn to.

### 1.2. The 1930s and Hitler's Plan for Eastern Europe

Roger Brubaker explains that The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation was an "incubator of German consciousness" and that German traditions of belonging revolved around the *Volk*. During the Middle Ages, many ethnic German groups were settled in East and Central Europe, and it was common that they made an effort to preserve their culture. In the Romantic era, there was a claim for unity through *Volksgeist* (national spirit), which found expression in language, law, custom, culture and state.[15] During the Nazi era, it was emphasized that only people with German blood could be German citizens, namely, members of the *Volk*. Nazi propaganda was filled with this term: the *Volk* was one, it had one leader, it was the master race, and it was without space. Since there was a plan to create this space in Easter Europe, Baltic Germans were responsible for filling it.

Even though Germans from the Baltics were still citizens of either Latvia or Estonia, the program of the National Socialist party explained who the natural citizen was and how an individual should relate to his country. The term *Volksgenossen* (comrades) received a special meaning and went beyond the religious confession. Race, including a person's physical appearance, was the only criterion for becoming a comrade, and only a comrade could become a citizen.[16] Nazi leadership found the *Volksdeutche* living in the Baltics as a very precious material for their ethno-racial plans. Before these plans were carried out, Adolf Hitler had to ensure that he had enough freedom and space for his planned operations. Furthermore, he needed to clear the way for the joint invasion and occupation of Poland by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, so the German-Soviet non-aggression pact was signed.

### Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact

Since April 1939, The Triple Entente was trying to sustain peace in Europe, promising Poland loyalty and defence in case of German aggression. Western representatives went on a diplomatic mission to Warsaw to discuss Poland's role – in the case of the war – in stopping

[14] Hiden, Housden, Neighbours, 1.
[15] Brubaker, Citizenship, 1, 3, 5.
[16] Ibidem, fragment of the program of the National Socialist Party, 167.

Wehrmacht while the West was supposed to counterattack the Third Reich. The same mission also went to Leningrad to discuss cooperation with the Red Army. But when Stalin let go of Maxim Litvinov, who was married to an Englishwoman and was supporting the international security policy, and appointed Vyacheslav Molotow as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, it was a first sign of the will to restore the connection with Berlin. The Nazi-Soviet rapprochement started officially as the trade talks. Hitler and Stalin soon realized that, while the West hesitated, they got a chance to divide and share Eastern Europe. Hitler was supposed to "take care of" France and Great Britain, and Stalin was to deal with the countries in the east of Europe, and they were to do it before America realized the danger. On 23 August 1939, the news came from Moscow: the two mortal enemies, fascist Germany and the Soviet Union, added to their trade talks the non-aggression pact. Six years later, when the Nazi archives opened, the secret part of the protocol saw daylight.[17]

The secret part of the protocol established Soviet and German spheres of influence in eastern Europe. This pact is often described as a license for Hitler to start a war. It meant the same permission for Stalin. Both partners could attack their neighbours without any objection. Non-aggression pact became an aggression project that started the Second World War. The pact also created a new geopolitical configuration in Europe where the West and the Soviet Union avoided confrontation. As long as the Soviet side used propaganda as the only weapon, the West would accept its military actions. Estonia, Latvia and Bessarabia recognized the pact as falling within the Soviet sphere, and Poland was divided along the line of the Narev, Vistula and San Rivers. The Germans and Russians restored the shared border which existed throughout the nineteenth century.

The secret protocol divided Northern and Eastern Europe; as a result, Finland, Estonia and Latvia were assigned to the Soviet sphere of influence. In September and October 1939, the Baltic States were forced to give the Soviet authorities the right to establish Soviet military bases in their territories. In June 1940 Red Army occupied Estonia and Latvia, Baltic governments had to resign, and both presidents were imprisoned and soon sent to Siberia. Sovietization of the Baltic states began marking a new period of political repressions and mass deportations. From 1941 in the course of Operation Barbarossa until 1944, Estonia and Latvia fell under German Occupation incorporating their lands into *Reichskommissariat Ostland* and *Generalbezirk Lettland*. Later, in 1944 the Soviet re-occupation of the Baltic States followed.

[17] Norman Davies, Europa, rozprawa historyka z historią, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2006, 1057.

## The Generalplan Ost: settler colonialism like in Africa italiana

Twentieth-century settler projects, including Nazi plans of transferring ethnic German communities to Poland[18], were central to the histories of nations and empires (like the Japanese colonial project in Korea, Portuguese settlement in Angola, Mussolini's plans in Ethiopia or French and British efforts after 1945 in Africa). While these were significant undertakings for the organizing parties, it was also affecting the resettlers who, in these projects, were supposed to hold the dominant position regarding the local citizens. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen throw light on some dynamics and say that the settlers sought to build communities connected by ties of ethnicity and faith. Their (Elkins and Pedersen's) approach towards the native inhabitants was "logic of elimination and not exploitation". It means the newcomers wanted to seize the new land and push out the locals. They were less interested in governing indigenous peoples or engaging them in their economic ventures. In this regard, the Nazi settlement was different. Germany's efforts in Poland in and after 1939 were more of a "relationship of domination". German resettlers were also about "governing an indigenous majority according to the dictates of a distant metropolis", and their aim was often to weaken "or even to rid themselves of" that metropolitan control and the local people.[19] The German settler project was different and is best explained as a follower of Italian colonial plans.

It is safe to say that the National Socialists were fascinated by Italian colonial policies in North Africa. By then, the Third Reich, H. Himmler and his planning staff, had realized that the colonization like under the Kaiser was outdated. Patrick Bernhard reminds of Hannah Arendt's famous study – "The Origins of Totalitarianism" from 1951 – and how it started the scholarly debate about the link between German colonial activities in Africa and the Nazi occupation of Eastern Europe. Only this time, the core aim of the NS regime was to create a new, racially pure society, and that is why all the eugenic aspects of Italian social engineering in Africa (especially the plan to "improve" the Italians by settling some 1.5 to 6.5 million colonists) were of the most considerable interest to the then German visioners.[20]

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[18] More about settler colonialism or Generalplan Ost one can find, among others, in: Sebastian Conrad, Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte, München: H. Beck Wissen, 2019; Shelley Baranowski, Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler, Cambridge/MA: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Isabel Heinemann, Patrick Wagner (eds.), Wissenschaft-Planung-Vertreibung. Neuordnungskonzepte und Umsiedlungspolitik im 20. Jahrhundert, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006; Michael Burleigh, Germany Turns Eastwards. A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich, London: Cambridge University Press, 2002; John Connelly, Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice, in: Central European History, vol. 32, no. 1 (1999), 1–33.

[19] Caroline Elkins, Susan Pedersen (ed.), Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century. Projects, Practices, Legacies, New York, London: Routledge, 2005, 1–2.

[20] Patrick Bernhard, Hitler's Africa in the East: Italian Colonialism as Model for German Planning in Eastern Europe, in: Journal of Contemporary History, vol. 52, no. 1, Special Section: The Dark Side of Transnationalism (2016), pp. 61–90, here 62–66.

For Germans, the new settlement policy was established to create and sustain a racially pure populace. Bernhard analyses how Musssolini's colonial plan was about the racial renewal of the Italian people and how, in the same way, Generalplan Ost was to strengthen the nation biologically. In 1938 German experts started gathering more information about Italian colonial policy because they realized how useful it was for their own plans. Collecting information included field trips, for instance, Wolfgang Spakler, from the German Embassy in Rome, in 1938, accompanied the first 20 000 Italian resettlers to their new homes in Lybia.). There were also specially organized training programs to spread the knowledge of Africa for the staff of the Reich Commissariat. Moreover, Konrad Meyer, the young agronomist who led The Planning Department of the Reich Commissariat and author of the infamous Generalplan Ost, was publishing Neues Bauerntum – the planning journal with richly illustrated articles about Italy's settlement policy.[21]

German fascination with Africa italiana resulted in the admiration of many factors. First, there was the extent of the colonization and the speed of its implementation. The idea that the occupied land would become a "white man's country" was very appealing. Apart from the ethnic make-up of the population, the fact that the policy in Africa was based on modern technology and science (involvement of agronomists, ethnologists or geologists) gave assurance and promised guarantee that the settlement could be "systematic" and "goal-riented". Additionally, German experts noticed an excellent organization; for example, they appreciated the start-support, medical care, recreational activities and social integration offered to Italian families (similar help that the resettling families from the Baltics received upon their arrival to Warthegau is mentioned later). National Socialist planners knew that all these ideas must fit the East's different climatic and cultural environment. As soon as they started to draw their plans, they discovered two essential factors.[22]

First, they understood the importance of the ideology in the populace at a local level. It was a specific technique of rule, and its purpose was "to bind subject at the periphery of the regime to its centre". Then the second factor followed: the infrastructure. The resettlers in Warthegau represented the "ethnic fight for survival against Poles and Russians" and for them to maintain a "lively community spirit", the appropriate infrastructure was needed. Like Italian plans in Africa, every future settlement in the East required an administrative building, a cinema, a medical facility, a hotel, and a party building. Before Germans were inspired by the Italian colonies, some facilities in their settlement were spread throughout the village. For instance,

[21] Ibidem, 67–73.
[22] Ibidem, 75–81.

The Hitler Youth headquarters were placed close to the local sports grounds. But when fascination with the Italian policies appeared, public buildings were to be concentrated around the village's central square. The middle of the town, like the Italian central piazza, held the settlement community together, and it was not without a solid racial component: "the heart of the village was to be a bulwark of Germadom".[23]

When Hitler spoke of his movement, he often drew parallels to Italy. He would say that "his brown shirts could not have existed without Italy's black shirts". [24] German authorities did not care about aesthetic considerations but racial goals. While their settlement program showed almost no difference compared to Italian social engineering techniques, it is worth mentioning the three features that made the Generalplan Ost unique. Primarily, Nazi settler colonialism did not include a place of worship – a church. This is confirmed in the sources of this work – Christian Baltic Germans did not mention any German establishment for church. Secondly, Germans planned to settle colonists from the same regions to create the same neighbourhoods. This is also seen in the sources for this work – many Authors identified their neighbours in the new place; some even opened the same businesses as they had in the Baltics. Finally, the critical difference in the German case was that their occupation involved the systematic and planned extermination of a biologically defined group: the Jews. Even though the indigenous populations in Italian colonies in Africa suffered heavily, it was not about total extermination.[25] German settlers in Poland were very privileged but had little control over administration. "They were subjected to and servants of a state project" and the main aim of the Nazi East was to expand the state's power. The settlement was to fulfil parts of the bigger plan. It included geopolitical expansion, domination, and collaboration with local elites.[26] Moreover German communities in Poland were caught in efforts to maintain the division between the settler and indigenous populations, i.e., divisions "built into the economy, the political system and the law, with particular economic activities and political privileges reserved for members of the settler population".[27] Germany as the authoritarian state was able to enforce "high, even genocidal, degrees of settler privilege". Even though the same state authoritarianism was attenuating formal settler power[28] (this will be shown later in this work), the Third Reich was presenting Baltic Germans as capable and with potential for the Nazi East.

[23] Ibidem, 84.
[24] Ibidem, 88.
[25] Ibidem, 86–87.
[26] Elkins, Pedersen, Settler Colonialism, 5.
[27] Ibidem, 4.
[28] Ibidem, 6–8, 12.

**Balts as a valuable ethnic resource**

According to the then "racial value scale", (*Wertskala*), that was maintained by *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS* it was concluded that:

> der rassenbiologische Wert der balten-deutschen Rückwanderer ein sehr guter ist und ein hoher Prozentsatz (65% [bei den Lettland-] und 72% [bei den Estlanddeutschen] … für die Ansiedlung im Osten als gut und sehr gut geeignet bezeichnet werden könne.[29]

The Nazi activists stressed that the newborn rate among German Balts was relatively low, which did not correspond with the then policy of supporting large families (*kinderreiche Familie*). That is why resettlement was presented as helpful for this community: opinions were spread that in new surroundings, among their people (other Germans), not anymore as minority (sic!) Balts could "undoubtedly be more fertile" (*zweifellos fruchtbarer*).[30] Comparisons to Reichsdeutsche were made, and Balts'occupational structure was regarded as much higher. All medical doctors, architects, different kinds of technicians, lawyers, academic teachers and pharmacists were regarded as valuable settler potential (*wertvolles Siedlerpotential*), and this is how Baltic Germans saw themselves too. Their self-esteem (*Selbstwertgefühl*) allowed them to express they were to strengthen new German territories against the Slavdom. Volkmann refers to a recollection:

> Heute wird uns die Sendung zuteil, mit unseren kolonisatorischen Erfahrungen und Fähigkeiten, die deutsche Ostgrenze im Warthegau zu festigen. Der Führer rief – wir folgen (…) Wir dürfen stolz und dankbar sein, daß uns Adolf Hitler ausgezeichnet hat, indem er uns als erste Volksdeutsche heimrief. Wir Baltendeutschen, die wir nun bald alle in der neuen Heimat vereinigt sind, wir Deutschen aus Estland und Lettland: wir danken unserem Führer![31]

Two occupied Polish regions became the Balts' destination: Reichsgau Wartheland and Danzig-West Prussia. Hitler declared that the decision regarding the Third Reich's Eastern borders was irrevocable, and presented Soviet Russia as a partner to look after mutual interests and work for

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[29] Hans-Erich Volkmann quotes here materials from EWZ (Abschlußbericht über die Erfassung der Baltendeutschen, BA, R 69/87), in: Hans-Erich Volkmann, Zur Ansiedlung der Deutschbalten im "Warthegau", in: Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg et al. (ed.), Zeitschrift für Ostforschung (ZfO), vol. 30, no. 4 (1981), pp. 527–558, here 532.

[30] Ibidem, 532.

[31] Ibidem, 533.

peace and order. In his famous speech before the Reichstag in the Kroll Opera House on 6 October 1939, Hitler claimed that in the light of the disintegration of the Polish state (*Zerfall des polnischen Staates*), there is the most crucial task in the German sphere of interests: a new order of ethnographical relations; namely the resettlement of nationalities. Hitler said:

> a task that reaches out much further. For the entire eastern and southeastern Europe is partially filled with fragile splinters of the German race. Precisely in this people is a reason, a cause, for continued inter-state interference. In the age of the principal of nationality and the idea of race, it is utopian to believe that these members of the highest Volk can exist without further assimilation. It is therefore one of the tasks of a prudent organization of European life to make relocations in order to eliminate at least a portion of the reason for conflict in Europe.[32]

In this speech, Hitler challenged his audience to think beyond regular adjustments to war. To help Europe to alleviate her conflicts, he proposed long-term policies with German people playing the leading role. He was presented the idea of population transfers as a tool of international policies, and he intended to make it clear that the new order of ethnographic conditions must be established by force if necessary. The use of force was justified by the fact that other nationalities (in East Europe, in their own countries) could not maintain the existence of German minorities. With this reasoning, mass relocation was a natural solution to avoid European conflicts.

Since the October speech was short on specifics, it had caused some anxiety and confusion among German agencies abroad and the *Volksdeutche* themselves. It was not clear if Hitler meant all German minorities and whether the resettlment would be obligatory. The Auswärtiges Amt had to issue a message about the Reichstag speech clarifying that "the Führer had only been referring to 'untenable national splinter groups' – in Italy, Soviet-occupied Poland, Estonia and Latvia – not to all German minorities".[33]

The October speech became like a prompt word for Baltic Germans. In the sources, it is clear that when they write about *Hitler's call*, they mainly refer to that speech. It made the resettlement real so they could start preparing for the relocation. They were about to embark on

[32] Free translation, Reichstagsrede Adolf Hitlers vom 6.10.1939, (22.05.2023), retrived from: https://germanhistory-intersections.org/de/migration/ghis:document-63.
[33] Matthew Frank, Making Minorities History. Population Transfer in Twentieth-Century Europe, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, 124.

a journey that, in a few years, would finally end the existence of their community. But in 1939, they had not yet presumed it but had adapted to their new role in new Germany.

**Relocation in practice**

As said before, the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact set the resettlement in motion since it agreed in principle to a population exchange between German and Soviet-occupied parts of Poland. Heinrich Himmler was appointed a *Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums* and was responsible for carrying the entire action. On 7 October Hitler signed a decree calling back to the Reich all those threatened with de-Germanization and the negotiating teams were sent to Tallinn, Riga and Moscow. The first of three agreements, for the transfer of *Volksdeutsche* from Estonia, was signed on 15 October, with Latvia on 30 October. Theses agreements gave the right of the free option to the populations affected, though the window of opportunity for exercising this was narrow.[34]

Resettlers were allowed to take only necessary belongings but this regulation was soon opened up for interpretation of "what does the necessary mean?" and it was possible to take even the furniture or domestic pets.[35] Observers were talking about "the move (*Umzug*) from *Baltikum*".[36] The resettlement agreements had very detailed descriptions "with particular attention paid to the protection of German assets, including the liquidation and valuation of immovable property, and a special organization (*Umsiedlungs- Treuhand Aktiengesellschaft*) was established for this purpose".[37] The first *Volksdeutsche* left Estonia on 18 October and Latvia on 7 November and the entire action lasted until 16 December 1939 and took approximately 100 transports. "In all, just fewer than 200,000 ethnic Germans – some 62,000 from the Baltic States, and around 130,000 from Volhynia and Galicia – were transferred to Germany".[38]. A "Review of Baltic Dead" (covering the years 1939 to 1947) included about 10 000 names of those who died during that time. Also, the number of all Baltic citizens, including Germans who did not go to occupied Poland or Germany, had shrunk due to the mass deportations as a result of the Sovietization that set in during the years 1944–1949.[39]

All belongings of Baltic Germans came to almost half of the total transport from the Baltics and filled storehouses in the then Danzig, Gotenhafen, Stettin, Hamburg and Bremen. With

[34] Ibidem 121.
[35] Plavnieks, Wall of Blood, 43.
[36] Lars Bosse, Vom Baltikum in den Reichsgau Wartheland, in: Michael Garleff, Paul Kaegbein (eds.), Deutschbalten, Weimarer Republik und Drittes Reich (Part 1), Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau-Verlag, 2008, pp. 297–388, here 306.
[37] Frank, Making Minorities History, 122.
[38] Ibidem.
[39] Thomson, Baltic Tragedy, 314, 317.

embarkation, Balts completed the first part of their resettlement. They were transported in luxurious cruise ships (*KdF-Kreuzfahrtschiffen*[40]) and entertained with dance and social conversations (*mit Tanz und anderen gesellschaftlichen Unterhaltungen*[41]). Marches performed by military bands often accompanied the reception of resettlers in the Reich. People were greeted with welcoming posters, and a group of helpers distributed food. Baltic Germans usually received a meal before the subsequent train transport to their final destinations. During the first church gatherings, the increasing feeling of homesickness (*Heimweh*) began to rule. Still there were hopes for the new place as the reception of German citizenship. Upon the mass relocation, each resettler must renounce his Latvian or Estonian citizenship, which was called a process of expatriation (*Ausbürgerung*), and the process of naturalization (*Einbürgerung*) was the very first formality Germans underwent in the new place.

One should not forget about the *Nachumsiedlung* that took place in 1940 when the Soviet Union had already exercised control, including the annexation of the Baltic States. This second wave of resettlement involved "in addition to 50,000 Germans from Lithuania 12,000 Latvian and Estonian Germans who had not opted for the Reich the previous year".[42] Negotiation with the Soviets about the *Nachumsiedlung* lasted about four months due to "disagreements over financial issues, in particular, the question of compensation for nationalized property".[43]

**New Germanization in the East**

Hans-Erich Volkmann says that the (re)settlement of the German Balts as a historical event is of double interest: first, it gives a chance to look at this "relatively closed national minority" shortly before it is reconnected with Germany. On the other hand, the resettlement contributes to the theme of the Eastern annexation policy of the Third Reich.[44] In his article, Volkmann focuses on the second part of *Umsiedlung*, i.e., the settlement (*Ansiedlung*), and he underlines the importance of the reason for resettlement. According to him, it was less about escaping the Soviet Union and more about the *Volkstum* policy and the Nazi program of *Lebensraum*.[45]

This idea was reflected by Hitler in "Mein Kampf" where he wanted to stop the eternal Germanic march to the south and west of Europe and to turn towards the land in the East.[46]

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[40] KdF stands for *Kraft durch Freude*, a National Socialist organization.
[41] Bosse, Vom Baltikum, 122.
[42] Frank, Making Minorities History, 125.
[43] Ibidem.
[44] Volkmann, Zur Ansiedlung, 527–558.
[45] Ibidem, 527.
[46] Ibidem, 542.

These plans were already explained in Hitler's Second Book which was teaching that under no circumstances could the *völkisch* state annex Poland to make Poles Germans.
Hitler was developing original concepts to bring new, dividing lines between nationalities. This time it was not only about colonizing the land in the economic or cultural sense, it was not just about domination. The new belief regarded new extreme levels of Germanization and eliminating unwanted people. This "task" was described by Heinrich Himmler who said: "Unsere Aufgabe ist es den Osten nicht im alten Sinne zu germanisieren, d.h. den dort wohnenden Menschen deutsche Sprache und deutsche Gesetze beizubringen, sondern dafür zu sorgen, daß im Osten nur Menschen wirklich deutschen, germanischen Blutes wohnen".[47] The emphasis on the creation of nationally homogenous environment was strong. Later the German authorities of Wartheland were going to discover that this plan was impossible to follow or even introduce. However, in September 1939, the will to relocate the locals was still there. With the means of propaganda, the opinions concerning Polish inhabitants were told:

> Die primitiven Polen sind als Wanderarbeiter in der Arbeitsprozeß einzugliedern und werden aus deutschen Gauen allmählich … ausgesiedelt… Der Pole bleibt der ewige Saison- und Wanderarbeiter, sein fester Wohnsitz muß in der Gegend von Krakau liegen.[48]

After the first deportations of Polish inhabitants (including Polish Jews), the "free space" was to be settled with the first *Umsiedlergruppe*, ie. Baltic Germans. In general, the resettlers were promised compensation for their property and profession *(Besitzstand und Beruf)*. It is not easy to not get the impression that Germans received the idea of resettlement with satisfaction. Hans. von Rimscha, a Baltic German publicist and historian, wrote in 1940:

> Ohne zu zögern und unbedenklich haben siebzigtausend deutsche Menschen sich dazu entschlossen, alles, was ihre bisherige Existenz ausgemacht hatte, von heute auf morgen aufzugeben… Sie waren dem Rufe des Führers ohne Bedenken gefolgt, und sie waren ihm freudig gefolgt. Aber es war nicht die fröhlich plätschernde Freude jener, denen unerwartet ein sehnlicher Wunsch in Erfüllung geht; … Nein, es war die tiefe und ernste

[47] Ibidem, 529..
[48] Ibidem, 529.

> Freude jener, die zu großen und schweren Aufgaben berufen werden, die sich selbst würdig dieser Aufgaben fühlen und fähig, sie zu meistern.[49]

The above statement is a declaration that wanted to show how much the Germans from the Baltics were ready for the resettlement, and reflected the general opinions expressed in 1939. How and whether it changed after the arrival to the occupied western territories will be shown later in this work.

**Uniqueness of Nazism**

Ian Kershaw agrees with the general conclusions that Nazism was a "specific form of fascism" or a "particular expression of totalitarianism" and that it was "war and genocide". He also acknowledges the charismatic role Hitler played and how his leadership that was bonding him and his "following" that offered the national salvation (later in this work it is shown how Baltic Germans expressed the need for this salvation).[50] While Kershaw tries to reach the conclusion about the uniqueness of Nazism he says that in 1933 in Germany the political culture was not in itself nazi but it provided a fertile ground for it to flourish: understanding of nationality in ethnicity (which also meant strengthening the nation which led to ethnic cleansing), the need of German dominance in the Eastern Europe (no more overseas colonies), presumption of Germany's rightful position as a leading power and intense dislike of bolshevism (which resulted in seeing Germany as the last fortress to protect the western civilization and control over the threat of Slavdom).[51] Finally Kershaw concludes and stresses the importance of new elites (because, as he puts it, Nazism was not only popular among the street fighters, but also among students at German universities) who absorbed the *völkisch* ideas, extreme racist nationalism and gave national salvation an intellectualized form. Such mentalities were popular among elites who were part of or were creating the SS and Security Police.

For Kershaw, the new elites played a key role in the uniqueness of Nazism because they were creating a highly modern state apparatus that was present in no other dictatorship. New elites could turn unchanging and unnegotiable points of Hitler's ideology into practical, administrative reality. The elites, even if they disagreed with Hitler or National Socialism, were still supporting it because Hitler's new form of leadership was sustaining their own power.[52]

[49] Ibidem, 530.
[50] Ian Kershaw, Hitler and the Uniqueness of Nazism, in: Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 39, No. 2, Understanding Nazi Germany (2004), pp. 239–254, here 240–45.
[51] Ibidem 246.
[52] Ibidem, 249–254.

**Why did Baltic Germans move out from the Baltics? Discussion with no answer.**

Volkmann takes us to the extended discussion about Balts' intentions regarding the resettlement. Were Balts ready to move because of their nostalgia for Hitler's Reich or because they feared falling under the rule of the Soviet Union? Were they caught in the politics of great powers (like the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact) and Nazi ideology?[53] While I studied their history, including their recollections from 1939, all these motives appeared. Still, they did not provide information to answer this question. However, there is a work with the meaningful title "Diktierte Option: die Umsiedlung der Deutsch-Balten aus Estland und Lettland; 1939–1941; Dokumentation" by Dietrich André Loeber, which suggests that the resettlement action was the only option for German minority.

This work which, nota bene, uses the "Deutsch-Balten" phrase to disconnect from the Nazi way of calling the group "Baltendeutsche" does not give a clear answer either. Nonetheless, I failed to see a need to establish a "real reason" why German Balts took part in a mass population transfer. As personal accounts show, there were different reasons for different Authors and studying the "true intentions" is not going to reveal anything new. First of all, German Authors referred to themselves as Baltendeutsche – a term made famous by National Socialist propaganda. They also expressed that abandoning their homes and homeland was done in a "supreme act of faith".[54] In 1963, one account says "Diese Umsiedlung geschah freiwillig. Sie bedeutete für uns Deutschstämmige ein Recht, keinen Zwang".[55] It is also acceptable that the minority opted against falling into Soviet sphere of control and influence. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that during my research, I had a few chances to meet and talk to some German Balts who were resettled and lived in Warthegau. Whenever I asked about the Germans who decided not to join the *Umsiedlung* I always heard the same answer: in 1939 only communists (from German minority) stayed in the Baltics.[56] This was the answer given years after the war, so one needs to remember about other factors, like memory, guilt or changing political discourse.

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[53] Volkmann, Zur Ansiedlung, 530.

[54] Expression used by Harvey in: Harvey, Elizabeth Harvey, Management and Manipulation. Nazi Settlement Planers and Ethnic German Settlers in Occupied Poland, in: Caroline Elkins, Susan Pedersen (eds.) Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century, New York and London: Routledge, 2005, pp. 95–112, here 99.

[55] Archive of Carl-Schirren-Gesellschaft e.V. in Lüneburg (CSG Lüneburg), manuscripts, Helmi Kurtze, Die drei Kriege in unserem Leben,1963, 7.

[56] There were Baltic Germans who did not join the resettlement because of their political views (for instance, Paul Schiemann), but according to the sources I analysed in this work, these people/families did not play any role. Some of them went missing, or under Russian influence, they faced a "depressing future" (Hiden, Housden, Neighbours, 108).

### 1.3. Balts' New Heimat in Occupied Western Poland

Arthur Greiser was directly responsible for the lifestyle of inhabitants, old and new, of Wartheland. He acted as a Reich Governor (or Reich Deputy, Reichsstatthalter) and head of civil administration (*Chef der Zivilverwaltung* or CdZ). He was in charge of creating a new Nazi Heimat for immigrating German groups. He was a Nazi leader who "pursued an extraordinary range of measures to remake a Polish region into Germany. He brought in some 500,000 ethnic German resettlers and attempted to alter the built and natural environment of the Gau".[57]

Greiser was born in 1897 and came from the Prussian province of Posen. In his youth, although the German group was the province's governing elite, Polish inhabitants established about two-thirds of the population. He was known for his "xenophobic German nationalism", which was neither "sophisticated nor intellectual" but rather "inchoate, visceral and personal". Greiser was deeply anti-Polish and strove for Germany's national redemption.[58] It is essential to recognize that Arthur Greiser had a vision of what kind of homeland he was creating for newly arriving Baltic Germans and other groups. "As a child of the East, he knows the Poles (…)" said Hitler[59], and he meant that Greiser took the right course in his policies. Greiser, as Epstein calls him, "a Nazi can-do man", got permission to carry out freely the Germanization of his childhood homeland that had fallen under Polish rule.[60]

According to Hitler's wish, within ten years, the area of Wartheland was to become a "flourishing German land". Greiser, often described as a very ambitious and power-desirous man, was affected by his own experience because he suffered a lot from his rivalry with Albert Foster (Danzig's Gauleiter), to whom, for nine years, he served as a deputy Gauleiter. He felt humiliated "to play second fiddle to a man five years younger and much less tied to Danzig". Finally, when Forster led the Danzig NSDAP, Greiser was the "only" senate president of "the tiny Free City state in November 1934".

As the occasion arose, Greiser actively sought a role in occupied Poland. He travelled to Berlin and arranged to speak to many of his contacts, which finally led to the situation in which Hitler decided that Greiser and Forster "would each become the Gauleiter and Reichsstatthalter of one of the two new Gaus to be created in western Poland".[61] Greiser was "overjoyed", and now he could have a robust and secure position which was effectively to impact the life of every

[57] Catherine Epstein, Model Nazi. Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, 2.
[58] Ibidem, 4.
[59] Ibidem, 130.
[60] Ibidem, 124.
[61] Ibidem, 125.

inhabitant of Wartheland. Moreover, his "far-ranging Germanization program – including the importation of ethnic Germans and their culture, the ethnic cleansing of Poles, and the genocide of Jews – was the most ambitious in Nazi-occupied Europe".[62] All these measures were to transform a Polish province into a model *Gau*.

**Reichsgau Wartheland**

On 14 September, Arthur Greiser was officially installed as head of CdZ in the previously established Reichsgau Posen area. On 29 January 1940, it was renamed Reichsgau Wartheland (after the Wartha river that flowed through the region). In 1939 Warthegau had some 4.9 million inhabitants[63]: there were 4,189,000 (85.5%) Poles, 325,000 (6.6%) Germans, 400,000 (7.5%) Jews, and 23,000 (0.4%) other nationalities (mostly Russians, Czechs and Ukrainians). This population lived on some 43,943 square kilometres of territory. 47.8% of all Polish land annexed to the Third Reich was included in the Warthegau. In terms of territory and population, the Gau was the second largest of the 41 (42 in 1941) Nazi Gaus.[64]

Since 50% of the population worked in the agricultural sector and 81% of all land was used for agricultural purposes, Wartheland was regarded as very rural. But, on the contrary, the industry was relatively underdeveloped, and there were only two cities of note: Posen, which was the Gau's capital, and Łódź (or Lodsch, which soon was renamed, in honour of General Karl Litzmann, to Litzmannstadt). The last one, the centre of textile production, was Gau's only crucial industrial region.

There were three districts in Warthegau: Posen, Hochensalza and Kalisch. These three districts were divided into thirty-eight rural and six city sub-districts (*Kreise*). According to administration, there were also 20 sub-districts called *Landräte*. All these divisions were not "compatible" with the region's history. Some of the areas had previously belonged to Prussia, but most of the rest had been part of the Russian Empire. Some parts of Litzmannstadt district had been located in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. That is why Posen, as a former Prussian province, was relatively developed and "more German" as other parts of the Gau (still, as it is shown later, not up to Reich's standards according to many Germans) and, on the other hand, Litzmannstadt was seen as primitive.

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[62] Ibidem, 2.

[63] Czesław Łuczak, Pod niemieckim jarzmem (Kraj Warty 1939–1945), Poznań: PSO, 1996, 83. The same topic desrcibes Maria Rutowska, Wysiedlenia ludności polskiej z Kraju Warty do Generalnego Gubernatorstwa 1939–1941, Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 2003.

[64] Epstein, Model Nazi, 135–136.

The population structure in Warthgau had been changing throughout the war. The following table shows the demographic movements[65]:

| Year | Total population | Germans from Altreich | German resettlers | DVL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Before 1939 | 4,922,000 | – | – | 325,000 |
| V 1942 | 4,533,000 | 111,000 | 223,000 | 456,000 |
| II 1943 | 4,412,000 | 132,000 | 242,000 | 476,000 |
| VII 1943 | 4,388,000 | 149,000 | 244,000 | 491,000 |
| I 1944 | 4,382,000 | 194,000 | 245,000 | 493,000 |

Table 3a. Population of Wartheland (part one).

| Year | Germans – total | Poles | Jews |
|---|---|---|---|
| Before 1939 | 325,000 (6,6%) | 4,189,000 (85.5%) | 385,000 (7.8%) |
| V 1942 | 790,000 (17,4%) | 3,535,000 (78%) | 213,000 (4.6%) |
| II 1943 | 850,000 (19,3%) | 3,473,000 (78.8%) | 89,000 (1.9%) |
| VII 1943 | 884,000 (20%) | 3,418,000 (78%) | 86,000 (2%) |
| I 1944 | 932,000 (21,2%) | 3,450,000* (78,8%*) | – |

Table 3b. Population of Wartheland (part two).

*including the Jewish population.

German population in Wartheland increased from 6.5% to 22.8% and Polish decreased from 85.1% to 74.9%. The number of Poles had been reduced as they were sent either to General Government or as forced labour to the Third Reich. *Volksdeutsche* was the group that was growing the fastest, which means there were many Polish citizens who qualified and applied to register on *Deutsche Volksliste* (DVL will be explained later). All these demographic

[65] Table 3a and 3b from: Czesław Madajczyk, Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce, tom 1, Warszawa: PWN, 1970, 245.

transformations needed accordingly formed administration, one of the Gau leader's ambitious tasks.

Before Arthur Greiser officially received the leading position in Wartheland, he started rganising staff to help him to run the district. There were more than 50 people that Greiser brought from Danzig to work for him. His advisor (*Referent*) was his cousin Harry Sigmund, and Fritz Harded was his adjutant (member of Greiser's official personal staff. He first served in Wehrmacht and then in the Danzig police force). There was also colonel Willi Bethke (retired chief of the Danzig Uniformed Police (*Schutzpolizei*) and Elsa Claaßen (secretary responsible for Greiser's correspondence). Dr Viktor Böttcher became district president in Posen, Helmut Froböss president of the provincial high court, Dr Karl Hans Fuchs was head of the Gau Press Office and many others[66]. There were two persons worth mentioning that belonged to state officials. August Järger was Greiser's deputy Reichsstatthalter and well known for his hatred towards the church (his nickname was *Kirchen-Jäger*). He worked closely with Dr Herbert Mehlhorn, who, in Warthegau, headed Department I (General, Domestic and Financial Matters). In 1941 Mehlhorn was, among others, named responsible for all "Jewish questions" (he helped to organise the murder of Jews in the Gau[67]).

It is clear that it was vital for Greiser to organise his own team of direct co-workers. With the trusted staff he could follow his plans. For instance, to facilitate administrative communication, Graiser organised a motorcycle courier. He issued decrees regarding currency and banking matters. He set maximum prices for essential consumer goods. Moreover, he restored electricity and street car, and organised food distribution. Within the agricultural sector, he took special care of bringing in the harvest and he worked to restore industrial production (with the most significant industrial complex in the province, H. Cegielski machine works).[68]

**Security officials and other arrangements**

Alongside the state officials, security officials also carried out the ethnic cleansing and genocidal policies that characterised the actions in the Warthreland. From 1939 to 1943, Wilhelm Koppe served as Himmler's higher SS and police leader (*Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer*, HSSPF). Under his control were the Security Policy (*Sicherheitspolizei*, Sipo), The Order Police (*Ordnungspolizei*), the Central Immigration Office (*Einwandererzentrale*, EWZ), and the Central Resettlement Office (*Umwandererzentrale*, UWZ). Greiser and Koppe

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[66] Epstein, Model Nazi, 142.
[67] Ibidem, 144.
[68] Ibidem, 129.

had created a good working relationship, and their harmonious cooperation allowed for the radical Nazi experiments in the region. Warthegau was the only Gau where there was no conflict between Gauleiter and HSSPF, and often scholars see it as no hindrance to the Final Solution or other demographic plans.[69]

Although Greiser, as Gauleiter and *Reichsstatthalter*, had no conflict with HSSPF he struggled a lot with the issue of legal authority in the Warthegau. He was directly responsible to Hitler, but at the same time, he was obliged to follow Interior Ministry directives. “His” Gau was to be under his total (administrative) control, but still there were institutions that maintained independent operations, for instance: The Central Trust Agency for the East (*Haupttreuhandstelle Ost*, HTO, responsible for plunder of Polish and Jewish property), the Ethnic German Liaison Office (*Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*, *VoMi*), the EWZ, and the UWZ[70]. It is said that this unclear distribution of authority cost Graiser frustration and struggle. Moreover, all security agencies (*VoMi*, EWZ, UWZ) were associated with Reich Commissariat for the strengthening of Germandom (*Reichskommissariat für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*, RKFDV), and it was Greiser, as Himmler’s deputy, who was responsible for the strengthening of Germandom in the Warthegau.[71]

**Management of local Polish and Jewish population**

Greiser’s general policy towards the local inhabitants was characterized as vengeful. He shared the sense that Germany had been on the losing side of German-Polish borderlands tensions, and finally, there was a chance to change it. All Polish political parties were banned and many leading politicians were arrested. Polish newspapers and periodicals were shut down, and all Poles were supposed to be relegated to a subservient role.[72] In general, all actions against the locals were consequences of his intention to turn “an overwhelmingly Polish area into pure German territory”.[73]

During the first weeks of occupation, the apartments of wealthier Jews and Poles were confiscated, and Wilhelm Koppe was charged with overall responsibility for deportations in Wartheland.[74] In Posen, The Security Police established a Special Staff for the Evacuation of

[69] Ibidem, 145.
[70] Ibidem, 148.
[71] Ibidem,155.
[72] At this point one can mention the natural target of the Nazi regime’s policies, the Roman Catholic Church, here for instance, Jonathan Huener, The Polish Catholic Church under German Occupation: The Reichsgau Wartheland, 1939–1945, Bloomington/IN: Indiana University Press, 2021.
[73] Epstein, Model Nazi, 129.
[74] For studying the history of Polish Jews during the Second World War, following works exhaust the topic: Michael Alberti, Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945, Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2008 or Martin Dean (ed.), The United States Holocaus Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of

Poles and Jews to the General Government (*Sonderstab für die Evakuierung und den Abtransport der Polen und Juden in das Generalgouvernment*). It was led by Albert Rapp, who, with his staff, carried out the "First Short-Term Plan" and deported 87,833 Poles, including Polish Jews. With a few administrative and personal changes (Rapp's office was reorganized and changed into the Central Emigration Office, which Rolf-Heinz Höppner later led) in March 1941, some 272 834 Poles had been deported to the General Government.[75]

Regarding the Jewish population, in the first month of German rule, some 385 000 – 435 000 Warthegau's Jews experienced terrible persecution. For instance, there was an incident of trapping a group of Jews in the synagogue, and the building was set on fire. Local Germans vandalized synagogues (and the building material was used by the German and Polish populations as firewood) and other Jewish sites. The four largest synagogues in Lodsch were burned down. Legal regulations for Jews were often harsher in Warhegau than in the Reich. For Greiser, it was about demonstrating the Nazi ideology, and with radicalized measures against Jews, he could remake his Nazi reputation. In October 1939, Himmler ordered all Jews from the newly annexed territories to be deported by the end of February 1940. Meanwhile, in Lodsch, the plans for organizing a ghetto began. Some sources from 1940 say it was about 160, 000 Jews in the ghetto, while Greiser's daughter, Ingrid, reported in April 1940, "there are 300, 000 Jews, and in every room, there are, surely ten to twenty people, I saw so many heads at the window. There are epidemics there (…)". Because of an outbreak of typhus on 30 April, the ghetto was sealed shut, and 164, 000 Jews were locked inside.[76]

**Regime's treatment of the new and old German population**

Above mentioned policies towards the Polish and Jewish population in Warthegau were consequences of a policy toward one group: ethnic German resettlers. With the additional policy of creating a "pure German East" Warthagau became, contrary to Nazi ideology, *Raum ohne Volk*: a land without people, or at least without German people.[77] Moreover, according to Koppe, the deportations of Jews and Poles were to cleanse and secure the new German territories but also to create a space for living and to work for the newly arriving Germans. However, management of the German population was also marked by the policy of

Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945, Volume II: Ghettos in German-Occupied Eastern Europe, Bloomington/IN: Indiana University Press, 2012. The situation of Polish population that was initially transferred to the transit camp before their resettlement is described, for instance, here: Maria Rutowska, Lager Glowna. Niemiecki obóz przesiedleńczy na Głównej w Poznaniu dla ludności polskiej (1939–1940), Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 2008.

[75] Epstein, Model Nazi, 166.

[76] Ibidem, 168–170.

[77] Ibidem,171.

discrimination, and even this privileged group had to experience isolation. One needs to remember that Germans could not share their desired belonging in occupied territories because two main conditions were not fulfilled. There was neither attachment to the new region nor a homogenized society in Wartheland.[78] Despite this, Arthur Greiser continued to deliver his solutions.

**Segregation**

Main Welfare Office for Ethnic Germans (*VoMi*) was to oversee, among other tasks, the resettlement. Within this effort, *VoMi* implemented a system of segregation between different German groups. It was about separating those awarded citizenship from the non-Germans. All ethnic Germans, who lived abroad and were regarded as German nationals (*Staatangehörigkeit*), could opt for citizenship of the Third Reich. And those Germans who found themselves within the annexed territories (like, for instance, Polish citizens) were compelled to "explain" their nationality. To determine the German race, Nazi authorities invented ways to "detect" (and treat) different German communities. They created the process of evaluation to define who was "ethnically alien" (*fremdvölkisch*) or who seemingly had "alien blood" (*fremdblütig*).

To differentiate between *Volksdeutsche*, the German People's List (also called the Ethnic German Register, *Deutsche Volksliste*, DVL) was established. Germans were applying to be included on the List and had to complete a special questionnaire (*Fragebogen*). According to the archival materials from the town Rogasen (today Rogoźno), collected information included: mother tongue, spouse's and grandparents' (paternal and maternal side) nationality, date and place of birth.[79] The administration of Warthegau, which had been using DVL since October 1939 (while in other occupied regions DVL was established in 1941[80]), could divide Germans into four categories:

1. Germans who actively fought for the German state before 1939;
2. Those who self-identified as German but had never been actively involved in work for Germany;

[78] Evans, Languages, 44.

[79] Katarzyna Szymankiewicz-Vincent, A Different Citizenship for Baltic Germans: Economic Consideration and the Management of Belonging in the Wartheland, 1939–1940, in: Katrin Boeckh et al. (ed.), Staatsbürgerschaft und Teilhabe. Bürgerliche, politische und soziale rechte im östlichen Europa, München: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2014, 232.

[80] Bożena Górczyńska – Przybyłowicz, Kraj Warty – poligon doświadczalny narodowego socjalizmu, in: Bernd Martin, Arkadiusz Stempin, Bożena Górczyńska-Przybyłowicz (eds.), Niemcy i Polska w trudnych latach 1933–1990. Nowe spojrzenia na dawne konflikty (Deutschland und Polen in schweren Zeiten 1933–1990), Poznań: Instytut Historii UAM, 2004, 122.

3. People of German origin or mixed marriages;
4. People who were Polonized but classified as *Volkdeutsche* by the German authorities.

Catherine Epstein, in one of her book's chapters, quotes the telegram in which "full of pride and joy" Greiser reports to Hitler:

> that today one million [of Germans] has been reached (…). We started in September 1939 with roughly 250,000 Germans. With painstaking attention to the German blood of this land, we then added through the process of the Ethnic German register [DVL] another 150,000. Then we anchored Reich Germans from all the Gaus of the Greater German Reich in the reconstruction of the party, state and economy. Then we took in more than half of all the German resettlers from the settlement zones of Europe.[81]

However, as Epstein stresses, all these population projects were still unproductive because after resettlement, deportation and murder, not even a quarter of the Gau's population was German.[82] Elizabeth Harvey reminds us that the Nazi experiment in population restructuring was carried out to establish a space cleared of the "racially alien". However, it was also created to be "peopled and defended with a racially renewed stock of Germans".[83] The settlers' position was privileged and highly vulnerable. They were caught up with mixed impressions of pride – they were a part of National Socialist Germany and disappointed about new conditions in Warthegau. They also experienced anxiety and unease because their lifestyle was maintained at the expense of the non-German population. Their main task in Warthegau was to exist "there", and their personal accounts reveal how they continued to strugglewith this crucial task.

### 1.4. Second Context: Personal Accounts about Mass Population Transfers, Interpreting Experience and Disturbing Presence of Political Opponents

One of the most important contexts for this work is time and conditions for writing. This regards personal testimonies and the publishing of literature, music, information and many other contents. Because of the Nazi regime, the then authors were strongly conditioned to articulate and shape their stories in certain ways. Their discourse had to relate to and safeguard the dominance of National Socialist ideas. The era of strict state censorship started in Germany in May 1933 with the burning of "un-German books". According to a tabulation undertaken by

[81] Epstein, Model Nazi, 191.
[82] Ibidem, 191–192.
[83] Harvey, Management and Manipulation, 108.

the Deutsche Bücherei in Leipzig in 1949, a total of 5,485 book titles were banned between 1933 and 1945.[84]

**Censorship**

In January 1934 Alfred Rosenberg, a Baltic German "hailing from an area where the name 'Rosenberg' was common among both Christian and Jews", became Plenipotentiary of the Führer for Monitoring the Entire Intellectual and Ideological Education of the NSDAP (*Beauftragter des Führersnfür die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Erziehung der NSDAP*). In his official correspondence, Rosenberg added a letterhead which read: to "monitoring the instruction and education of the entire National Socialist movement", that is, including the party's affiliated organizations.[85] Those who wanted to write had to be members of National Chamber of Literature (*Reichsschrifttumskammer*, RSK) and such membership presupposed political reliability. Indexed books represented various classifications. Most of the hundreds of authors expelled from RSK were excluded not because they were anti-Nazi but because their writings failed to meet the ill-defined standards of political orthodoxy set by the censors.

To the banned categories belonged texts with an expressionist style that dwelt upon dreams and feelings. Publications dealing with the issue of race received particular scrutiny, and their authors often ran into problems. In 1941 there was an instruction for publishers not to accept manuscripts, especially fiction, that depicted marriages between Germans and members of "inferior people", which "constitutes defilement of the race" (*Rassenschande*). Additionally, the beauty of the Nordic race was emphasized. Books that were non-objectable from the point of view of any of the Nazi ideological reasons could still run into trouble if they were "irreconcilable with the views and principles prevailing in the state of today". This was the catch-all category that was used in banning the then books.[86]

The range of offending subjects was wide. Objectionable categories included alleged moral corruption, Marxist or pacifist tendencies, damaging the martial spirit and morale of the German people, propagating Catholic or other confessional ideas, being a Jew, and finally, the catch-all designation of "failure to live up to what was to be expected in new Germany".[87]

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[84] Guenter Lewy, Harmful and Undesirable. Book Censorship in Nazi Germany, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, 19, 194.

[85] Ibidem, 74.

[86] Ibidem, 97, 100.

[87] Ibidem, 194.

While circumstances and political events kept changing, authors were often pressured to find out exactly which trend of expression to follow. During the prewar years, on average, there were about 300 writers banned a year. In November 1939, at least 211 authors were expelled or rejected by publishing houses. In 1941 the number of rejected authors reached 782. In 1943 clergy members were excluded from publishing. When France and England became Germany's enemies, there were new instructions for indexed books. Also, turn from "corrosive cultural Bolshevism" change into friendship after Hitler–Stalin Pact. After the invasion in 1941, this relationship changed again. When Germany declared a war on the United States on December 1941, American literature had to be censored. Authors were advised or encouraged to write about specific topics. For instance, books describing the heroism of the soldier at the front appeared in large numbers, but authors were warned against "cheap exaggerations".[88]
All these changing trends must have affected the writers on both professional and private levels. The government was held to be responsible for guarding citizens' souls against cultural bacilli in the form of corrosive literature and ensuring that everyone absorbed the National Socialist ideology. In the eyes of the Nazis, German culture had to be purged of its liberal and Marxist elements, and there was a particular target: the alleged domination of German culture by Jews. Hitler repeatedly stressed that in this world, human culture and civilization are inseparably bound up with the existence of the Aryan. Recognizing the printed word's importance, the regime sought complete control of both the publication and the readership of books. The aim was to get rid of all ideological rivals and achieve the preeminence of National Socialist ideas.[89]
The war-time reports by Baltic Germans, among the primary sources in this publication, were addressed to the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda because one of the documents has this Ministry's stamp of approval. This means that the Authors knew their publications were being controlled; their reports were intended to reach the audience that supported the Nazi ideology and to show their political reliability. At the same time, the little freedom of thought and action caused an inner struggle for many Authors as they had to find ways of their expressions because censorship not only pervades institutions but also "colors human relations, [and] reaches into the hidden workings of the soul."[90]

[88] Ibidem, 129, 133.
[89] Ibidem, ix–x.
[90] Ibidem, xi.

**Writing as praxis**

While Robert P. Yagelski complains that the writing remains poorly understood, he points out its transformative power: making sense to the authors and the world around them. Writing is not a procedure or production of texts, and it is a praxis. It is "a vehicle for individual and collective transformation" because it goes beyond the means of communication (or form of thinking) "which are limited and limiting". In the context of the organized relocation of the pro-German Baltic Germans, writing as praxis receives more meanings. For instance, it is not "limited and limiting" as it shows the relationship between language and being. Balts chose to write their ego-documents in German (as a symbol of belonging), and they also wanted "to be" in a survival sense since their existence in the Baltics came to an end. Janet Emig said writing is not only writing but also connecting to something larger "that is not here". It can be a subject one writes about, like shared experience and history and it may include the readers: real (in this case, the German authorities and other Germans) or imagined (like the future generations). Writing as praxis can encourage individual or collective well-being; it is to cope with difficult situations. It is also about clarifying feelings about what is happening. Very often, the writing matters more than the text, although for the propagandist narrative, the content may be more visible.[91]

A different aspect of writing stories is reading them. Susan Rubin Suleiman writes that one can recognize parts of one's life in another's. She was writing about Holocaust survivors who could not talk or write about their painful past and traumatic experiences, so they chose to read the autobiographies of other Holocaust survivors. In this way, they were doing, as Suleiman calls it, a "strong autobiographical reading".[92] After reading these autobiographies, some people, after a couple of years, were able to start telling their own stories. I do not know how similar it was for Baltic Germans writing in 1939 and 1940. They were expressing their suffering because of leaving their homeland, but this cannot be compared to the traumatic experience of Holocaust survivors. Nonetheless, they were writing for themselves, for the Baltic and other German communities to encourage the support of National Socialism and the resettlement. In this way, they could have been reading similar stories of others who also wrote at that time. It is possible reading the stories of others prompted them to write their own, so in this manner, they accept, process and recover through writing about their *Umsiedlung*.

[91] Robert P. Yagelski, Writing as Praxis, in: English Education, vol. 44, no. 2 (2012), pp. 188–204.
[92] Susan Rubin Suleiman, War Memories: on Autobiographical Reading, in: New Literary History, vol. 24, no. 3, (1993), pp. 563–575, here 564, 573.

When Baltic Germans were writing their biographies after the war, it was also praxis to see their past on paper. They were possibly reading the stories of other resettled Germans and understanding them as their own. About the sources I used for this work, it is impossible to establish whether the war and post-war memories have the same Authors (some may have, some may not). For the Authors who wrote only after the war, writing as praxis was "taking time to find the way to their past". Suleiman says, "the only kind of autobiography she finds essential is the one that tries to recover through writing".[93] She refers to Holocaust writing and those whose tragic experience was "impossible to communicate". Still, the "recovering through writing" may apply to Baltic Germans because they suffered during their resettlement and expulsion in 1945. They also experienced guilt for supporting the Nazi system and the sad consequences for other nationalities because of Balts' presence in the Wartheland. They also had things from their past to recover from, as it is shown later how the Biographers wanted to declare their disloyalty to the Nazi regime by presenting their good relationships with the locals in German-occupied territories. Whether they succeed in it is a different story, but it was clear that writing was a trial to come to terms with their history.

**Narrative**

Narrative equals stories that contain events, meaning and a social encounter, which means they are told to an audience. There are also other components of the story that can be included, like value points, events selected and relevant to the endpoint (all that contribute to the conclusion), ordering of events and other factors that connect the human life and narrative.[94] The most common reason for writing a biography scholars name the following: authors want to preserve both change (for Baltic Germans the *Umsiedlung*) and permanence (things that have not changed and give the sense of security and continuity). People write to bring new insights into the Self, to bring meaning to the past, to communicate the purpose of an absent world, to transform understanding of one's Self in the world and to self-understand through texts.[95] Moreover, the narrative gives the possibility to the authors to adapt, modify and shift their stories and thus lived experiences can be modified too. The narrative offers structure to a chaotic life, and when life is narrated, it is also lived.[96]

[93] Ibidem, 568, 573.
[94] Ivor F. Goodson, The Concept of Narrative, in: Counterpoints, vol. 386 (2011), pp. 3–16, here 4–5.
[95] Patrick Crowley, Paul Ricoeur: The Concept of Narrative Identity, The Trace of Autobiography, in: Paragraph, vol. 26, no. 3 (2003), pp. 1–12, here 2–3.
[96] Goodson, The Concept of Narrative, 6.

For Baltic Germans, making meaning of their stories was extremely important. They were not just telling their life stories, and they did not write or reflect upon an ordinary time. They probably knew their position during the war could be controversial (they lived next to the active presence of Paul Schiemann, which will be discussed further in this work). In their after-war stories, they were self-conscious because the audience would judge them and decide whether they supported National Socialism which would cast a long shadow over their lives. "No other moment of writing so clearly brings out the question of boundary lines (of the whole that the person is) as the moment of autobiography when the living subject tries to become both author and character in her own narrative".[97]
Some scholars also argue why an autobiography is a "foredoomed task" because, according to them, it is impossible to merge an author, a narrator and a protagonist in one story. A story can be a delusion, the Self cannot "tell itself", and there is no perspective (because only one person is telling the story). There is also a question of whether one can write the last word about himself. Or why the present has a right to tell the story of the past?[98] Nevertheless, Baltic Germans did not enter philosophical discussions about their own writings and instead focused on rationalising their actions. Their Self communicated with itself, and there were notions of auto refelctions. In post-war accounts, Balts tried to show their disloyalty towards the Nazi regime but did not see the sameness between their present and past selves. In this way, they appeared unable to take responsibility or to show commitment.[99] Most of the time, they focused on the resettlement arranged by the Nazi regime.

**Resettlers in geo-political management**

Starting with the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, when Bulgarians, Serbs and Greeks were expelling the minority populations, international authorities were discussing the natural borders and that they should be established according to ethnic criteria and minorities not willing to assimilate should be subject to resettlement (proposal by the Swiss anthropologist George Montadon). There was also the conflict over the city of Vilnius (between Lithuanians and Poles), during which Britain's Prime Minister David Lloyd George suggested "everyone to leave and turn the contested capital into a museum".[100]

[97] Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, The I That Tells Itself: A Bakhtinian Perspective on Narrative Identity, in: Narrative, vol. 16, No. 1 (2008), pp. 1–15, here 4.
[98] Erdinast-Vulcan, The I That Tells, 5.
[99]Andreea Deciu Ritivoi, Explaining People: Narrative and the Study of Identity, in: Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies, vol. 1 (2009), pp. 25–41, here 27–28. Here the author explains the difference between autobiographers (so-called Episodics and Diachronics).
[100] Davoliūtė, Balkelis, Narratives of Exile, 8.

German minorities from Eastern and Southeastern Europe found the protection of "their own German country", and they experienced nothing like "forced deportation that seldom occurs without murderous violence". In "Fires of Hatred" Norman Naimark says that "people do not leave their homes on their own". They would instead hold on to their land and culture because they are interconnected. People resist deportation orders, they cling to their domiciles and possessions; they generally find every possible way to avoid abandoning the place where their families have roots and their ancestors are buried.[101] In this way, one needs to remember that even though the resettlement of Baltic Germans in 1939 was a painful experience and one can talk about the "trauma of displacement" (as shown in latter parts of this work, Balts cannot be named as deportees but as returnees or repatriated persons. Their experience was not of an exile since, officially, they were settled down in their own country.

The Second World War "in the east" was radical because it was the product of new homogenizing ideologies and new implementation techniques. In Hitler's case, it was a policy linking racial supremacy to *Lebensraum*. The propaganda discourse of the regimes (including the Soviet one) hammered at the same theme: fighting a war of civilization against barbarism.[102] Nonetheless, the violence of the Nazi regime (and what it required from its people) placed a German person in a sort of clash of identity because, according to NS literature:

> Der Germane ist ein "braver Mann" – tapfer, mutig, ein guter Krieger, aber dabei durchaus nicht auf Krieg versessen. Ginge es nur nach ihm, würde es sich lieber dem Ackerbau und der Kultur widmen, nur selten würde er zum Schwert greifen, um ein Stückchen Lebensraum zu erobern, denn den braucht man ja wohl zum Leben.[103]

1919 Nazi discourse's source was nineteenth-century "anchored folk tradition", which was a "proof" showing that a German is a good and harmless person, loving peace, it is a friendly peasant soldier (*Bauernsoldat*), strong and beautiful *Naturmensch* who lives in idyllic natural state (*Naturzustand*).[104] This was not the only context in which Baltic Germans were producing their texts and although my knowledge of narrator's experience is limited to what I read (meaning to what Author wrote), these contexts arrange deeper insights. And so, I would like to mention a few others.

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[101] Naimark, Fires of Hatred, 4.
[102] Rieber, Repressive Population, 14.
[103] Johann Chapoutot, Das Gesetz des Blutes. Von der NS-Weltanschauung zum Vernichtungskrieg, Darmstadt: Der Zabern Verlag, 2016, 29.
[104] Ibidem, 29.

**Guilt**

During the resettlement, Baltic Germans were writing their accounts from the position of people belonging to the Third Reich – a country launching the war that began with the invasion of Poland. Balts were part of *Volksgemeinschaft* and waited to enjoy their rights of German citizenship once relocated. The memoirs written after the war were composed by people who, *nolens volens*, belonged to the perpetrators' side (the complexity of this will be shown later). In the 1950s, Nazi atrocities were already exposed, and Europeans were constructing the post-Holocaust identity. Whether as National Socialists or post-war Nazi followers (*Mitläufer*) in both periods, Baltic Authors seemed to face the guilt.

Katharina von Kellenbach, author of "The Mark of Cain: Guilt and Denial in the Post-War Lives of Nazi Perpetrators" says that most extended German families, on some level, must cope with the presence of perpetrators in their midst. Somehow, most Germans generate(ed) guilt, which is reflected in German personal accounts. While Balts' distance from National Socialism has grown so has their guilt. For many other Germans this experience was both: intellectual and emotional.[105]. This double knowledge and the question of who is regarded as guilty created a valid context for Baltic Autobiographers. The ideas of guilt will be discussed more in this work.

**Attachment**

Talking attachment within the interpretation of Baltic Germans' personal accounts means including identity and belonging. There was a duality of attachment. Balts were simultaneously projecting their future in the Third Reich and remembering the "good old days" in *Baltikum*.

There was also a context of needing help to decide (or discern) whether the resettlement was voluntary. To be more precise, it was a situation of avoidance to decide. On the one hand, there was an experience of emotional grief because the authors identified themselves with the locale. Moreover, "though such feelings are undoubtedly due in part to the loss of social integration, these feelings of apathy, disorientation, and grief are also caused by the traumatic separation of the self from a community landscape of meaning".[106] This indicates the relationship between community sentiment and community mobility. On the other hand, there were "voluntary movers" (with differences in the degree to which relocation is experienced as voluntary) for whom "move may reflect the degree to which individuals desire and are prepared for a change in attachments". What is important is the fact that "sometimes relocation may support a new or

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105 Katharina von Kellenbach, The Mark of Cain. Guilt and Denial in the Post-War Lives of Nazi Perpetrators, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, 5–6.

106 David M Hummon, Community Attachment. Local Sentiment and Sense of Place, in: Irwin Altman, Setha M. Low (eds.), Place Attachment, New York, London: Plenum Press, 1992, 260.

desired identity".[107] There are studies that show "that identity changes may promote voluntary community mobility"[108]. This means that Balts' narrative works were affected by the context of the struggle of identity change into National Socialists.

As German authors often stated, there was not much room left to decide about the relocation to the German Reich, and in this way, their personal judgement declined. The objective physical environment as an influence on behaviour started to increase. Their environments became increasingly constraining so they lost the capacity to act upon them. That is why their actions "went with the stream" of the regime's policies because without control, "one's activities begin to be dictated not by what one wishes, but by what one is able to accomplish" Can we say one decides as much one understands? Nevertheless, some scholars suggest "that people act proactively on the physical environment to minimise constraint, by selecting and adapting their surroundings to enhance competence and achievement of desired goals". In other words, experiences and identity shape the environment, too.[109] Balts were pressurized about their decision to relocate and, at the same time, they did not want to move on.

Within "the sense of place" Balts were struggling about leaving or relocating (together with them) their elders. Old residents were "the spatial analogue to the dominant themes of self-identity" and symbols "of living within a known terrain; within an order of community of life; within a landscape of remembered events". Their fundamental identification with the locale is taken for granted and unconscious because it was not challenged. Suddenly, with the resettlement, German Balts had to face a new, competing place of homeland, and their elders would not be there with them. That is why it was not easy to transform the Wartheland into the new locale.[110]

Baltic Germans' *story*, even though it is not an autobiography per se, is their self-location. They identified with their families, elders, community and the Third Reich. Since they were already located in the symbolic world of culture, each story is not "a situation of tabula rasa, a free invention, but rather a tweaking of what was said before. The stories which have been told enable and limit the possibilities for the stories which can be told in the future".[111] That is why there are limitations and new contexts for later compilations written in the 1950s and 1960s (for instance, the Marburg Survey) appeared because of what had been said in recollections of 1939.

[107] Barbara B Brown, Douglas D Perkins, Disruptions in Place Attachment, in: Altman, Low, Place Attachment, 288.
[108] Hummon, Community Attachment, 260.
[109] Robert L Rubinstein, Patricia A. Parmelee, Attachment to Place and the Representation of the Life Course by the Elderly, in: Altman, Low, Place Attachment, pp. 139–163, here 146.
[110] Here author analyses contemporary Americans and how they feel about communities, in: Hummon, Community Attachment, 258–259.
[111] Taylor, Narratives of Identity, 34.

In other words, praise and enthusiasm for the Third Reich and Adolf Hitler in the war recollections became the new context for later texts and interpretations. The latter had almost wholly avoided the political theme of National Socialism and ignored the period of Reichsgau Wartheland. And it is not a matter of things "not worth remembering" but instead developing a relationship between remembering and importance. Authors say what they want to say and thus decide where the priority is attached.[112]

Another background for the narratives within the topic of attachment is the reference to safety and danger. The Third Reich was seen as a place of opportunity. In post-war interviews, it was stressed that the *Baltikum* was a place without options. Additionally, the Russian invasion was seen as a threat of violence, which meant the old homeland must have been replaced. The destination was imagined as "perfect" Germany where resettlers could enjoy full rights as citizens, "in other words there is pressure to move on to find a new place of residence which is amenable to an interpretation closer to the unflawed ideal".[113] These sentiments were avoided in post-war texts and "the unflawed ideal" was referred only to the Baltics.

**Presence of Paul Schiemann and his "ethical microclimate"**

This context is not typical because it is about a person's presence. Paul Schiemann is mentioned only in this part of this work because although his presence and actions were visible, they were ignored by Baltic German Authors. The importance of Scheimann's presence is a unique factor because it shows that, at that time, it was possible to demonstrate different from National Socialism views and opinions. He is mentioned only here for two reasons. First, his political and journalist activities are presented so one can be aware of them in other parts of this work. Secondly, as German Authors silenced the whole topic of Paul Schiemann, I follow this silence to focus only on their ideas and thoughts but also to reflect on this silence that must have been an intentional avoidance of the all-present political moods.

Paul Schiemann, a liberal Baltic German journalist, and his activities are not mentioned in any of the analysed texts, which is more than telling and shows an example of purposeful silence. The context of the political and journalist presence of Schiemann is different than place attachment or guilt. It is about another Baltic German person and his actions commonly present in a public space but ignored by Baltic German Authors.

Schiemann was born in 1876 in Mitau (then part of the Russian Empire), and was a famous politician known as the defender of minorities. He was educated in Germany (Berlin, Marburg)

[112] Ibidem, 61.
[113] Ibidem, 108.

and wrote his doctoral dissertation at the University of Greiswald. During the Great War, he fought in the Russian army. After settling in Estonia in 1903, he became editor of the German language newspaper *Revalsche Zeitung* in Reval. There he was also one of the founders of the *Deutscher Verein*. In 1907 he left for Latvia and became chief editor of another German newspaper, the *Rigasche Rundschau*. When he lived in Berlin, he worked for *Frankfurter Zeitung* and *Preussische Jahrbücher*.

In 1919 he returned to Riga and continued his work as an editor of *Rigasche Rundschau*. In the newly created Republic of Latvia, he became a member of its parliament (he was a member of all four Latvian parliaments). Moreover, Schiemann was a leader of the Baltic German Democratic Party, and led the Committee of Baltic German Parties. In 1929 he was a member of the Latvian delegation to the League of Nations.

On the eve of the Second World War, the Baltic German community pressured him to cease his uncompromising defence of the minorities, especially the Jews. He refused to do so and continued writing articles and expressing his views. He was an opponent of German National Socialism and Soviet socialism. He published several anti-Nazi articles and when in 1933, Nazi supporters took over the *Rigasche Rundschau*, he had to leave the newspaper. After it, he settled in Vienna, and in 1937 he established the Association for National Freedom in Europe. He continued publishing for the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* and the *Der Deutsche in Polen*.

After the annexation of Austria, Schiemann returned to Riga. In the autumn 1939, he did not join the resettlement of Baltic Germans and campaigned for other Germans to remain in the Baltics. In 1930s, his health started to decline, and he suffered from severe tuberculosis. In Latvia, he experienced the Soviet occupation and later the occupation by Nazi Germany. In his house, he hid a young Jewish girl who survived the war. Paul Schiemann died in 1944 in Riga, and in 2000, Yad Vashem institution in Israel honoured him with the title of the Righteous Among the Nations.

**Schiemann's ideas**

In 1919, when Baltic Germans had to accept the new reality in the newly independent Baltic States, Paul Schiemann was regarded as the leader of the Baltic German communities in the new parliamentary era. He did not support nor share Balts' bitterness and disappointment about their glories being in the past and that they had to build a new existence in a democratic state.[114] About German Balts, Schiemann wrote they were naturally far from the ideology of the purely Latvian national state idea and at the same time they had a strong feeling of responsibility for

[114] Hiden, Housden, Neighbours, 38.

their homeland. Consequently, Balts desired to be on the same level as the state-minded Latvian, and they wished to be actively engaged in the Latvian state through the minority movement.[115] Schiemann seemed to believe that if only Baltic Germans took part in this minority movement, they would find their place within the new Baltic States.

In general, Schiemann was propagating the idea of cultural autonomy of minorities and rights for all nationalities. At the heart of his thinking was a strong aversion to the centralised nation-state as it had developed historically in Western Europe since the French Revolution. He was against the insistence on identifying one people with one territory and the nation-state's obsession with its sovereignty. John Hidden describes Schiemann's belief that "belonging to a nationality was akin to professing a religion". In Schiemann's view, national identity was like religious conviction: it was integral to being human – a matter of purely personal choice where the state had no right to intervene. He also thought, for example, that a genuine national minority could not behave as a fifth column of the motherland. According to Schiemann, each minority should be loyal to the host country and ready for the physical defence of it.[116] In other words, he understood that commitment to "the own culture" was parallel with being a good citizen of the host state. That is why Schiemann often favoured the terms like Lettländer or Estländer. In this way, the concept of a community could be revived, and much sensitivity might disappear. For instance, as Schiemann suggested, Upper Silesian could be asked not to be "a good Pole" but a "good citizen of Poland" (Polenländer).[117]

What is worth noticing in Schiemann's writing is that he expressed and acknowledged the suffering of different minority groups. At the same time, he also stressed the principle of self-determination for people within any state. He noticed suffering among those groups who were denied the natural right of self-determination and that they suffered injustice to the point that it was intolerable. And also, those who found themselves in their own newly created nation-states experienced the elementary striving for the complete implementation of a national unity principle. And this struggle, according to Schiemann, often led to fanaticism.[118] He seemed to be a reasonable observer, and tended to recognize and name the difficulties of the minorities. For example, as the numbers of minorities in Lettland were high, i.e., over 25%, he said that it was "psychologically not ideal" (*das ist psychologisch natürlich nicht gut*) because it caused the majority to feel threatened.[119]

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[115] Paul Schiemann, Die nationalen Minderheiten in Lettland, in: Zeitschrift für Politik, vol. 14 (1925), pp. 276–281, here 281.
[116] Hiden, Housden, Neighbours, 45–47.
[117] John Hiden, Defender of Minorities. Paul Schiemann, 1876–1944, London: Hurst & Company, 2004, 225.
[118] Schiemann, Die nationalen Minderheiten, 276.
[119] Ibidem, 278.

Paul Schiemann was critical of the national sentiment – for him, it was an inside spiritual emotion that, instead of manifesting itself as the love of one's people, it manifests hatred against another. This was precisely his point against the Baltic German community: it disregarded other nationalities and did not acknowledge that Latvians and Estonians had been fighting for the same rights and autonomy. From the beginning Schiemann noticed that the German side had attacked the independence of Latvia and Estonia regarding the historical role of Germandom in the country. He was reminding that both states came into being as a fulfilment of the right of self-determination and that their territories were defined based on the ethnographic borders between Estonians and Latvians, and that the language of the majority is constitutionally recognized as the state language.[120]

Schiemann did not doubt that the difficulties European minorities faced in 1931 from extremist and totalitarian elements were unprecedented. Still, he concluded that the *Verband der deutschen Volksgruppen* must, at all costs, be kept on a strictly democratic path. But, unfortunately, his commitment to parliamentary democracy and his outspoken opposition to National Socialism were followed by more intense criticism from fellow Baltic Germans, at home and in the Reich.[121] Gradually, Schiemann was becoming unpopular, and his position and future on the *Rigasche Rundschau* was questioned. Never mind that the newspaper was the best-known German minority paper in northern Europe, and Schiemann, with his 1,500 articles, was crucial to this achievement.

He wrote many anti-Nazi articles and, for instance, about the slogan: Germany for the Germans! Schieman noted: "What a familiar sound for every politician in the East! Latvia for the Latvians! Poland for the Poles!" Moreover, he emphasized that the definite programmatic point of National Socialism anti-Semitism, and it was not going to construct the state but to wreck it. In another article, he pointed out that: "Domestically, National Socialism is aggressive nationalism of a brutality and bias as yet unknown in history". He was saddened that Baltic Germandom – opposed to extreme nationalism for half a century – was now "drinking from a poisoned cup just because fellow Germans proffered it".[122]

Despite being warned to tone down his opinions, Schiemann continued to express his views. In one of his political speeches, there was a fear that his voice might be taken as representative, this time, of the *Verband der deutschen Volksgruppen*, and again he was asked to tone down the parts of the speech against National Socialists. He responded: "the central theme of my

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[120] Ibidem, 276.
[121] Hiden, Defender, 185, 190, 193.
[122] Ibidem, 180.

speech is that the present aggressive nationalism originates in the ideas of the war (…) Were I to abandon these views, or modify them to the point where they became unrecognizable, I would be left with a collection of platitudes that I am not disposed to associate abroad with my name [the speech was to be broadcasted in radio]. Besides, I shall also be expressing similar opinions at the German [*Verband*] conference about the nationalist wave, and if our committee chooses not to approve, then I am willing to resign my present position (…)”.[123]

About the preparation for the *Umsiedlung*, Schieman knew no more than others. Once the news was spread he refused to take part in it. “What”, he asked, “did the National Socialist solution to minority conflicts offer for Europe’s future?” He was right in saying that the Baltic German experience of being resettled into formerly Polish territory from 1939 showed that voluntary relocation did not necessarily produce the desired results.[124] In November 1939, he was interviewed for a Swedish newspaper, and this is what he said about the resetlement:

> As Germans, as decent beings and Christians, we need not obey any orders or heed any directives from outside. Many people are allowing themselves to be swayed by panic propaganda and the spectre of Bolshevik menace, with the slogan: Whoever stays behind is no German! Those of us who have decided not to exercise the right of option are influenced by the following considerations: We believe it an injustice, at such a critical time, to desert our home and inflict severe economic hardship through the flight of capital linked to the evacuation. We have no wish to travel to a country on whose citizens an ideology has been imposed that is contrary to our idea of religion, of the conduct of life and justice[125].

Balts, Schiemann and those who did not join the resettlement had to face a harsh regime of the Russian invasion. The period of 1940–1941 was marked as “the year of horrors”[126] and committed atrocities reminded everyone of the revolution time. On Russia, Schiemann commented:

> Violent methods signify the abolition of any kind of law and the penetration of national life with vulgarity and injustice. (…) The lack of system in the selection of those to be deported, which included at the same time Latvians, Russians, Jews and Germans,

[123] Ibidem, 192.
[124] Hiden, Housden, Neighbours, 65.
[125] Hiden, Defender, 232–233.
[126] Ibidem, 240.

> former dignitaries and members of the bourgeoisie, minor officials, workers and farmers, leads to the sole conclusion that people were simply seized so that someone would follow the others. How the returning danger of war began the great slaughter of thousands of defenceless victims, just as whole train loads of children going to certain ruin after they had been removed from their parents is quite well known and in the future cannot be contested even by the greatest of all sceptics.[127]

Despite Schiemann's longstanding criticism of National Socialism, his extremely ill health and enforced isolation in his home in a Riga suburb ultimately spared him a worse fate under the Nazi occupation of the Baltic countries from 1941 until he died in 1944. Till the end, he remained faithful towards his views which were confirmed by a Jewish woman who, as a young girl escaping the Nazis, found a hiding place in Schiemann's household. She later testified that joining his home was entering an "ethical microclimate".[128]

### 1.5. Concluding Thoughts

The resettlement was a short word but a long history for the Balts. Already then, during the war, it was clear that the Umsiedlung would be an event that changed everything. The demographic revolution, in which Baltic Germans spent their time and energy, produced many contexts.

This first chapter shows contexts that Baltic Germans were operating within while writing their stories. First references were Hitler's plan of reorganizing Europe, the perception of the Balts as "valuable ethnic material" useful for the resettlement and the new dimension of extreme Germanization where domination did not play the central role anymore but the elimination of unwanted people. Another context considered settler colonialism. Nazi East gave German settlers a privileged position within the administration (however, with no control over it). Still, they were also servants of the more significant state project that included geopolitical expansion and collaboration with the local elites.

The second main context regards writing, as such, about the mass population transfers and interpreting experience. The memory about resettlement seemed to be important but the relocation did not fall into traditionally understood categories. Balts experienced forced "deportation" without murderous violence. Despite their painful personal history, they could not be called deportees, returnees, or living in exile (since they were settled down among their people). Their experience was intensified by the appearance of guilt where "everyone on some level had to cope with the presence of perpetrators in their midst". The need for inclusion and

[127] Hiden, Housden, Neighbours, 108.
[128] Ibidem, 101.

belonging created the context of attachment, which was expressed, among others, in their relationship with their elders or writing as praxis understood as self-location.
An exceptional context was the presence of Paul Schiemann. Unfortunately, Baltic Germans decided to ignore it, and in their writings, which were the primary source for this research, they did not reference Paul Schiemann. He was not mentioned in war recollections, and in 1958, one Balt remarked that Paul Schiemann did not resettle "because he was ill".[129] In the context of the whole work of Schiemann, this remark is, at least, a considerable disregard and shows how Baltic community wanted to keep quiet about all his activities and ideas. Nonetheless, Schiemann's political presence was there, and one must remember, that Balts produced their personal accounts not only in the atmosphere of Nazi views but also in Schiemann's ideas. The latter was critical of Hitler and his policy and critical of the national sentiment. Schiemann blamed the Germans for "love" towards their own community and hatred towards other communities. He reprimanded Germans for not acknowledging that Latvians and Estonians were fighting for themselves for the same rights and autonomy. Balts heard him explaining Hitler's policies were no solutions for international minority problems and that Germans should responsibly accept the changes (rise of democratic Baltic States) in their own territory. "Fruitless, to weep over lost values, which are perhaps no longer values. Foolish whoever hopes through fleeing to escape the consequences of a new era".[130] These consequences followed in 1945.
The post-1945 conditions also shaped the production of memory. All contexts mentioned above do apply to both: war and post-war discourse. For after-1945, the context of guilt played a role, and censorship turned into self-censorship that was limited by Baltic Germans' war opinions and attitudes. Additionally, one needs to remember the post-war rhetorics on German victimisation. The victim-centred narrative focused on "wild expulsion" describing the experience of German expellees in 1945. After that, perpetrator-centred research dominated and became popular after reunification in 1990. In the second half of the 1990s, the extent of German crimes and German guilt was accepted. Since then, Germans as victims could tell their stories differently, namely, acknowledging the victims of Germans. This issue will be explored further in this work.

[129] Herder Institut Marburg, Archive (HIM), DSHI 140 Balt 491, Befragung, B. E., Kiel 1958, Survey 7 (own pagination).
[130] Hiden, Housden, Neighbours, 39.

## Chapter 2. Making New Heimat a Nazi Construct. From the Local Attachment to the National Sense of Identity. Attitude Towards the Resettlement and Reality in Warthegau

> "wenn dieser Ruf 10 Jahre früher gekommen wäre,
> dann hätte er wohl viel taube Ohren gefunden.
> Kein echter Balte verlässt so ohne weiteres
> seine Heimat". (1939)[1]

### 2.1. The Idea of Homeland

Peter Blickle gives a comprehensive view of the all–pervasive German idea of Heimat. His work "Heimat. A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland" explores multiple representations of Heimat at various times and in different social contexts. It also approaches the idea philosophically. There are difficulties in defining Heimat, and German speakers tend to acknowledge at once that there is more than one Heimat. They would express terms like "self", "I", "love", "need", "body" or "longing".[2] In other words, Heimat may mean anything to anyone. In October 1939, in the eve of resettlement, a German Balt wrote:

> Es ist bei jedem etwas anderes, was er sich unter Heimat vorstellt. Fuer den einen ist Heimat ein Vorstadtgarten in der Fruehlingssonne, fuer den andern ein niedriges Haus hinter Baeumen oder ein Holzplatz mit dem starken Geruch frischgesaegten Holzes[3].

Coordinates that serve as a basic configuration for the complex idea of Heimat are modernity, nation, identity, childhood, nature, innocence and the feminine. Even though these coordinates are not the only possible ones, Blickle says that "where Heimat is, they, too, are always there".[4] As he explains further, literary scholars reduce Heimat to a literary phenomenon and prefer case studies. Sociologists often treat Heimat as a functionally defined space with social, emotional, and institutional elements. Philosophers give the idea philosophical, gendered and imaginary aspects. And eventually, historians see the Heimat topos as a mobile term in the progression of

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[1] APP/800/146/236, K. D., Liebe…!, Posen, 19. Dezemebr 1939.
[2] Blickle, Peter, Heimat. A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland, Rochester/NY: Camden House, 2002, 4.
[3] APP/800/146/226, author unknown, Schlussfeier in der Rigaer Staedt. 7. Deutschen Grundschule, Riga, 31. Oktober 1939.
[4] Blickle, Heimat, 157.

German provincialism into German nationalism, a development that could be studied, for instance, by analyses of Heimat protection associations (*Heimatschutz*).[5] Thus, I want to consider more closely this development and turn from provincialism to nationalism to see how Baltic Germans were experiencing it.

In this part, I am not going to study the idea of childhood, landscape or selective memory because, since these issues are complex, it would take a too large portion of this work. Rather, I will see how Baltic Germans' localized nationalism became an essential element of National Socialism. With the example of their personal accounts, I would like to study how they were experiencing Heimat in the context of resettlement. While Blickle stresses the role of Heimat in the development process from provincialism into nationalism, Celia Applegate sees it differently. She says that "Heimat may have had the last word". She means that the proper understanding of the idea of Heimat, how it was meant by the authors of the term of nineteenth-century philosophers, could have saved Balts from supporting and identifying with the Nazi regime. And this proper understanding is connected with Heimat, which is known, familiar and local. As Applegate suggests, the regime won the people on the local level, and indeed Germans in Baltics aspired to be a nation and part of *Volksgemeinschaft* before the resettlement. Traditionally understood Heimat is known and local because when "the lines of obedience and submission to a central will" break, people are left with their locality, not with the nation.[6] Since Balts did not show the apparent break in this obedience or submission, towards Nazi authorities, they had experienced a major disappointment (which was kind of breaking this "special bond"). First it happened in Warthegau, and later after the war they found themselves on the controversial side of the conflict.

In other words, the concept of traditionally understood Heimat could have saved Balts from welcoming the regime. Nonetheless, they decided to transform into a national community, leaving their familiar and known. Wrongly German Biographers thought they could transform into a national community within the ideas of the new Heimat in Germany, but in reality, they committed to the borderlands' idea. It is essential to notice that the concept of Heimat, which was supposed to save them, was the central idea they started to transform from. Moreover, they had already become a national community in their old Heimat. And one could expect this transformation would be reinforced in the Wartheland, but the new territory was an actual setback for Baltic resettlers. Balts had to find new ways of dealing with it.

[5] Ibidem, 5.

[6]Applegate, A Nation of Provincials, 226.

This chapter has two parts: first discusses the spread of National Socialism ideas in the 1930s in the Baltics and shows how Balts' attitude towards the Nazi concepts developed. Here I want to show how their Baltic Heimat was taking in and apprehending the Nazi style and how Germans there were ready to receive upcoming changes. Moving to a new Heimat required that its citizens would transform into a new national community, and that is why I demonstrate their tool for this "personal conversion" to *Volksgemeinschaft*. Second part of the chapter examines how Baltic Germans' interpretation of the motives of resettlement clashed with the reality in Warthegau and how the disappointment was reflected in their biographies. Moreover, I see how Balts' biographies reflect not only their dissatisfaction but also Nazi sentiments and check how much they seemed to be "educated, aware German citizens". The irritation with the new conditions in occupied Poland continued with unfairness or hierarchy among German groups. With the example of a small study of the town Rogoźno, I describe how Balts were undergoing definite professional setbacks and inequity in general.

## 2.2. On the Old Heimat Ground and Transformation into the Nazi Construct of Fatherland

### 2.2.1. Balts' Attitude towards National Socialism. Clubs and Associations in the Baltics

Scholars debate about the "special path" of German people towards National Socialism which goes back to even earlier centuries and includes ideas of *Sonderweg* to *the Sonderweg*, concluding with even more questions. Among established thesis, one points out the enormous power Nazi slogans had on youth, who, as attentive listener, was desperately expecting new ideas for their future and waiting to experience something new.[7] Other theories turn to the notion of Heimat and Heimat movement that strongly evoked a sense of cultural and ecological responsibility.[8] In "Nation of Provincials" Celia Applegate provides arguments that the understanding or imagining one's Homeland was preparing the ground for National Socialism and became a necessary factor in winning people for this dictatorship. With an example of the German state of Bavaria, she says that National Socialism attracted Germans not on a national but local level. Slowly the autonomy of the local Heimat associations was affected by Nazi administrations, and all kinds of various German clubs were transferred into those with *Führerprinzip*.[9] Similarly, German minorities abroad adjusted their ethnic group leadership

[7] Michael Garleff, Deutschbaltische Politik zwischen den Weltkriegen. Quellen und Studien zur baltischen Geschichte, Band 2, Bonn, Bad Godesberg: Verlag Wissenschaftliches Archiv, 1976, 189.
[8] J. Hermand, J. Steakley (eds.), Heimat, Nation, Fatherland. The German Sense of Belonging, New York: Peter Lang, 1996, viii.
[9] Applegate, A Nation of Provincials, 197–198, 204.

according to new *Weltanschauung* and, for instance among Baltic Germans, it became a solid platform to build the sense of *Volksgemeinschaft.*[10]

In the beginning, without going into debates about *Sonderweg* of the German minority in the Baltics, let me present the political situation of Balts in Estonia and Latvia shortly. Andrzej Topij, as an expert on the history of Baltic States, elaborates on the national movement among the German Balts and describes its prominent leaders, clubs and their activities.[11] Concerning Latvia, the ideas of national movement were discussed by *Baltische Brüderschaft*. Even though the association was active actually in Berlin (since 1929) and its 43 members from Riga were forced to stop any political activities (through the intervention of Riga's court), still few friends of the club remained, and they became a platform for Latvia and Germany for any Nazi ideology exchange. Initially, the movement was led by Erhard Kroeger, a leader of *Deutscher Wander- und Sportverein and Deutscher Bildungsverein*. Among other clubs supporting or interested in Nazi ideology were: *Deutscher Kulturverein* (with main leader A. Lüder-Lühr) and *Nationalpartei der Deutsch-Balten*. The last one was not officially registered as a political party since the Latvian government did not allow it. The main press organs were *Baltische Monatsschrift* and later *Rigaer Tageszeitung*, with the standard topics of separation from the Jews, the situation of German workers and other slogans like *Arbeit ist Pflicht, Arbeit ist Recht, Arbeit ist Freude*. German youth, who "had no future in Latvia", was the main target of Nazi slogans that proclaimed the need for a new national community. Summer camps or clubs called SA-Gruppen became new places for young Germans to associate. Gradually, the Latvian government started raising concerns about numerous secret meetings organized by national activists trying to hide their actions in other clubs like *Rigaer Sängerkreis, Rigaer Männer Gesangverein, Liederkranz, Liedertafel, Theaterverein* or *Herder Institut.* Reports of Latvian police noted that the famous "Heil Hitler" greeting was common in everyday life.

In Estonia *Baltische Brüderschaft* had 23 members. Their foremost activist – Victor von Mühlen – was impressed and fascinated by Adolf Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg (the last one who came from Estonia), whom he met during his visit to Munich in 1929 or 1930. The press organ of the National Socialist was *Aufstieg*, and it had the main task of explaining the fight between bourgeois liberalism and international capitalism, which were limiting the freedom of the German nation. Journalists usually wrote about racial issues and the history and meaning of the swastika. Von Mühlen, as a member of *Deutsch-Baltische Partei*, created a group called *Baltische Nationalsozialistische Bewegung in Estland* and became its leader. This association's

[10] Garleff, Deutschbaltische Politik, 194.
[11] Topij, Mniejszość, 346–398.

program focused on cooperation with Estonia, uniting all Baltic Germans, and introducing the principles of the leader (*Führerprinzip*) in all levels of public life. The Estonian parliament decided to react against *Deutsch-Baltische Partei*: the party and *Aufstieg* had to stop their activities, and the Estonian court sentenced von Mühlen. Nevertheless, it did not stop the German national movement there, and soon Oskar Lutz took over the managing of national activists.[12]

Like in Latvia, Estonian youth was supposed to be the leading receiver of the Nazi ideas: many clubs were controlled by the activists and the scout group *Wolf* in 1931 was the first youth Nazi organization in Estonia. In 1932 there was *Deutschbaltisches Pfadfinderskorps* which in 1935 had branches in every city in Estonia. It had 800 members, and that was 70% of all organized youth clubs. Their leader was baron Arved von Taube who trained this group according to *Hitlerjugend* policy and cared for the contacts with *Hitlerjugend* from Königsberg in Prussia. Young people liked to imitate their friends from the Third Reich by wearing their uniforms daily and greeting each other with "Heil". Similarly to Latvia, the Estonian government showed concern and had to react: from 1937 to 1938, all youth associations were closed.[13]

Other German clubs and organizations in the Baltics were confronted with National Socialism and its ideas. *Deutsche Volksgemeinschaft in Lettland,* for instance, was forced to cooperate with the Third Reich and few leading positions were given to the Nazi members. As one could expect, this left many opponents (like Paul Schiemann, the "defender of minorities") with no choice but to leave the club. The same happened to *Rigasche Rundschau.* After 1933 the newspaper was taken over by the Nazi supporters, and those journalists who did not respond to the new German *Politik* decided to resign from their jobs. Even though A. Topij stresses that the Third Reich was not influencing the development of Nazi ideology in the Baltics, and German Balts were not that strong so that one could say that they stimulated the Nazi movement in Latvia, many scholars cannot help the feeling that "activists developing independently" simply could not exist. At the same time, he points out that, in Estonia, there was a support of negative attitude towards Jews. In the late 30s, for instance, German owners of the hotels were not ready to receive Jewish guests, and in many restaurants German waiters refused to serve the Jews. Additionally, it is stressed that Germany's main help for the minority in Latvia was financial for education and culture, which means the inspiration and deep concern about Nazi ideas were coming from Germany.[14]

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[12] Ibidem, 346–398
[13] Ibidem, 346–398.
[14] Ibidem, 346–398.

It is worth mentioning that in Estonia, unlikely in Latvia, the movement did not manage to influence culture. The old elite still created culture. Nevertheless, the Nazi activists succeeded among young people who were convinced that their only Heimat was the Third Reich, and they expressed willingness to join Germany in case of war. Moreover, they wished that their community would finally cease its existence as a minority which was not the case until 1945.[15]

**Willingness to belong**

German Biographers, who described their experience before resettlement, were clear in their statement of national aspirations: they wished to belong to National Socialist Germany. As described above, the infiltration of the then propaganda was reaching all social circles and was leaving each propagandee with pressing expectations to respond. The majority of Balts acknowledged that the physical integration of Germans into Germany was paramount, and the decisive factor was the will to be included. This will, as sources show, was desperate and, for instance, is well presented in a girl's letter to her uncle. While still in the Baltics, as a juvenile, her situation was troublesome. The official documents show that "every ethnically German person over 14 years of age was allowed to apply for immigration. Otherwise the decision of the family head held true for the whole family including adopted and foster children".[16] The girl expresses her love for old Heimat but a determination to move to Germany was, in this case, higher:

> Lieber Onkel Eugen (…) Ich glaube, dass mehr keine Hoffnung ist, dass ich fahren werde (…). Auf meiner Mutter Taufschein steht geschrieben, dass sie eine Lettin ist. Unser Hausvater sagte, dass er mich nicht lassen wird nach Deutschland. Du weißt gar nicht, wie ich jetzt unglücklich bin, dass ich nicht fahren darf. Ich habe in der Schule nicht gelernt die ganze Zeit. Ich weiß wirklich nicht, was ich machen soll. Lieber Onkel, mach doch das allermöglichste, was du kannst. Bitt an Großpapa, das er dir die Vollmacht gibt. Unser Hausvater sagt, dass andere nichts mehr zu sagen haben, aber ich will das gar nicht glauben […] mir ist hier alles bis zum Halse. Richtig dürfen sie mich gar nicht zurückhalten […] Lieber Onkel, bitte komm doch her, ich werde dich warten,

[15] Ibidem, 346–398.
[16] Alexa Stiller, On the Margins of Volksgemeinschaft. Criteria for Belonging to the Volk within the Nazi Germanization Policy in the Annexed Territories 1939–1945, in: Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann, Maiken Umbach (eds.) Heimat, Region, and Empire. Spatial Identities under National Socialism, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 199–212, here 236.

> aber wie schnell du kannst. Ich kann gar nicht verstehen, wie können sie mich nicht lassen, wen Großpapa haben will, dass ich fahre.[17]

The desperation of the person writing is evident, and she cannot believe there is no other way to let her go. A similar attitude is presented in another example. Here a German lawyer writes about one of his clients: a mother who is dedicated to taking her son to Germany but has no idea where the boy's father is, and without father's permission, the boy is not allowed to leave. Mother explained it to the lawyer:

> Das ist es ja gerade, Herr Rechtsanwalt, – wo soll ich ihn denn finden? Er ist ein Lump, der sich seit Jahren nicht mehr um uns gekümmert hat, – nicht einen Pfenning haben wir von ihm gesehen! Seit zwei Tagen reise ich kreuz und quer durchs Land, um ihn zu suchen, damit mein Sohn nach Deutschland kann und nicht zwischen Letten und Gott weiß was für Volk verkommt. Alles umsonst, – niemand weiß, wo mein Mann geblieben ist.[18]

Above quotations confirm Celia Applegate's thesis that people denied their Heimat to be committed to the idea of borderland. Even though Balts praised their Heimat in *Baltikum* (which will be shown later) and wrote long passages in their diaries to speak about the beauty and greatness of their home region, it almost always ended up with the conclusion of the absolute priority of the nation and blood ties that are above social and cultural. In other words, Balts received manipulated categories of blood and race which undermined the understanding of hometown, province and locality. Furthermore, the reorganization of German clubs and associations in the Baltic States robbed Heimat of its local independence, and all local activities could continue only in favour of the regime.[19] Finally, the understanding of Heimat was changed from a conservative value into a dynamic token of expansionist ambitions.[20] Nonetheless, the change in perception of Heimat required the change in personal understanding of individuals. The shift into new a person who creates a new community turned out to be a challenging process for Baltic Germans. To their advantage, they made a tool for this "reidentification shift" which will be discussed below.

[17] APP/800/146/26, M., Liebe Onkel Eugen, place and date unknown.
[18] APP/800/146/144, A. I., Zurück!, place and date unknown.
[19] Applegate, A Nation of Provincials, 205, 212–220.
[20] Elizabeth Boa, Rachel Palfreyman, Heimat - A German Dream. Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890–1990, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 5.

### 2.3. “Bad poetry but it is poetry nevertheless”: Personal Transformation into National Socialist Community

Moving from the Old Heimat of *Baltikum* to the new German territories created a very intense and stressful mood for the Balts, and they had to find new ways to deal with this transformation. During that time, collectively, they experienced diverse affective, feelings evoking events, and as an emotional community, their expressions are analysed further in this work.

I mentioned before that if Heimat or home “is the story of peoples’ lives”, it can be anything.[21] There is no theoretical distinction between place and space. The first one is an actual locality, and the second one means the general idea of “where things should be”.[22] This idea made Balts struggle and suffer because they did not want to leave the Baltics but, at the same time, they wanted to express their affiliation to the Third Reich. But Balts also said that they were going to remain rooted in their Baltic history and identity while receiving the “new identity” of *Volksegemeinschaft* and moving to a new place “where things should be”. In processing the thoughts on resettlement and searching for new meanings of expressions, Balts “committed” some poetry. “By disciplining their words, they honoured the rules”.[23]

Since it was a response to the then propaganda, their work is called “Nazi poetry” which Walter Knoche called “bad poetry, but it is poetry nevertheless”. In this way Nazi poetry can still be called poetry because the subject is the poem, not the author, it carries a message, it searches and combines words to express feelings, and it often uses figures of speech like metaphor, personification or rhetorical questions.

Knoche also pointed out that political poetry, in opposite to lyric poetry, may be helpful for historians. Lyrical qualities are timeless because they deal with primary human conditions. Opposite to it, the impact of political poetry is usually restricted in time because it has political nature, and the cause of writing the poem is political.[24] That is why the one who writes political poetry is not necessary the “real” poet. Still, he can be called the “Rufer”.[25] The “Rufer”, in opposition to the “Sender” who is a “real poet”[26], writes “to solve a problem or to champion a cause”, his text is “by nature didactic and propagandistic”.[27] His his voice must be understood

[21] Maruska Svasek, Narratives of “Home” and “Homeland”. The Symbolic Construction and Appropriation of the Sudeten German Heimat, in: Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power, vol. 9, no. 4 (2002), pp. 495–518, here 514.
[22] Ibidem, 497.
[23] Here I reference to the Soviet regime: Halfin, Red Autobiographies, 158.
[24] Knoche, The Political, 6.
[25] Knoche reminds us that the term was used by Werner Neusse in 1938, in: Knoche, The Political, 6.
[26] More about the German political works and poetry during the 1930s and 1940s: Uwe-K. Ketelsen, Die dreißiger und vierziger Jahre, in: Walter Hinderer (ed.), Geschichte der Deutschen Lyrik. Vom Mittelalter bis zum Gegenwart, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001, 477–501.
[27] Knoche, The Political, 6.

depending on the historical situation. That is why the Baltic poet is a "Rufer", but I am not sure whether this term ultimately reflects the person's motivation for Balts were not only writing to champion a cause, but they were also writing for themselves.

Initially, I want to state that the sources I analysed contain 11 poems. However, they are worth studying and, despite their small number, represent and correlate with other Biographers' texts. Moreover, many other, not poetic writings enclose poetical inserts, lyrical verses, expressions or songs. All these parts correspond with the poems (like a picturesque description of Baltic land[28], song[29] or phrases "to Heimat" or "to Riga"[30]). That is why I decided it is sufficient to treat these poems as representative of all the war-time texts in the context of personal transformation into the national community.

First, I must note that the Baltic Biographers' poems are "simple". I mean is that the reader has no difficulty understanding the words, expressions and sense of the texts. There are no hidden thoughts, no "reading between the lines" is required, the conclusion of each text is entirely predictable, there is no surprise or turning point, and in the end, the reader is not provoked for further reflections. The main aim of the wording is to encourage others, to justify the war and the resettlement, and to pressure the rest of the group, so they will also like to migrate. Unlike lyrical poetry, "Nazi poetry is to be read, not contemplated".[31] The poems usually talk about the old Heimat, i.e., nature, architecture, people and special places. They also present views and praises of the *Führer, Volk* and Fatherland. In the end, they envision new and content life in new Germany. Among diverse subjects like sacrifice, obedience and the significance of the blood connection, two themes emerge and seem to be reflections of Balts' understanding of the then events. First is the belief that Baltic Germans were of special value to the Third Reich. The second theme reveals the inner conflicts expressed in contradictions and negations, which are sudden changes in poems' tones. Balts present themselves as they were transformed from the local into the national community and became a part of *Volksgemeinschaft*. But how this transformation happened is not clear, and one cannot really "detect" this moment. With analysis of these two mentioned topics, I argue that writing poetry was a tool to do it and that producing the poetry itself was this transformation.

In the first place, I want to describe the most often appearing motif. Baltic Germans, who understood resettlement as cultural mission, desired to be seen as worthy. If they were to leave

[28] APP/800/146, 123 or 150, T. von, Abschied von Rickholz, place and date unknown, E.S. H. T. von, no title, Stargard (Pommern), date unknown.
[29] APP/800/146/377 B. H., Die Umsiedlung, Posen, date unknown.
[30] APP/800/146/12, S., Mein Baltenland, place and date unknown.
[31] Knoche, The Political, 6.

their homeland and make such a sacrifice for the *Führer*, they wanted to be recognized as unique and valuable. They wanted to show how helpful their community is. In other words, Balts imagined their resettlement is crucial to the plans of the Reich. Furthermore, they appeared to believe their "Baltic abilities and talents" could introduce new and fresh standards to Germany. Baltic Biographers noted: *Wir bringen Euch des Baltenlandes Gaben* and *Der Heimat bestes bringen wir Euch.*[32] Baltic Germans desired to carry to the new Heimat all that is typical for the Baltic landscape: "the silence of forest", "spring days of the North" and "the glow of white nights". Moreover, they wanted to offer their Germanness: *Deutsches Saatgut, das in uns sank, Wir bringen es heim in tiefem Dank.*[33] But since they bring the seed in thanksgiving, they mark the superiority of Germany over them: it is the state that did them a favour in bringing them home. Namely, even though they do something great for the state, it is the state that does something even more remarkable for them.

This motif of being unique and valuable for Deutschland reveals the submersion into the collective masses. Individual persons cannot be helpful for the great cause of the Reich. As Knoche noticed, a person was lost in the concept of *Vaterland*, and there was no room for individual personality. The collective was the centre of a person's existence[34]. In this case, Balts's work fit the standard ideas of Nazi poetry. They showed passionate dedication to what is German and went along with the then *Weltanschauung*: they declared their belief in blood relations.[35] They thus left their individualism because their value was as a national community. In this way, they prepared themselves to reidentification into Baltic *Volk*, performing in their understanding of Heimat. Moreover, they were ready to become The Third Reich Germans:

> Am Nachmittag ging ich dann in die Zentrale unserer Volksgemeinschaft, da brodelte und kochte es. Ein Kommen und Gehen, und von Stadt und Land kamen die Deutschen, um zu fragen, und wieder zu fragen. Bekannt über Bekannte traf man da, und freudig ging die Hand zum Gruß hoch, wie es doch verboten war. Was schert uns jetzt aber dieses Verbot, bald sind wir auch Reichsdeutsche, dann könnt ihr mit euren Verboten uns nicht mehr anhaben.[36]

[32] APP/800/146/5, Ch. H. von, Der Ruf erklang, place and date unknown.
[33] APP/800/146/1, H. B., Deutschland, place and date unknown.
[34] Knoche, The Political, 71–73.
[35] Ibidem, 53.
[36] APP/800/146/237, K. D., Liebe...!, Posen, 19. Dezember 1939.

Little had Balts known that taking their familiar into the unknown and offering their "Balticness" would be rejected by the authorities in Warthegau. In reality, they were recognized exclusively as a "settling material", which be explained further in this chapter.
Furthermore, there was something more to the unique "element" that Balts offered. It was their Heimat itself, either as the place they were coming from or a "thing" that was coming with them. According to Peter Blickle Heimat, a shared tradition, like childhood, extends beyond the roots of memory, providing a definite sense of self – and not only of self but also of a morally good self. In other words, by having Heimat with them, Baltic Biographers automatically contributed whatever was positive and beneficial. There was this naïve state of mind in which, through Heimat, eliminated the fear and uncertainty of self-definition and the fear of responsibility for one own's decision.[37] Thanks to poetic expressions the fear and the uncertainty were removed, and, for a moment, Baltic community was able to see itself as a valuable part of the Third Reich.
The second motif that emerges from Baltic Nazi poetry is a tendency to contradict. Stream of contradictions is not a theme but rather a way of writing or presenting this theme. On the one hand, German poets express their inability to give up the Baltics because this is their "true Heimat". On the other hand, they say it is *Deutschland* that they are the most deeply connected with.[38] Authors know the value of their land. To paraphrase one poem, they acknowledge this is their land and that they are rooted in it: *wie lieg' ich tief in Dir, wie oft haben wir's gesungen und gefühlt.*[39] Balts' connection to the land and nature is expressed with vivid and picturesque language that shows genuine appreciation and the ability to observe the locale:

> Die Landschaft war dort so bezaubernd schön, dass man darüber die ganze Dürftigkeit des sonstigen Lebens vergessen konnte. Unvergessen wird das Birkenwäldchen die Birse bleiben in ihrem ersten zarten Frühlingsgrün, unvergessen die Uferwiese mit ihrem Blumenschmuck, die schön Eichen an den Abhängen, die vielen roten, süßen Erdbeeren.[40]

Nevertheless, when the reader is convinced of the Author's passion for the old Baltic Heimat and to ability to appreciate all of its details, the poem changes its overtone and submits to the nuances of propaganda. Usually, this propagandist part of the poem blemishes the beauty of the

[37] Blickle, Heimat, 136.
[38] APP/800/146/1, H. B., Deutschland, place and date unknown.
[39] APP/800/146/ 37, I. N., Weites Land ohne deutsche Menschen, place and date unknown.
[40] APP/800/146/ 246, H. R., Aufbruch, Morkonos (Wartheland), date unknown.

whole text; it interrupts and finally makes no sense to the preliminary ideas of the homeland. Authors compromise their own beliefs: first they are independent to describe their feelings about the Baltics but later they submit to ideas of propaganda: "Ich weiß, dass der Entschluss dich Übermenschliches kostet, aber welchen Sinn hätte es für den Einzelnen hier zu bleiben, wenn die Leitung unserer Volksgruppe die Rückwanderung beschlossen hat? "[41] Or they repeat the then popular slogans*:* "Jetzt gehen wir nach jahrhundertelanger Kulturarbeit, um in die großdeutsche Heimat zurückzukehren".[42] The variation of contradiction would be negation which is more of a pattern than a motif as such because it does not seem to be intentional "figure of speech" in Balts' works. All negations revealed the struggle in the fall of 1939.

As mentioned, Biographers wanted to bring to Germany the "Baltic spirit" with all valuable skills and talents. But then they negate it and express that they do not want to go far away: "Wir wollen nicht ins Weite". And the following line of the same stanza says they would like to stand "by the side" of Germany: "Wir wollen gern zur Seite stehn". While interpreting it is confusing to know where the poet would like to be, although he assures whose side he would like to stand by: "Den Deutschen, nicht den Polen".[43] The contradictions show how Biographers wanted to express themselves in poetically, with meaningful words or metaphors but they were unable to become a "Sender", and they must have remained at the position of the "Rufer" whose *Empfänger* was, in reality, the Third Reich. No matter how impressive they start, their texts almost always end with political overtones. They become, what Uwe – K. Ketelsen calls, an instrument to the propaganda apparatus, and they share the central ideas of fascism, like racial hatred (*Rassenhaß*), military tradition (*Soldatentum*), agrarian romanticism (*Agrarromantik*) and desire for imperial expansion (*imperialistische Expansionsgelüste*).[44]

There is another concept inevitably connected to the "migrating poets" or migrants in general – it is nostalgia. Balts never mentioned the word "nostalgia" because they were not emigrants or exiles in a traditional way. The Nazi authorities expected they desired their new German fatherland so the conventional "longing for home in the past" was not that visible. Nonetheless, even though they did not write about it directly, they were experiencing nostalgia, another aspect that caused inner confusion or struggle. New standards of Nazi reality forbid them to be concerned about reconstructing their past or, in other words, to think about it. Balts were torn between a sense of longing and belonging. They longed to be united with their German

[41] APP/800/146/ 140–141, A. I., Zurück!, place and date unknown.
[42] APP/800/146/ 176, no author, Wie ich das Erntedankfest 1939 erlebte, place and date unknown.
[43]APP/800/146/8, Ein 9-jähriges Maedel schickt aus Pommern am Ende eines Briefes ein selbstgemachtes "Gedicht": "Wir wandern", place and date unknown.
[44] Ketelsen, Die dreißiger, 492.

homeland, but at the same time, they belonged to the Baltic countries. The sentiment towards the Baltics was very high, and it was reflected in their moods and a realization that one could not go back to past experiences and emotions.[45] Biographers' works show that authors were thinking about their past as idyllic and fabulous. Especially in their poems, their Baltic identity is exposed, and they seem to want to remember and maintain it in a new place. At the same time, while moving to Warthegau, they had to integrate new elements of *Volksgemeinschaft* with all migrating German groups from other parts of Europe into a new Heimat.[46]

### Post-war recollections

During the resettlement, Balts went through the tension of imagining and understanding where their true Heimat was. They desired *Baltikum*, but also "wanted to want" Warthegau as their homeland. In recollections written after the war, there is an authentic relief that there is no more need to decide: the true Heimat was in the Baltics, and five years in western occupied Poland became just an episode of people's journey. Finally, this distinction was clear and in post-war recollections, Warthegau is never called Heimat. During the war, the understanding of "where the Heimat is", *Baltikum* or New Germany seemed to be one of the most confusing experiences for the Biographers because one needs to remember that shifts in Heimat discourse started after the war. Balts never use expressions like first Heimat or second Heimat; they never speak of *Heimaten* (plural). They do not say: *Baltikum* was our first Heimat, but they instead understand the Heimat as a fixed or a utopian one place. This understanding might have reduced some of the tensions connected to mass relocation and personal transformations in response to the then regime. Biographers use the terms Old and New Heimat, but it is instead for the particular need of the moment, which was the fall of 1939. For the sake of narrative, one must discern and be clear about which Heimat one writes. Terms Old and New also define this as the last change, the final destiny, because there cannot be anything between or after, like Newer or Older Heimat. Even in the after-war compositions, Biographers do not recognise the Baltics as reclaimed or the third Heimat (after Warthegau being the second, the post-war Baltics would have to be the third one). That is why with the acceptance that there is only one real Heimat, the mass relocation brought so many degrees of pressure.

[45] The topic of nostalgia and its type (ex. Restorative or Reflecting Nostalgia) is described in: Katharina von Dessien, The Bittersweet Comfort of the Past. Nostalgia in the Literature of the Late 19th and Early 20th Century (Master thesis, Faculty of Humanities, Department of American Studies, Eberhard-Karls-University in Tübingen, 2014).

[46] Ibidem, 30, 52.

Ina-Maria Greverus argues that “human individuals, if they are to thrive as self-determining agents leading active and fulfilling lives, need a sense of spatial orientation within a flexible political and social framework”.[47] No doubt Balts expressed self-determination and a need to have a fulfilling life. Still, since 1939 (or even before when as a minority, they faced many limitations from Estonian or Latvian governments), there was no space with flexible political and social structure. In this way, the German community naturally wished for development and “free space” for their performance as a group and as individuals. They just did not have territory for it. Without realising it, their new Heimat became a “frame of mind” which is explained as “the commitment of citizens to the process of making a livable social space”. Individual effort constantly adapts and recreates the social space[48], which the Baltic group was to become aware of in their New Heimat of Wartheland.

### 2.4. Warthegau: New Heimat or Heimat, Again, Abroad

#### 2.4.1. Arrival to Wartheland

In new Heimat, the Baltic group had lost its “title” of the national community. It is not that there were no more expressions of *Volk* or *Gemeinschaft* to be heard, but upon the arrival to the Wartheland, to their new Heimat, it had become more and more clear Balts were indeed just an “ethnic resource” for colonizing the east. Nazi apparatus would still call ethnic Germans *Siedler* or *Umsidler*, but in occupied Poland, it started to carry a new meaning. Elizabeth Harvey says that “German resettlers were treated as the human material for a project of settler colonialism”.[49] No doubts the ideas of Nazi planners, Himmler and other “racial experts” about the “German drive to the east” and ethnic restructuring go way back in the past. Arthur Greiser, their leader in Warthegau, told them:

> Mit der Rückberufung in euer Vaterland, das Deutschland heißt, ist damit in voller Erkenntnis und bewußt eine 700jährige geschichtliche Epoche abgeschlossen worden. [...] Das ist aber nicht der Sinn, in welchem euch der Führer in das Großdeutsche Reich heimgeholt hat, und nach welchem er euch zum allergrößten Teil mitten in die Anfänge der Aufbauarbeit im Reichsgau Wartheland in Marsch gesetzt hat. Mit der Ansetzung in meinem schönen Gau habt ihr also eine verpflichtende Aufgabe übernommen.[50]

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[47] Boa, Palfreyman, Heimat, 194.
[48] Ibidem, 195.
[49] Harvey, Management and Manipulation, 95.
[50] Die baltische Geschichte und Tradition abgeschlossen. Eine Rede des Gauleiters Greiser, in: Ost-Rundschau from 15. August 1941.

Nonetheless, for Baltic Germans, the matter of being a "human material" for the colonial project became a reality only after October and November 1939. This is an important fact because it again triggered the question of the new identity within the regime and was a sort of shock that began a deconstruction of the expectations from New Heimat and intensified the general disappointment with the new place. In her article about the Nazi regime's management and manipulation, Harvey focuses on the treatment of the settlers and the strategies to manipulate them. She says there was an ambition to control the settlers, but there were also limits to this control and Nazis' power which, almost always, led to some destruction.[51]

Bringing new sources of the population to the eastern territories was supposed to create "a thriving peasant-based society" with a restructuring of towns and a "balanced" economy. In reality, Heimat for Balts meant no secure place for settlement but borderlands of mixed ethnicity. Nazi expansionism was constantly pushing the "border" and thus delivering new actions of settlement, displacement, deportation and destruction of "alien populations".[52] This became a New Heimat, no idyllic promised land, no *Heim ins Reich* but an actual immediate environment of wartime colonization with racial and genocidal warfare. Suddenly their "Baltic talents and skills" that they were so keen on bringing with them lost their value. The values of the Baltics were not desired in New Heimat because Arthur Greiser wanted to break up resettlers communities and create a "great German identity". "Gauleiter Greiser has said several times, the Balts are to forget that they are Balts, the Bavarians that they are Bavarians, and so on. As he says, here they should all blend together as a "great German people through the great German task of forging the Reich's food supply".[53]

After arrival to Wartheland, Balts became aware of the fact that they were actually colonists, and their Biographies started to show this experience. Balts began to write from a different perspective, suddenly realizing the presence of other nationalities and acknowledging foreign territory. They stopped seeing themselves as "chosen people" of a "chosen Führer", and understood they shared the experience with other German communities. Furthermore, "their position was an ambiguous one: while they had the spoils of Nazi conquest bestowed upon them and enjoyed for a while the privileges of the 'master' in occupied Poland, they can also be seen as pawns or even victims of the gigantic enterprise of population restructuring embarked on by the Nazis".[54] In other words, the regime was ready to give them "anything" they needed and to

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[51] Hervey, Management, 96.
[52] Ibidem, 98.
[53] Epstein, Model Nazi, 173.
[54] Harvey, Management, 99.

provide with resources for living: house, farm, school. But at the same time, German communities were under total control of the regime, i.e., the under constant check of their performance and great intolerance for their failures.[55]

### 2.4.2. Heimat: Desire for a Secure Place

There is no doubt that Germans, who were first placed in the camps in Warthegau, were enduring various conflicts. In a collection of letters to her relatives, one Author struggled with no certainty of the final destination. She was desperate to stay in Poznań, but it was not sure for some time. For her, it was a severe *Nervenkrieg*, and a time when one had to hold on (*durchhalten*).[56] According to her letters, the main reason to stay in Poznań was the education possibilities for her children, also because of the teachers who worked mainly in Poznań. She also lists many relocated to Poznań persons she knows from the Baltics, which was another reason for her to stay in Poznań. She wanted to be among friends and families she knew. Additionally, she feared being transferred to Lodsch because of the geographical location. To her, this city was too far in the east, and to live there would be like an exile from the real Reich (*Verbannung vom richtigen Reich*). In her text, she goes on that for them, Lodsch means an ugly city (*häßliche Stadt*) where one can experience only *Heimweh*. Interestingly, she also says that settling in Lodsch is possible only for the brave pioneers (*sehr tapfere Pioniere*) because they can serve as a "good example". The Author does not seem to see herself as a brave pioneer or at least brave enough to go "so far" east. Now and then, the Author repeats how important it is to stay in Poznań. She also says that others are desperately willing to stay there too, also if it means worse or less paid job: "Eben sprechen wieder viele von Lodsch, die hin sollen: Frau Ingenieur K., die lieber in Posen an dritter Stelle, als in Lodsch an erster Stelle sein will." Or in another place, she continues: "Aber Frl. K. […] Man bietet ihr eine Dorfschule an. Nein, das möchte sie doch nicht. Sie lebt mit ihrem Bruder, dem Apotheker, zusammen und möchte hier arbeiten […]. Man schickt sie in ein Etablissement, wo sie – Flaschen spüllen soll (…]".[57] The desperate wish to stay in Poznań was connected to better living conditions, higher chances of becoming a job, greater possibility to live among family and friends and better, or at all, perspectives for the education for children.[58] According to the Biographers, people were reluctantly accepting houses in remote villages where, for instance, no schooling was possible.

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[55] Ibidem, 99.

[56] Letters, private collection of Ms Renate Adolphi, 2 (own pagination).

[57] Ibidem, 5, 10, 15 (own pagination).

[58] How the education was organized by the Nazi regime one can find, among others, in: Georg Hansen, Ethnische Schulpolitik im besetzen Polen: der Mustergau Wartheland, Brandenburg: Waxmann, 1995 or Joachim Weiß, Zur nationalsozialistischen Einflußnahme auf Schulgeschichtsbücher, in: Internationale Schulbuchforschung, vol.3 no. 5 (1981), pp. 112–124.

Moreover, Poznań was not seen as a "province", but as an old German territory. It was remembered that it was a part of the German Empire from 1871 until 1918 or a province of Prussia since 1848.

After starting life in New Heimat, all poetical overtones about Führer's soldiers or bravery to being a substantial part of the Third Reich disappeared. After experiencing the borderlands of mixed ethnical groups and realizing all difficulties related to the settlement in the east, Biographers do not seem to want to be "brave pioneers" any more. Still, their first concern was about guaranteeing a secure place to live.

### 2.5. The Best Ethnic Material? Separation of the German Groups

It is very significant how the Nazi imagination of Baltic Germans – that they were the *wertvolle Siedlungsmaterial*, and Balts' reception of themselves, i.e., the high value of their origins, was contrary to the situation after 1939.[59] Even though the racial policy of Nazi Germany was uplifting the German race, Baltic Germans were experiencing the unequal treatment within all the consequences of their new German citizenship. I wanted to entitle this paragraph "Balts discriminated" but in the context of the Second World War, this term could give a wrong correlation. Nonetheless, after their resettlement, Baltic Germans, faced various unfairness and separation. The National Socialists and connected circles were convinced that only people with German blood could be or become German citizens. Yet, the Nazi leader's policies showed that community membership could have many levels and did not necessarily mean equality. "Basic human equality is associated with […] full membership of a community".[60] However, for the Baltic Germans, "belonging" did not automatically reduce tensions within the *Volk*. Still in the Baltic area, and in Warthegau, resettlers heard pompous speeches about Führer's call and their cultural mission in the East. Yet, while these speeches would talk about the importance of belonging and responsibilities, in practice, the citizens of Great Germany would not be treated equally.

The naturalisation process of Baltic Germans enabled them to accept Wartheland as a new Heimat. Every Balt who came to Warthegau had to renounce Latvian or Estonian citizenship – the process of *Ausbürgerung* – and receive a German one, so-called *Einbürgerung*. Referring to their poetic works, which were the tool of transformation into the new community, the process of expatriation and naturalisation was more of a transformation in practice or even a ritual of receiving a new personal status:

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[59] This case study about the war-time town Rogasen can be found in: Szymankiewicz –Vincent, A Different Citizenship, 225–240.

[60] Thomas H. Marshall, Citizenship and Social Class, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1950, 8.

> On 11 December 1939, I picked up my certificate of naturalisation. This day meant so much for me, as much as a wedding day means for other women, which leads to a happy marriage. I will never forget it. Now I am a full member of the German Empire and am fully at home here, where the Führer has established a new home. No longer a refugee or a guest, but at home (zu Hause).[61]

In the Baltics, Germans could have had an impression that they were being taken care of and entirely accepted as an equal member of the new German community. They were organized into the economy and bureaucracy of the Wartheland, and shortly after arrival into the new territories, they were allowed to claim reimbursement for the resettlement. Nazi government covered their travel costs and financially supported the migrants' new life. Support included everyday living expenses, additional help, like medical help for pregnant women, and education, which included occupational retraining.[62] In different parts of Warthegau, Baltic Germans were engaged in agricultural work and also in small undertakings. Catharine Epstein accurately illustrates general moods among all German groups:

> Although Greiser hoped to create a harmonious German community, the Gau's three main German constituencies were deeply divided. Reich Germans looked down on ethnic Germans; ethnic Germans resented the Reich Germans; Reich Germans were often dismayed by the 'un-German' qualities of resettlers; the resettlers were angered by patronizing Reich Germans; ethnic Germans were jealous of resettlers; and resettlers felt ill at ease among the ethnic Germans [...]. Throughout the occupation, these tensions never subsided. In January 1943, a Reichsstatthalter department reported that 'the individual German groups in the Gau still haven't totally merged. They often distinguish themselves from each other, while maintaining very strong ties among themselves, so that creation of a tightly obedient Volksgemeinschaft is fraught with difficulties'. A quip making the rounds in the Warthegau also captured intra-German tensions: 'The Baltic [Germans] speak Russian, the ethnic Germans Polish, the Poles German, the Reich German are speechles'.[63]

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[61] APP/800/42/383, B. H., Die Umsiedlung, Posen, date unknown, (this quotation has been used in a published article, and for this purpose it was translated into English).
[62] APP/Landratsamt Konin (455)/Rückwanderer, Baltendeutsche (62), 1–32.
[63] Epstein, Model Nazi, 175–176.

Belonging to a certain group was followed by different obligations, such as military service and privileges, like a priority in public transport or regular access to food supplies. That is why there is a lot of controversy around the DVL because it was causing a lot of tension among people. Depending on to which group a person belonged, unequal treatment appeared. Many received significant advantages, while others lacked food or fundamental rights. In many cases, especially for persons of German origins, one could choose whether to belong to group three or four of the DVL, and thus, among Poles, applying to be on the DVL list was a conscious decision to identify with the German invaders.[64]

The example of the town Rogoźno (Rogasen n German) in Warthegau shows how the Nazi government was creating barriers for the ethnic Germans. In 1938 there were 6159 inhabitants in Rogoźno: 5510 Poles, 586 Germans and 63 Jews. By the end of 1939, the number of Germans grew to 1350, including 367 individuals from "Old Germany"; another 879 people with German nationality, and 104 who were part of the mass resettlements (including Baltic Germans). At the beginning of the war, when German troops occupied Rogoźno, the town needed a new administration. For this new structure of power, Balts were among the most qualified or highly educated persons in Rogoźno. Many of them were trained teachers, pastors and musicians, yet none of these individuals had access to the power. Instead, Nazi authorities sent people from the Third Reich to create a new administration in the town and none of these new people had the needed qualifications. First, a local German who was a miller declared himself the town's new mayor. Few weeks later his daughter became the Town Secretary. Eventually, the new mayor was sent from the Third Reich, but, as it turned out, this man had previously worked as a truck driver. The leader of the Registry Office also came from Germany, where he had worked in a town hall as a housekeeper. Other people in the town's government had similar backgrounds.[65] Documents mention only one Baltic German who became the first manager of "Mühlenbauanstalt und Maschinenfabrik in Rogasen".[66] This factory was to satisfy the Third Reich war needs: it manufactured parts for aircraft and submarines, field kitchens, ammunition carts etc.

At this point, I would like to mention the settlers, who after leaving the camps and being placed in a house, farm or business, remained highly dependent upon the regime and its agencies.

[64] From a Polish perspective, inclusion on a German Peoples' List meant disloyalty and betrayal because it was a safe status during the war. It was to show a person's wish to belong to the German state and willingness to support the Nazi apparatus. On the other hand, *Volksdeutche* were taken care of by German authorities and thus regarded as enemies.

[65] Muzeum Regionalne Rogoźno (Museum of Rogoźno Region, Poland, MRR), Kronika Augustyna Smukalskiego 1919–1939 (Chronicle by Augustyn Smukalski – mayor of the town Rogasen – 1919–1939), no pagination.

[66] Zbigniew Boras (ed.), Dzieje Rogoźna, Poznań: Wydawn. Lega, 1993, 216.

Furthermore, they were not given security of tenure in their new properties.[67] German authorities were not officially making the resettlers the owners because many properties were kept as compensation or acquisition for fighting German soldiers. The final division and allotment of properties were planned to be done after the war.

The example of the occupied town Rogasen describes a situation that cannot be found in the war or post-war reflections of Baltic Germans. They do not express their reactions to their unfair treatment and separation among the German groups. In their personal accounts, the Biographers could not portray the German system in negatively, not because of the censorship but rather because they believed in a difficult situation as their country was at war. The time after the war also did not let Balts express how they were, or felt, "discriminated against" because a new perspective on Holocaust and war atrocities did not allow them to express any complaints about the time of the war.

### 2.6. Concluding Thoughts

Since the idea of Heimat was an essential element in both German fascism and German mass culture, Heimat was a crucial concept with which German Biographers negotiated their understanding of the world in which they lived.[68] Additionally, there was also a kind of oneness when "everyone feels good about having contributed".[69] Considerable majority of German Biographers described or mentioned Heimat which means it was a significant perception and place that generated an actual action: the resettlement to Germany and belief (mindset, perspective or opinion) in the National Socialist ideas and system.

Blickle stated that for historians, the Heimat topos means development, a process of progress from German provincialism into German nationalism. German Balts experienced this development within the idea of National Socialism. While still in the Baltics, the German minority underwent a process of severe administrative changes in the local clubs and associations. New National Socialist policies and persons were introduced, and the German community tolerated and welcomed the regime on a local level. Hans-Erich Volkmann shows that Nazi ideologues and influential Nazi Party members were there in Latvia and Estonia sometime before the resettlement of 1939.

Nonetheless, the ordinary Germans had to find their way to individual transformation into a national community. Poems written during the war became a way of expression and a tool to maintain this transformation. Still the lyrics were not free of struggle: first, it was revealed in

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[67] Harvey, Women, 159.
[68] Blickle, Heimat, 138, 157.
[69] Ibidem, 139.

the contradictions or sudden submissions to the then propaganda and later in unexpressed nostalgia that was breaking the Baltic emigrants with similar feelings of contradictory longing for the Third Reich community and belonging to the Baltics. Balts aspired to have a national sense of identity from their local attachment. The wish to be included to the German *Volksgemeinschaft* was clearly expressed. Here one can think of the similarities with the Bolshevik autobiographies, where the authors looked inward to find the meaning of their lives. The Soviet regime, similar to the Nazi one, aimed to change and perfect the Self, to create a new man. While Bolsheviks, in their ego documents, claimed to have seen the light of Communism, the Baltic German stories do not present any similar enlightenment about National Socialism.[70] The poetical reflections of Baltic Biographers are worthy of attention because of the figures of thought, without which the Authors would not have been able to turn the actual events of their lives into meaningful stories.

The observations within the study in this part presented the misconception of the value of the Baltic group. Balts needed the Führer to construct their new homeland, but the Führer did not need them, especially their origins. To their disappointment, they were degraded to "human material" for the ethnic relocations and experiments and expected to blend in with other German resettlers. In simple labelling of "who the real German is", Balts experienced practical intolerance and occupational setbacks. On the other hand, Balts seemed to accept the colonial view of conquered people (the typical view where natives cannot be trusted to govern themselves) but also received a new picture of the Nazi racial thinking.[71] However, the relocation brought practical problems of settlement in a new environment and Balts were challenged to review their presence in their new Heimat. Factual adaptation process made them see that their decisions had consequences they had not seen before (like the mass deportations of Polish Jews).

The second theory, next to Blickle's, is presented by Celia Applegate, who explains the significance of the locality. Based on her arguments, it can be assumed that if the German community had stayed faithful to its Baltic Heimat, it could have had the last word, which means it could have saved them from welcoming the Nazi regime. Instead, Balts broke with their locality and submitted to the central will and only in Warthegau they realized how much this submission costed. In practice, they had lost the title of national community and sought security in the new place. How important the local Heimat was for Balts revealed the post-war

[70] Halfin, Red Autobiographies, 3–5, 16.

[71] Martin Åberg, Review of, Elusive Alliance. The German Occupation of Poland in World War I by Jesse Kauffman, in: Peter Rutland et al. (ed.), *Nationalities Papers. The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, no. 3 (2018), pp. 526–527, here 526.

recollections that showed the relief in admitting that there is only one real Heimat – *Baltikum*. In this way, after 1945, Baltic Germans, in their memories, remained reserved, ignoring the topic of Warthegau Heimat and its National Socialist connotations.

This chapter shows the conflicts that the German minority was going through within the theme of Heimat. There were inner conflicts, like losing the value of the Baltic heritage in the new German territories. This included losing the title of privileged national community (as all German communities were to be unified and equalized). The struggle was that Balts were unable to express this disappointment. First, because they were not ready to complain about the then circumstances, and secondly, in post-war memories, the political-social discourse did not allow them to express their difficult situation in the Nazi occupied territories. The example of the town of Rogasen demonstrates unjust treatment and discrimination among different German groups.

In the end, I want to refer to the word "ground" which is a part of the Heimat motif, but in the German language, it means not only "land" or "soil" but also "reason". "The metaphorical grounding (German affinity for grounding) turns an imagined unity between subject and object into an absolute identity that is based on the ground of common reality".[72] It is an idyllic place where one wants to live, but as it has been observed, "the identity of Germans is labile and fleeting […] that is has to be anchored in the earth, tied to a territory". Baltic German Biographers seemed to receive the term "ground" in the context of *Volk ohne Raum* or *Blut und Boden* ideology. In this way, in cultural nationalism, concepts of space, ground, identity and Heimat started to intermingle in the German tradition. They supported expansionist desires.[73]

Ideas of the Führer, and the Third Reich were evolving among Germans in the Baltics, and within ten years, Biographers became ready to receive the "call to resettle". That is why in December 1939, in Poznań, one German Author noted that if this call to resettle had appeared ten years earlier, it would have fallen on deaf ears, for no real Balts leaves his home country so quickly.[74]

[72] Blickle, Heimat, 122.
[73] Ibidem, 126.
[74] APP/800/146/236 K. D., Liebe...!, Posen, 19. Dezemebr 1939.

## Chapter 3. "Aber das leise Gefühl hast du doch, als müsstest du sagen: Entschuldigen bitte, dass ich noch lebe".[1] Migrating Balts Reveal Emotions

"fühlen sich die Balten sehr fremd
und sehr bedeutungslos".[2]

### 3.1. Studying Emotions

In this work, when I write about Balts revealing their emotions, I do not mean to reconstruct their emotional life from the past or to discuss experimental psychology with a thesis that emotions are biologically preprogrammed responses or overlearned cognitive habits. Neither would I like to refer to the field of the anthropology of emotions, which is part of a debate and disagreements on "how, and to what extent, emotions are influenced, shaped or 'constructed' by culture".[3] Instead, I want to study the "emotional part" of Baltic Germans' resettlement and see how this group used emotions to deal with their sudden migration and how emotions influenced their understanding of the war conflict. Historians support the idea that "the study of emotions is a practice that interprets and shapes experience which does reflect but also alter the self, that varies and changes across time and place (…)".[4] The theory says that there is "inseparable interrelation of thinking and feeling" and that "the interpretive study deals with concrete times, places and texts".[5] In other words, historians interested in emotions "look at them in particular social locations and historical moments"[6] and they study them not in isolation but in the context in which they are manifested.[7]

Barbara Rosenwein discusses and provides relevant aspects of how to approach historical sources with emotional aspects (i.e., how to most effectively, according to her, interpret them).[8]

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[1] APP/800/146/62, F., Noch einmal in Riga, place and date unknown.
[2] Letters, private collection of Ms Renate Adolphi, Posen, 18. Januar 1940.
[3] William, M. Reddy, The Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of Emotions, Cambridge/MA: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 34.
[4] Mark D Steinberg, Valeria Sobol (eds.), Interpreting Emotions in Russia and Eastern Europe, Dekalb/IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011, 5.
[5] Ibidem, 6.
[6] Catherine A Lutz, Abu-Lughod Lila (eds.), Language and the Politics of Emotion, Cambridge/MA: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 5.
[7] Eiko Ikegami, Emotions, in: Ulinka Rublack (ed.), A Concise Companion to History, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 337.
[8] Barbara Rosenwein relied in her article on observations by Peter Stearns and his "emotionology" (social and economic change is the driver of emotional transformation, it serves new emotional standards) and by William Reddy, who names the agents of change: "emotional regimes", "emotional suffering" and "emotional refugees", in: Barbara Rosenwein, Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions, in: Passions in Context, vol. 1 (20210), pp. 1–32, here 17 (22.05.2023), retrieved from: https://alioshabielenberg.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Rosenwein-2010-Problems-and-Methods-in-the-History-of-Emotions.pdf.

In the beginning, it is worth indicating that while studying the emotions, one does not deal with feelings per se but with their expressions[9] because it is hard to detect a feeling if it was not expressed in the first place. After recognizing these expressions or reflections, one needs to examine emotions "as doing things and having effects in the world".[10] Additionally, it is essential to remember that there could also be a lack of specific emotions (expressions of them). In a particular context this silence provides information as well.[11] Baltic Germans as the emotional or imagined community[12] during the time of the war, collectively experienced diverse affective, feelings evoking events: the trauma of losing the homeland (*das Trauma des Heimatverlustes*), fear of conflict with Latvians and Estonians on one side and "Bolshevism" (as they used to refer to Russian threat in 1939–40) on the other, and a great disappointment with the fact that in 1939 Adolf Hitler gave up the Baltics. Finally, they experienced escape (*Flucht*) from Wartheland in 1945. Emotionally charged parts of German biographies from the time of the war have their continuation in the after-war recollections. The last ones became a tool to process the feelings from the resettlement and struggles of explanation of the attitude towards National Socialism.[13] The main intention of writing during the war was to officially encourage other German minorities to resettle and, actually, it was about finding their place in the Nazi ideology. The prime motive of post-war recollections was "a desire to communicate with others about the personal past".[14]

The "emotional paths" that Baltic Germans were called to undergo in 1939 included following: the outbreak of war, sudden instructions for the resettlement, leaving the homeland, mass transport to newly occupied German territories and expectations of quick adjustment to new environment. The recollections of Baltic Germans show that each part of this path released serious reactions which introduced new emotional standards. The situation of Balts developed into a new struggle where individuals desired to explain and justify their actions. At the same time, restricted by Nazi apparatus that dictated some dominant norms of everyday life, their stories find a place within the concept of the "emotional regime"[15] of modern dictatorships, namely, marked with censorship, political and military monopolies or economic control.

[9] In the present work, only written documents are studied, although one should be aware of the research that interprets the expressions of emotions on photographs (faces, gestures, postures).
[10] Steinberg, Sobol, Interpreting Emotions, 6.
[11] Rosenwein, Problems and Methods, 17.
[12] The term "imagined community" was first used by Benedict Andersn.
[13] Maris Saagpakk explains the term autobiography and characteristics of Baltic Germans' personal documents throughout her article, in: Saagpakk, Die Umsiedlung, 1.
[14] William Hirst, David Manier, Remembering as Communication. A Family Recounts Its Past, in: David C. Rubin (ed.), Remembering Our Past. Studies in Autobiographical Memory, Cambridge/MA: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge/MA 1996, pp. 271–290, here 271.
[15] Rosenwein, Problems and Methods, 22.

German war texts contain an apparent response to the Nazi propaganda and express feelings of encouragement, joy and excitement, but also sadness of leaving the Baltic homeland.

By and large, the limited freedom of speech dominates the content of any composition I used as a source for this work. What follows is the matter of reliability of the captured information: one has to be constantly aware of censorship, self-censorship, and writing under pressure or control and fear of consequences after writing "the truth" or "true feelings". These aspects were usually present in National Socialism because modern dictatorships with various offensive tactics and techniques affected people and their everyday lives. Jacques Ellul in "Propaganda" explains how these techniques reach and encircle "the whole men and all men". He regards propaganda as a "sociological phenomenon rather than as something *made* by certain people for certain purposes".[16] Propaganda, which turns to men's feelings[17], through all kinds of media (movies, newspaper, poster, radio) speaks to all men and the propagandee (the one subjected to propagandising) needs it for personal involvement and participation in important events. The individual in mass society is pressed by a "totality of forces".[18] Since propaganda study involves investigation of its diversity of techniques and turns to the propagandists, the analysis of Baltic Germans' texts would be turning to the people subjected to it and answering the main concerns: effectiveness and leading people to action or non-action, to prevent from interfering.[19] The documents are in a high measure the response to the National Socialist indoctrination.[20]

This part is divided into three categories, and it intends to study the emotional conditions of the resettled German community, including the basic feelings of happiness, sadness and fear. It shows some attitude (*Haltung*) towards National Socialism and its leaders, how decisions were preferred to be made by "those in power" and how Biographers tried to make their stories meaningful.[21] The method of content analysis intends to establish what was valuable, harmful and ignored by Balts, how they understood bonds between people and the relationship to the Third Reich. I also try to show how one presents the self within society and to check how

[16] Jacques Ellul, Propaganda. The Formation of Men's Attitiude, New York: Vintage Books, 1968, v (from Introduction by Kellen Konrad).
[17] Werner Betz, The National-Socialist Vocabulary, in: Jacques Rueff (ed.): The Third Reich, Bungay: Weidenfeld and Nocolson, 1955, pp. 784–796, here 785.
[18] Ellul, Propaganda, vii.
[19] Ibidem, vi.
[20] The subject of propaganda is not studied in this article. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that research about Nationalism similar to that around the Stalinism era revolves around revisionism and the relationship between the Mitläufer (or Aufsteiger) and the System that for political loyalty offered career and social status to its people (see works by Jochen Hellbeck).
[21] More for "sense making" and "logic" as an aim of biographers in: Pierre Bourdieu, Die biographische Illusion, in: Zeitschrift für Biographieforschung und Oral History und Lebensverlaufsanalysen (BIOS), vol. 32, no. 1, (1990), pp. 75–81, here 75.

emotions build power relations.[22] Personal experiences of the Second World War illustrate the war's impact on people and their understanding of the conflicts. As already said, by "conflicts" I mean the different levels of personal struggles: within family, neighbourhood or other nationalities and life-changing decisions under the pressure of the state, in this case, the dictatorship of the Third Reich. These noncombat memories[23] reveal the paths travelled by many individuals, families and groups and show how their life was unprecedentedly transformed. I also give attention to detecting any shifts in a system of emotions between the war texts and those written after the war.

Here I want to remind that while quoting documents from 1939 to 1940 I kept the original spelling. It is important to remember that Germans who lived in the Baltic States held the citizenship of the actual residence, and the language of that place was usually the first they used, for instance, Latvian or Estonian. Spelling or grammar mistakes suggest a lack of fluency in German and thus reveal the struggles of expression, which could have been an additional emotional burden during the Nazi period.

### 3.2. Searching for Expressed Emotions: Happiness, Sadness and Fear

#### 3.2.1. Optimistic Reaction – Happiness

To a certain extent, National Socialist propaganda created a unique period of time[24], and it affected many individuals emotionally. Propaganda literature assumes that man does not tend to decide for himself. Thus the terror of the Third Reich "neutralized the masses, forced them into passivity, threw them back on their private life and personal happiness to leave a free hand to those who are in power […]."[25] In this light the eve of the resettlement worked for Baltic Germans contradictory: they were not thrown or pushed into their private life with "personal happiness", but with every possible attitude they themselves lifted the forced migration to the point of the optimistic event. Nazi apparatus went on with its policy, and Baltic Germans essentially allowed their private emotional sphere to be infiltrated. In their descriptions, they documented that emotions of happiness were consequences of the policy of Nazi leadership.

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[22] The issue of emotions as power relations is well explained by Joanna Bourke. She exhausts the topic of fear and anxiety and explains the approach of emotions with its language-game, "emotionology" and "anesthesiology", Joanna Bourke, Fear and Anxiety. Writing about Emotion in Modern History, in: History Workshop Journal, vol. 55 (2003), 111–133.

[23] "Noncombat memories" is a term that Olivier Wieviorka used to stress the difference between the recollections of the Great War and the Second World War, Olivier Wiewiorka, Divided Memory. French Recollections of World War II from the Liberation to the Present, Stanford/CA: Stanford University Press, 2012, 3.

[24] By "unusual" I mean Joseph Goebbels and Adolf Hitler's phenomenon of crowd impact with all the consequences of war crimes. One should not forget other forms and historical periods of propaganda: for instance, communist propaganda or democracy propaganda (today called as a discipline of Public Relations).

[25] Ellul, Propaganda, 192.

Balts shaped the expressions of their happiness on every occasion, which means that any situation could become a platform for joy, pleasant feelings or a cheerful attitude. In the beginning, it could be hard to imagine positive reactions could follow forced resettlement conducted during the war. Still, while Germans were exposed to the propaganda, it is natural that they did remain under its influence, and their opinions and attitudes did modify. Casual events, meeting neighbours or descriptions of nature or households are noted, but when it comes to emotions, they appear within the Authors' first impression.

**First impressions**

While still in the Baltics, shortly before the relocation, the feeling of being proud of Germany was remembered. The Authors especially stressed the uniqueness of the German group among other nations in the Baltic States and its organizational skills while preparing for leaving the port of Riga. Often the first impression was of the ships waiting for Balts to take them to their new homeland. Many Authors who were children in 1939 remember the picture of waiting *Dampfer* as the mark of change. Prepared ships were a symbol of coming transformation and the reason for national pride: "Letten staunen nur so – solche Schiffe haben sie wohl noch nie gesehen! "[26] This very document was written in 1960 and is constructed as a drama (in the sense of literary genre) with the title "Vier baltische Frauen am Kaffeetisch 1939, 1942, 1950". The first scene took place in Riga in November 1939. Using the drama composition, the author tries to reconstruct not the events but the then feelings and the emotional atmosphere of the resettlement. The main topic of the conversation revolved around packing, what was allowed to be taken and how difficult it was to leave certain things. In general, the heroines of the drama praised two things: extraordinarily organized undertakings of the leadership and excellent passenger liners. The text says that people were happy to be a part of such an organized community which, for resettlement, provided all necessary items. They felt that the Third Reich remembered and cared for them. For the coming resettlement, all needed materials were sent directly from Germany: packing materials and trucks for transporting the furniture and household items. Just the idea of things sent by their fellow citizens – Germans from the Old Reich – was a desired assurance of the success of the migration. The Author wrote: Ich finde es fabelhaft.[27] In the same document she had continued about the news from Germany: Rigasche Rundschau brachte einen Brief aus Gotenhafen – schon von unseren Balten – demnach soll es

[26] Andrea Stegman, Am Vorabend der Umsiedlung, in: Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums (1960), pp. 85–90, here 88.
[27] Ibidem, 86–87.

ja ganz gut sein, fertige Wohnungen, alles vorhanden, sogar Eigenmachtes und Gemüse im Keller haben sie vorgefunden. Having little information before leaving the Baltic land brought some light into the fear of unknown destiny.

Memories of joyful moments had again considered first impressions. It was a sweet bread with a confiture (*Marmeladenstullen*) given after the arrival to the harbour in Gdynia (or *Gotenhafen* because Authors use both German and Polish names), which was a confirmation that life in the new homeland was going to be better.[28] Thus the variety of the fruit jam ("4 flavours mixed in a big bucket") brought memories of the first impressions after the arrival to Gdynia. There are also first impressions of happiness when Balts, after reaching Gdynia, heard German songs or saw the board with welcoming words. While still on the ship, Balts were welcomed, through the loudspeakers, in the name of the *Führer*, and they were happy when finally allowed going ashore (*glücklich waren wir)*. When the whole action of resettlement was completed: "wir sind so glücklich, und es kommt so über einen, dass es unfassbar erscheint, ein Freuen (…)".[29] In the war texts influenced by the German propaganda the source of joy and satisfaction was to see young people, organized within *Hitlerjugend* and *Bund Deutscher Mädel*, helping newly arrived Balts.[30] Worth to notice, the expressions of positive feelings in these texts are expressed in actions of others, especially connected to the Nazi organizations. Authors of documents from 1939 to 1940 appreciated leadership's efforts and identified it as their own well-being and satisfaction.

**Giving examples of others, descriptions by youth**

Sometimes when Authors could not express their own positive emotions, they described the situation of others. Parents, usually mothers, talk about children and their excitement while packing before they leave. They talk about neighbours' future plans in Germany, and describe friends who convinced their families to leave the Baltic land. Teachers write how it was at the school after a few days the news about leaving was announced: "Spannung war groß. Die Mädel schwatzten und redeten durcheinander, jede musste doch noch schnell erzählen. Wie viel sie beim Einpacken geholfen habe, und wie wichtig sie deshalb sei".[31] Lacking good examples of joy reasons, Balts tended to compare themselves with those who were extremely against the resettlement. In that way the Aauthor's situation always looked better. For instance, the Authors

[28] Olrik Breckoff, Zwischenspiel an der Warthe – und was daraus wurde, in: Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums, (1994), pp. 142–149, here 142.
[29] APP/800/146/105–106, S.K., Meine lieben beiden Mädel, Posen, date unknown.
[30] Ibidem.
[31] APP/800/146/221, E.K., Der letzte Appell, Posen, date unknown.

stressed that there was no quarrel in the family concerning the travel or that at least their children were obedient and involved in work at the harbour in Riga. Compared with Germans who did not wish to fulfil their duties toward the Reich, those who followed the call of the Führer were putting themselves automatically in a better light, and that was the reason for happiness: Balts were aware of the fact that they had understood the whole situation and had the potential to sacrifice. Their relationship to the Reich was expressed in the ability to sacrifice. Doubts of adults were often hidden behind the enthusiasm of the children. Many texts present a description of their behaviour or with a child as an author (whether a child really wrote the composition is another question since it was common for the propaganda to use the children's experience). Writing about the innocence of the children and youth was an opportunity to hide fears and expose the happiness that was common for the whole community. A 14-year-old girl, as she celebrates her birthday on 18th October 1939, writes in her diary:

> Ich bin furchtbar aufgeregt, es past schlecht zu meiner neuen Würde, aber ich kann nicht dafür. Onkel Harro fährt heute, um 9 Uhr muss er im Hafen sein, um 11 werden die Kollis angeholt und um 2 geht es aufs Schiff! Na so was! Grade an meinem Geburtstag! Das vergesse ich sicher niemals! And then she continues: ich bin ganz wirr, im Traum seh ich sicher nur Kisten und Schiffe (…) ich bin todmüde.[32]

Children are shown as the ones who are amused during the resettlement: they are excited about packing, organizing the carrying boxes, going to the harbour to see the ships, dreaming about the new land and taking the whole action in an adventurous way.[33] In documents by Authors who could not directly share the enthusiasm of resettlement, the description of happy children was the way to do that. Sharing somebody else's experience of joy was a form of expressing positive emotions.

**"Small miracles"**

Many texts are rich in "small miracles". For example, there were situations when a very stubborn person, according to the Biographer, suddenly changed his mind and, instead of staying, decided to leave with everybody. Another example is when a neighbour managed to

[32] APP/800/146/244, L.S., Aus meinem Tagebuch, Posen, date unknown.

[33] The only given reason of trouble for children was the fact that they had to leave school. Nevertheless, in majority that was concern of the parents.

collect all needed for the resettlement documents within a short time or a person who was sick suddenly became fine and did not have to stay in the Baltic land:

> [...] die Mutter meines Mannes liegt schwerkrank im Bett. Die Ärzte schütteln hoffnungslos den Kopf. Kaum wagt ihre Tochter ihr von dem Rücksiedlungsprojekt zu erzählen. "Wenn du willst Mutterchen, so bleibe ich hier bei dir". Da richtet sich die 75-jährige auf: "Was denkst du dir, mein Kind? Ich bin doch eine Deutsche". So einfach ist das und so entscheidend. Und der Entschluss wirkt Wunder. Nach zwei Tagen steht die Kranke auf, lässt sich in die eigene Wohnung zurückfahren, überwacht dort das Packen ihrer Sachen und wird von Tag zu Tag kräftiger.[34]

Accounts often described relentless people: those who did not want to leave their workplace, profession or family house. These texts were always about others, and Biographers conveyed that they do not have this kind of struggle, and their texts follow a pattern: stubbornness for a long time and sudden change just before leaving. The same overtone carries the following text:

> Unser ältester Volksgenosse ist ein Armenhäusler, wie alt er ist, weiss kein Mensch, er ist so taub, dass er kaum ein Wort versteht. So gut es ging, wurde ihm die Umsiedlung klar gemacht, aber er winkte ab und beschäftigte sich weiter mit seiner Mittagssuppe, die ihm weit wichtiger zu sein schien. Am nächsten Tag erschien er aber bei einem Nachbar, er schien sich die Sache in der Nacht richtig überlegt zu haben, und erklärte in seiner plattdeutschen Mundart, dass er mitfahren werde.[35]

Description of other Author shows the pattern of "decision at the last moment" and, typically for all texts, hesitation is presented: a neighbour was unable to decide. The neighbour was ready to leave every morning, and then every evening he wanted to stay. Finally, the Author's son realized the reason for the man's hesitation: his wife. The Author narrates that the son and his brother went to the man's house and spoke to his wife until she ultimately gave up.[36] In describing small miracles, the Biographers did not present themselves directly. They did not talk about their own experiences, but still, they used others' stories to present themselves in a particular light. They appear to be giving the actual dialogues and words, but they do not inform

[34] APP/800/146/254, D.B., Aufbruch, Posen, date unknown.
[35] APP/800/146/121, Author unknown, Wir sind bereit!, place and date unknown.
[36] APP/800/146/186, M.J., no title, Posen, date unknown.

whether they heard or witnessed it. Often intertwined with propagandist vocabulary, documents show a need for a positive response.

The propaganda of the Third Reich was putting enormous stress on forcing people to express their position within the Nazi ideology. The propaganda asked "what you want and why you want it" and demanded people to prioritize their desires. Individuals have their own desires and emotions that cause them to formulate them and to realize the most important.[37] "Small miracles" indicated the priorities of German resettlers: they wished to be a part of the Old Reich. Although they struggled to express their place in the then dictatorship, they understood that they were an inseparable part of the *Volksgemaeinschaft*. And this truth was manifested by supernatural, miraculous power.

**Bitter obligation and joy of Balts' companionship**

As I have already mentioned, the recollections written in the after-war period are marked with some reflections. The excitement of returning to the German homeland was not visible anymore, and the Authors, freed from the presence of Nazi apparatus and the then propaganda, did not force emotions of happiness and joy to play the leading role. Contrary to the war recollections, there are no expressions of positive emotions concerning leaving the Baltic land, and the resettlement action is understood as a bitter obligation. The life in Wartheland was presented as at most tolerable and the common consoling factor was the companionship of other Balts: "Schon allein das Gefühl, daß man jemand aufsuchen konnte, wenn man wollte, weil die Nachbarn erreichbar waren, war beglückend".[38] Regular meetings with neighbors or friends (mainly at home: *Um meinen runden Tisch im Wohnzimmer*) are among the most memorized happy events. One woman describes how much she enjoyed the fellowship of her old friends from Heimat.[39] During the meetings "es wurde viel erzählt: Erlebnisse der Umsiedlung, der Ansiedlung im Wartheland [...] es wurde viel philosophiert, politisiert und diskutiert". In many cases, resettlers were transferred as groups, like whole families or neighbourhoods, and it often happened that in the new territories, they had the same neighbours or students had the same teachers as they used to in the Baltic land. Balts, walking around the central city of the Reichsgau Wartheland – Poznań – had recognized many of their old friends:

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[37] Roger Petersen, D., Western Intervention in the Balkans. The Strategic Use of Emotion in Conflict, Cambridge/MA: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 25.

[38] Jeannette von Hehn, Als Landfrau im Warthegau 1940–1945, in: Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums (1960), pp. 90–93, here 92.

[39] Wilhelmine Kurtze, Erste Jahre in Posen, in: Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums (1990), pp. 105–111, here 109.

> Nun will ich Euch etwas von der Stadt erzählen […] In der Berliner Straße 2 hat A.N. sein Geschäft aufgetan und handelt mit Kolonialwaren, Feinkost und Wein. Ein paar Häuser daneben ist J. Geschäft, nicht ganz der Rigasche J, er handelt mit "schönen Geschenkwaren": Nippes, Kristall etc. Biegt man von der Berliner Straße nach rechts, so kommt man in die "Ritterstraße", wo man bald auf die "Martinsapotheke" von K. stößt. Biegt man von der Berliner Straße nach links, gelangt man bald auf die "Wilhelm Gustloffstraße" und findet die Bäckerei von B. aus Dorpat.[40]

The importance of presence of other Balts is confirmed by another woman: "Posen, eine so hübsche, rein deutsche Stadt, mit gutem Theater, schönen Konzerten, guten Kinos bot viel geistige Anregung. Wir fühlten uns durchaus wohl. Es wohnten viele Balten in Posen".[41] Similarly, those who had to settle in the countryside placed the happiness in the harmony of being together with their countrymen. The fact of family staying together occasioned the emotion of happiness, 15 years after the war it was recalled that women in the countryside were fortunate to work alongside their husbands: "Die Frau kann dem Manne beruflich helfen, und so war es uns selbstverständlich, daß wir uns genau so wie auf den Restgütern im Baltikum auch im Warthegau wieder voll einsetzten".[42]

After the war, Balts experienced a new reality of the history of Europe after 1945. Their struggle to express their feelings continued as they became a part of new democratic orders with further limitations, like censorshipor political correctness. Their language and memory were affected by it, and their feelings were shaped by emotional aspects of collective identification from the time of resettlement.[43]

### 3.2.2. Emotions of Sorrow – Sadness

Vera Heinrich, in her short contribution concerning the Great War, "Emotions in the Military Mail Exchanged between Two Lovers" traces the complicated story of the two people remaining in two distant places: the war front and the home front. Easy to guess, the story of suffering lovers, who experienced conflict, expresses the sadness of the situation. Although there are parts which meant to console and encourage, the reason for writing all the negative feelings is "to deal with the pain of missing one another and the exceptional war situation",

[40] Letters, private collection of Ms Renate Adolphi, Posen, 29. Januar 1940.
[41] CSG Lüneburg, manuscripts, Margarethe von Gersdorff, Lebenserinnerungen, date unknown, 65.
[42] Hehn, Als Landfrau, 90.
[43] Terms of "emotional aspects of collective identification or feelings of attachment and rejection" are used and explained in more detail, in: Steinberg, Sobol, Interpreting Emotions, 12.

expressing the experience “to reduce the pain in the process”.[44] Similarly, Balts who expressed the love for their Old Heimat described that they experienced despair and powerlessness. They revealed that they had been unable to control what had already been planned for them: the resettlement to Polish territories. They wished to care for their relationship with the Baltics, but the then events left them with feelings of resignation. Similarly to the love letters studied by Vera Heinrich, Baltic Germans, by expressing their feelings, were actually “working on the emotions” and it helped them to differentiate them.[45] Next to happiness, Balts expressed the opposite emotions of sadness.

**Strangers**

The first trigger for deep sadness for Baltic Germans was the fact that they had to leave their homeland. And the word homeland could represent anything: house, equipment inside the house, garden, old trees, non-German relatives and friends, church, church community or ancestors’ graves. In recollections from 1939 to 1940, Balts stressed their upsetting experience after receiving the news of the mass relocation. This shock was accompanied by the central question: how can I leave this home place and everything attached to it? “Leaving things behind” was the first thought that the Germans were confronted with, and they were forced to start to accept it. The first struggle was expressed in realizing that “all will be taken over by strangers” (*Fremde*) who were coming to the Baltic land to live in the houses there. All doubts were addressed to the potential new owners of their possessions. The Authors asked where to leave the house key so that new owners could find it and whether to leave the door unlocked. They wanted to know where to keep the pets and who and when was going to feed them.

Farmers seemed to be in a more significant dilemma: who would check on the livestock the next day and who would milk the cows? The tension grew as the attachment to the soil was explained: “Die Felder – der Roggen in frischen grüner Farbe – ist es möglich, dass wir ihn nicht ernten werden? Wir haben ihn doch gesät, wir haben ihm das Feld bereitet, und jetzt soll irgend ein anderer, fremder ihn ernten”.[46] Almost in every composition the Author expresses an unjust feeling: “My family and I have worked on our land but the harvest is going to belong to someone else”, “the benefit of it is not for us”. The motif of the “stranger taking over” is present in most compositions. The stranger was either internal – it could be an Estonian or

[44] Vera Heinrich, Emotions in the Military Mail Exchanged between Two Lovers, in: Jane Redlin (ed.): Feeling War, (Schriftenreihe Museum Europäischer Kulturen No. 16), Husum: Verlag der Kunst, 2014, pp. 61–68, here 64, 68.
[45] Ibidem, 62.
[46] APP/800/146/47, Author unknown, Sonnabend, 7. Oktober 1939 in Riga.

Latvian fellow citizen, a Jewish neighbour or external – identified as Bolsheviks, who were to come and rule over the the Baltics.[47] It seemed as if it would be easier for Balts if nobody else were going to come to take over their place: the sadness was intensified by the awareness of newcomers. These intruders meant for Germans no hope for return; their homes were about to be taken forever, and this was one of the most expressed emotional pains.
The documents from the wartime are concerned with the strangers who were from the outside, "not one of us", others, known (e.g. Estonian or Latvian neighbours) or unknown (Bolsheviks). In recollections from the after-war period, the sadness is expressed in realizing that the Balts became strangers in a new land. In this way, they became strangers from the inside. Although often relocated with families and whole neighbourhoods, German minorities were taking the place of newcomers and uprooted from their Baltic Heimat; they felt like a nation without history.

> Jedenfalls aber wurde unser Leben jetzt aus der Herkunft unserer Familien und deren Vergangenheit abgelöst, so daß unser Dasein insofern künftig geschichtslos warden mußte. Was bedeutet die Familie Ungern–Sternberg, was bedeutet die Familie Hollnader in einem anderen als im Baltenlande? (…) dieser Name praktisch geschichtlos geworden ist.[48]

The new environment of Warthegau made Balts strangers. Balts without the Baltic land became aliens, which again evoked emotional sadness. Groups of lawyers, doctors, teachers, pastors and others had their specific, meaning professionally, place in Estonia and Latvia. Before leaving the Heimat in Fall of 1939 German minority feared the strangers (taking over their place in the Baltics), and after arrival to Wartheland, they themselves became their fear. In practice, they turned into foreigners who took over the area of previous inhabitants and, mentally, started to be "adaptive citizens" with no history, unknown surnames and forgotten professions. The pastor was no longer a famous pastor for his community; the teacher was no longer a well-known teacher in his school, and farmer was no longer known owner of a certain land. Losing the Baltic land meant for the German minority losing its identity and self-recognition.

[47] The terms "internal" and "external Others" were used by Pille Petersoo in: Pille Petersoo, Reconsidering Otherness. Constructing Estonian Identity, in: Nations and Nationalism, vol. 13, no. 1 (2007), pp 117–133, here 117.
[48] Rolf Freiherr von Ungern–Sternberg, Bilder aus meinem Leben, in: Jahrbuch des baltischen Deutschtums (1994), pp. 78–89, here 78.

Moreover, this alienation went further. Baltic Germans became strangers to each other. In most cases, it was connected to the fact that they had to change their professions (ex., a pastor without a church community, a teacher no longer working at school, a family from the town taking over a farm to run, a doctor who did not manage to find a position in hospital). For example, it does not mean they did not recognize each other literally, but they were no longer the persons they used to know. Experience of relocation, disappointment with living conditions in Warthegau and new professional positions were drifting Balts apart.

**Depression and *Posenitis***

The grief affecting Baltic Germans's emotions was visible after arrival to Warthegau. It was a result of the stress that people were overburdened with while relocating and letdown of the new conditions in occupied Western Poland. First, Baltic Germans were sent to prepared camps (*Baltenlager*) and the naturalization process was carried out. Staying in the camps meant waiting to be assigned to work or an apartment. Some groups were sent to the countryside and some remained in the small towns or Poznań occupying the houses or apartments of previous Polish (and other nationalities) owners and tenants. Only in post-war descriptions, the situation from 1939 to 1940 was intensified by the awareness of expelled Polish citizens. Authors described the moments they noticed unmade beds and when they saw the tables that were not cleaned up. They say it was evident that earlier residents had only a few minutes to leave the house. Konowing this was followed by expressions of inner conflict and somewhat uneasiness of describing it.

Depression in Poznań turned into common emotion among many replaced Germans. One Author called it *Posenitis*. Because of the stress of disconnection from old Heimat, the tiring journey to the port of Gdynia, and disappointment with the new living conditions, everyday activities became unbearable. One Author wrote in post-war recollection:

> Zuerst ging es uns in Posen um ein Bett zum Schlafen, die Lebensmittelkarte, um zu essen, Kohle, um zu heizen. Unter den ankommenden Umsiedlern herrschte die "Posenitis", d.h. ein Zustand schwerer seelischer Depressionen, der sich aus Enttäuschung über die vorgefundenen Zustände in Posen nach hochgespannten ersten Erwartungen und wohl auch aus unausgesprochenem Heimweh nach dem Vergangenen und der verlassenen alten Heimat zusammensetzte.[49]

[49] Kurtze, Erste Jahre, 106.

The above text suggests that Authors of the post-war memories were unhappy about the new life in Warthegau. The problem did not lay in material goods and standards because everyone realised it was just the beginning of Germans' new life in the East, and the Third Reich was at war. The constant comparison with life in Baltic lands played the leading role. In Poznań and other areas of the Wartheland, everything was different and "not ours". Impressions in January 1940 were following: "fühlen sich die Balten sehr fremd und sehr bedeutungslos" and Poznań as the capital of German Warthegau did not seem or feel "German enough", because only the streets had German names.[50] Moreover, everything seemed to be unknown: different town squares, buildings and households: "Wir schlafen in fremden Betten, sitzen auf fremden Stühlen". On the other hand, there was a strong acknowledgement of receiving something valuable (e.g. apartment) that used to belong to somebody else, and thus was the question: why do we have to benefit from it?[51] These unpleasant emotions were intensified by the constant remembering of previous Heimat. They grew into established pessimism that was shared in most post-war descriptions.

Judith Pintar writes about these shared feelings among people who identify with one another. Though, basically, "it is only individuals who can feel", in crucial times (e.g. periods of crisis or violence) the whole group may experience similar emotions[52]. While "theorizing space" Pintar presents a few points of other scholars: people attach to their environments and, at the same time, construct them or that "salient emotions" rather belong to those who live in a place in the present (than to those people who lived in the past and built it).[53] In case of Baltic Germans it becomes more complex.

For the German group, it looked different. First of all, in 1940, Balts did not construct *Baltikum* anymore (since they left it), although to it only they were attached with their memories and descriptions. Their misery was in the place of Warthegau, which was new and foreign; they could not be a part of it since they were emotionally bonded with another place. Also, their emotions of place attachment were suppressed because although they were "people of the present whose ancestors built *Baltikum*", they were not physically in that place. Moreover, under the rules of the Third Reich, the emotional expression of space attachment was censored. The pressure of the then propaganda commanded "to close the *Baltikum* chapter" forever, to

[50] Letters, private collection of Ms Renate Adolphi, Posen, 18. Januar 1940.
[51] In this letter (Letters, private collection of Ms Renate Adolphi, 20. Januar 1940,) author stresses the justice: for 10,000 Volksdeutsche who were murdered by Polish citizens, German minority had right to take over Polish possessions, nevertheless the author struggles with the fact that she is the one who benefits from it.
[52] Judith Pintar, Emplaced and Displaced. Theorizing the Emotions of Space in the Former Yugoslavia, in: Mark D. Steinberg, Valeria Sobol (eds.) Interpreting Emotions in Russia and Eastern Europe, Dekalb/IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011, pp. 177–200, here 182.
[53] Ibidem, 178–179.

part from it irreversibly and to focus on "building a new Germany". As a result, recollections were charged with a depressive mood resulting from the tension between the need to express the attachment to old homeland and different Nazi policy expectations.

### 3.2.3. Dealing with Anxiety – Emotions of Fear

During the Great War it was realised that the atrocity propaganda (i.e., spreading information about the crimes committed by an enemy) became "a case for the emotionalising effect of extreme depictions of violence and the motivating and demotivating power of emotions".[54] The way the leaders were conveying the message to their people was to be an effective tool for expected actions. For the use of propaganda during the Second World War, the view continued that describing the cruel acts of violence was going to stimulate massive emotional reactions.[55] People were to be led by: fearing death, mass death, injuries, unjust actions of the enemies, brutal acts of perpetrators. But those pictures had not yet been there in 1939 as a reality, and they were rather in people's imagination of what may follow as a result of the next war. As the conflict broke out, general joy and enthusiasm ruled on the German side (for those supporting the war and the leadership), and everyday "war worries" or "war nervousness and pessimism" were not yet present. Nonetheless, even at the beginning of the war, certain groups, including Baltic Germans, were to be under the political control of communication to achieve common plans. The fear played a role in overcoming Balts' limits in fulfilling Nazi leadership wishes, and there was an everyday manifestation of fright.

#### Duality of abandonment

"Der Führer nimmt uns in seinen persoenlichen Schutz (...). Wer dann noch geblieben ist, hat nichts von Deutschland zu erwarten"[56] – such an emotionally charged form of communication was streamed towards Baltic Germans on a daily basis after the official call for resettlement. It is important to remember that the German community in the Baltic lands maintained its own separation. Dynamic activities of different clubs, associations, church members and circles of the schools created an environment of togetherness. They set clear borders of distinctions between the German minority and the majority of Latvian and Estonians. Nevertheless, the connection with Germany (whether during the interwar period or before) was there, and the linking support was more or less playing its function. The importance of these relationships

[54] Anne Schmidt, Persevere in Fear? The Pros and Cons of Horror Stories, in: Redlin, Feeling War. Emotions in the First World War (Schriftenreihe Museum Europäischer Kulturen No. 16), Husum: Verlag der Kunst, 2014, pp. 27–42, here 28.
[55] Ibidem, 28.
[56] APP/800/146/178, Author unknown, Wie ich das Erntedankfest 1939 erlebte, place and date unknown.

became clear when National Socialists threatened its existence in 1939. It was openly declared that all Balts were expected to join the resettlement to the newly occupied territories. Old Germany officially proclaimed: those who were going to stay would not be considered Germans or would not be accepted as German citizens any more, nor could they expect any help from Germany.

Arthur Greiser pointed out, in his speech which was delivered in July 1940 in the town Schroda/Środa, that Baltic history and tradition had been finished. All minorities called and brought back to be part of the Third Reich were expected to transform their identities and detach from their past. A year after that, in August 1941, the speech appeared again and was printed in "Ost-Rundschau": the commitments to be met were repeated, especially to Baltic Germans. Arthur Greiser was appealing to people's feelings, putting them under an obligation of patriotism and creating an impression of guilt for those unable to understand the circumstances. He imposed feelings of selfishness, weakness and inability to be worthy as a community:

> Nun leben wir aber nicht, meine deutschen Volksgenossen aus den Siedlungsgebieten der baltischen Länder, in einem Zeitalter, in dem menschlisch verständliche Wünsche das Primat haben, sondern im Zeitalter Adolf Hitlers, welches seine Kräfte aus jenem großen Erziehungsprozeß zur Gemeinschaft immer wieder von neuem schöpft, welche das menschlich verständliche Ich überwidmet, um jede Einzelkraft einzuspannen und damit zu konzentrieren zu einer Gemeinschaftsleistung des Wir. (...) Im nationalsozialistischen Staat ist das keine Privatangelegenheit des einzelnen, sondern eine auf seine Schultern gelegte Verantwortung der gesamten Nation un damit dem Großdeutschen Reich gegenüber .[57]

This speech must have appealed to German Balts since, in their accounts, Biographers often refer to the responsibility, sacrifice and task they had been called to. The resettlement was indeed understood as something unbelievable that an ordinary person could not accept or appreciate.

One Author, after the resettlement, already in the Wartheland, wrote his opinion about the work of the *Volkstum* back in Latvia. When he reached the description of 1939, he wrote about the voice of blood. Influenced by the propagandist materials, he "realized" that resettlement is a test for Germandom. Stepping out of it meant naturally renouncing German nationality not only

[57] Die baltische Geschichte und Tradition abgeschlossen. Eine Rede des Gauleiters Greiser, in: Ost-Rundschau from 15. August 1941.

for the particular person but also for the next generations: "So kam jener denkwürdige 8. Oktober 1939, der uns vor die Entscheidung stellte: willst Du deutsch dein, oder verzichtest Du darauf für Kind und Kindeskind? "[58] The same Author admits with pride (*voller Stolz*) that from the whole region (*Kandauer Gebiet*) over 100% of living there German population had decided to join and follow the call of the Führer (by "over 100%" the Author meant more people had decided to opt for German identity than before 1939). Other Authors writing during wartime stressed that any objection or resistance would be understood as sabotage and the consequences would follow. It means the Authors were repeating the Nazi propaganda, but at the same time, it is an explanation that doing otherwise could be harmful or cause the loss of some privileges. It is a classic example of remaining loyal to the then dictatorship in exchange for protection and support.

The last two main factors that influenced the decision of German Balts were their value and security. Propaganda used its emotional blackmailing power to threaten to leave the people without support. It was suggested that only the right attitude (*Haltung*) and submission reflect the actual value of German citizen. The worthiness of a person was weighted according to his personality, which was revealed in obedience to his country. The commitment was to come out of his personality and work: "Ihr werdet jeder soviel wert sein wie er aus seiner Arbeit und aus seiner Persönlichkeit herausholen kann".[59] The submission to the German authorities indicated the value of the person. Moreover, moving to the occupied Polish territories guaranteed protection during the whole process. Balts did not associate their resettlement with escape or expulsion but the notion of free will was retained. In all documents, it is clear that the Authors did not identify themselves as refugees ("nicht als Flüchtlinge"[60]) but as persons who agreed with the circumstances. This was connected with the awareness of stability and imaginary shelter offered by the state because many Authors registered that the leadership knows why it does what it does.[61]

Fear of being abandoned was accompanied by fear of abandoning. No matter how much Balts were not ready to lose the protection of the Third Reich, the fear of leaving their homeland was also high. First of all, the Baltics meant home and being in the Wartheland and remembering, for instance, Riga was evoking sadness and nostalgia. In one recollection, it is said that Estonia offered a unique atmosphere (*Wärme*) that never treated any German as new or stranger

[58] APP/800/146/73, H.J.B, Deutsche Volkstumsarbeit in der Kleinstadt, Wreschen (Wartheland), date unknown.
[59] APP/800/146/114, Author unknown, Appell der Einsatzformationen im S. Der Landesleiter und Otto Kraus sprechen, date unknown.
[60] APP/800/146/16, A. von, H.T., Der Baltenrückzug ins deutsche Vaterland. Ein Stimmungsbild, place and date unknown.
[61] Compare: APP/800/146/236, K.D., Liebe… !, Posen, date unknown.

(*Neuangekommener*). Whoever came here (either years or centuries ago) was taken "by hand" by other German Balts and was led into a "spiritual and cultivated atmosphere in which all could move freely".[62] This means that the space that the Baltics provided was a positive experience for all German Balts. However, in October 1939, this space became unavailable, regardless of the decision: staying or leaving, the safe space had disappeared. Moreover, there was not only the fear of leaving the houses and graves of ancestors with frequent questions: who will take care of all this? Is it dishonourable to forswear all possessions? And there was also a fear of detachment from anything that was "German Baltic". Authors in their documents often refer to *baltischer Gemütlichkeit* or *altbaltisches Wohlleben.*[63] The Baltic region was imagined as a safe room created in the past and guaranteed the same high standards for the generations to come. It was a kind of Baltic lifestyle that could not have been performed anywhere else. Awareness of the upcoming transition caused natural fear, and recognition of it was often expressed as clearly divided stages of life: youth as an idyllic, beautiful and rich experience in the Baltics, then abandoning the Heimat with the shift into mature adulthood or even old age.[64] Also spirituals stages of life essential for Christians must have been conducted on this safe Baltic platform. Quickly before leaving church communities were organizing rituals of baptisms, confirmations, celebrations of the Last Supper, engagements and weddings.[65] Balts wanted to go through important events when still in the Baltics as if the rituals would have no meaning somewhere else, even in Old Germany.

**The pressure of decision-making**

Making the decision was expressed as most challenging in two aspects: history and generations to come as judging factors and the problems of relating to the new Polish neighbours. Resettlers lacked reassurance that future German descendants would offer their understanding for the mass move in 1939, arrival to newly occupied territories and fulfillment of National Socialists' instructions. On the other hand, the Authors wished and often expressed an honest belief that their decisions were made for the benefit of the next generations.

Documents from 1939 to 40 portrayed the German Baltic children as the lucky ones, who, "one day", were going to talk about the sacrifice of the previous generation. According to the texts, the children were going to be proud of their parents for the decision of 1939, although they

[62] APP/800/146/12, S., Mein Baltenland, place and date unknown.
[63] APP/800/146/38, .I.N., Weites Land ohne deiutsche Menschen. Fahrt ins geräumte Kurland, place and date unknown.
[64] APP/800/146/14, Mein Baltenland, place and date unknown.
[65] APP/800/146/103, S.K., Meine lieben beiden Mädel, Posen, date unknown.

would not be able to understand the cost of it because they would never know what the old Heimat was: “Dann werden unsere Kinder und Kindeskinder wohl noch mal von all dem Vergangnen reden […]. Aber ihre Augen werden die alte Heimat nicht sehen – wie wir sie sahen und ihre Herzen werden nicht das fühlen, was wir gefühlt haben”.[66] Another Author only confirms the lack of understanding from the children, but assures the next generation was going to be awed: “unsere Kinder werden uns nicht mehr verstehen, aber sie werden uns mit Ehrfruchtsvollen Augen ansehen, wenn wir von dieser Zeit sprechen werden”.[67] The last fragment also marks the awareness of the 1939 task’s significance and wish for being acknowledged for it in the future. Behind the propagandist expressions concerning the new territories like “von den Polen geräumten Raum”[68] or “Räumungsaktion”[69], German Autobiographers hid their struggle in decision-making.

In the post-war texts, there is also an expression of hope that the post-war generation would not maintain resentment or anger against resettlers of 1939, that they would not be disappointed, not only for moving to a new place but also for leaving their possessions and graves of ancestors (what could be taken as a betrayal). In the play mentioned earlier (from 1960), the Author reflects the anxiety and fights with horrible thoughts (*Mir ist die Gedanke schrecklich*) that the graves were going to run wild. She also mentions her belief and concern that the youth would not become dissatisfied with whatever followed November 1939.[70] After years, with the time perspective, Authors had to deal with judgment and different opinions of others. By expressing their feelings, they could give an explanation and a picture of their concerns during the war.

The pressure of decision-making in the post-war documents is also presented as a dilemma of what to do with others’ belongings. It is common in post-war records to describe the circumstances, including the emotions. The empathy towards expelled people from the occupied territories appears and the guilt of being considerate about only German community. With the words: Heute erschrickt es mich, wie schnell wir gegen das alles abgestumpft waren […] ausgefüllt nur von der Suche nach einer brauchbaren Daseinsmöglichkeiten für uns selbst[71] the feeling of fear had continued. The sympathy goes even further; the same Author recalls the situation when she arrived in Poznań and moved into her new apartment. There she found some documents, stationery and photographs that belonged to the previous residents. She was

[66] APP/800/146/50, H.T. von, E.S., Posen, date unknown.
[67] APP/800/146/222, W.K., Der letzte Appell, Posen, date unknown.
[68] APP/800/146/28, P., Liebe Olly, Posen, 21. Oktober 1939.
[69] APP/800/146/57, .Author unknown, Bis heute haben 20.584 Deutsche Lettland verlassen, place unknown, 19. November 1939.
[70] Stegman, Am Vorabend, 89–90.
[71] Kurtze, Erste Jahre, 107.

perplexed about what to do with all these belongings, and finally, she decided "the same she would have wished for herself" in the same situation: she set everything on fire:

> Ich erinnere mich, wie ich anfänglich zögerte, was ich mit diesen konkreten Zeichen aus der Intimsphäre anderer Menschen machen sollte […]. Die Flamme hatte eine reinigende Kraft. Die Atmosphäre in der Wohnung wurde klar und durchsichtig, und zwei Räume wurden mir im Verlaufe der nächsten vier Jahre allmählich auch zu meinem Kriegszuhause.[72]

Setting everything on fire brought for this resettler something like relief. Like the fire that consumes everything, the guilt could have been processed and, to some extent, dealt with.

**Darkness**

The motif of darkness runs through much of the wartime documents. It gives a notion of consternation that many resettlers had to face. Commonly, the concept of darkness is associated with something unknown, secret, covered and uclear. However, for Baltic Germans, it was not only the state of mind or attitude but the darkness literally surrounded the minority during the crucial action of leaving.

The journey to the new Heimat of Wartheland was long and exhausting, and regardless of the distance, the autumn weather and conditions during the war played a significant role. Thus, it is understandable that such a demanding journey could start at a very inconvenient time of the day (ex., early morning or late night). Nevertheless, the darkness was documented by many Authors, and it was not for the need for the picturesque descriptions but because it was an expression of fear. The fear of uncertainty was expressed through literally dark pictures of the travel. As a contrast that emphasizes the darkness, many authors mention torches or lanterns used while going outside at night, ex., to the stable (*Stallaternen).* The moment of leaving the house was often in the early morning before dawn or the middle of the night. The excitement before this moment did not allow many to sleep or wait at home.

Many Authors remember that they left the house and went towards the railway station without waiting for the rest of the group. To their surprise, many others did the same, and the picture of walking crowd with light was remembered. There was brighter on the street than in the houses, although generally, it was very dark ("Es ist finster wie im Keller"[73]). This pervasive darkness

[72] Ibidem, 109.

[73] APP/800/146/50, Author unknown, Sonnabend, Riga, 7. Oktober 1939.

was taking people's courage and self-confidence, it was "not nice" or reassuring ("Die Dunkelheit war nicht schön"[74]). It was even introducing a kind of panic since people could not recognize their "travellers": "es ist noch zu dunkel, um die Gesichter so weit zu erkennen".[75] Many Authors remember the hours and exact time of leaving the house or the train leaving: two or five thirtee in the morning or eight in the evening which were dark times of the day.[76]

**Hidden fear of losing the war**

Regardless of the victorious situation of Germany in the fall of 1939[77], Baltic Germans were presumably worried about the war's outcome. This assumption was based on a few factors. First of all, in wartime biographies, political events are absent. German minority remained silent and did not discuss nor analyse any official matters. The only exceptional case was the "historical speech" (confirmed in documents as *historische Rede*) of Adolf Hitler on 6th October. Many Authors acknowledged and mentioned this speech, and already in 1939, almost always labelled it as "historical". This means the resettlers were aware of the impact and consequences of it, and at the same time, it was a way of expressing their political alignments to the then propaganda. Also moving out of the Baltics, in general, was recognized as a "historical event" that the next generations will remember. Few Authors pointed out the history of Germans in the Baltics (some of them with details presented the past of the minority). Thus, with these two issues: speech and departure, the commentary of unfolding events ends. No Author observed military actions, decisions taken by the Third Reich and the situation in Poland – the place of their ultimate destiny. The complete absence of current developments is telling. Firstly, it could have been a silent sign of disagreement with Nazi leadership and fear of this leadership's consequences, like losing the war or aversion of European nations towards Germany. The second possibility is that Balts, who identified themselves as Germans, could not handle the mentioned "emotional blackmailing" of being abandoned by Germany as a result of not following the instructions. And finally, there could have been a feeling of guilt while settling down in newly occupied regions. The uneasiness of taking over the new possessions was especially expressed in post-war documents. Remaining silent about political events was

[74] APP/800/146/160, H.T. von, E.S., no title, Stargard (Pommern), date unknown.
[75] APP/800/146/167, E.S., Abschied von Riga, Posen, date unknown.
[76] Compare: APP/800/146/206, 378, Author unknown, place and date unknown and B.H., Die Umsiedlung, Posen, date unknown.
[77] By 6th October 1939, when Chancellor Adolf Hitler addressed his speech to Reichstag, the military aggression against Poland ended, and the defenders of Warsaw had capitulated. Also, the secret supplementary agreement of Ribbentrop-Molotov concerning the German-Soviet borders was enforced.

possibly a way to describe the dissatisfaction with Nazi policy which was automatically labelling resettling German minority with the known idea of a passive follower.[78]

Another example of hiding the fear of losing the war was using Latvians or Estonians to express the German Balts' masked anxiety. Literally, by placing words into other "nation's mouth", Germans found ways to say the ideas they had not been able to share openly because of the then censorship. Quoted words and monologues by Latvians or Estonians (or other nationalities) run through much of the wartime documents. They mostly describe how sad others were about Germans leaving; they express Latvian and Estonian's affection and attachment to their fellow German citizens. But, what is essential, these quoted words do not reflect the relationship between the German minority and other Baltic citizens. When German Authors remembered and documented their contacts with others, the concept of attachment did not play any role. In this context, avoiding the confrontation of strict control of propaganda, German Authors of wartexts use the neighbours to expose their own attachment and affection to the Baltic land, to reveal their own fear of losing the war, to show their own disagreement of giving up a beautiful house and fulfilling occupation. Even the tears of crying neighbours were their own. Following is one of the best examples which include all doubts: "Lettische Nachbarn […] fielen einem plötzlich mit Tränen in den Augen […] und baten inständig doch nicht diesen Schritt zu tun. Deutschland werde den Krieg bestimmt verlieren, den die Ganze Welt sei gegen Deutschland".[79] No Author of the war texts questioned the war's outcome or asked for the reasons for the war in the first place. No one had commented on the new European political order in its nationalist-racist context. That is why quoting others expressing these matters was a safe way to convey particular concerns: authors remained loyal, and credit for some views was given to other people.

### 3.3. Concluding Thoughts

During the exceptional time of war, feelings were experienced through direct participation and observation of the events of 1939 and 1940. Sources coming from the time of dictatorship allowed listening to the Authors who knew their described experiences would be exposed and were aware that they would be heard. Again, similarly to the poetry, the Authors chose a personal way of expressing – describing the emotions – during the military conflict. Baltic Germans' feelings were expressed as unique (subjective) descriptions, heard or witnessed

[78] Although the official idea of the word "Mitläufer" with its controversial meaning appeared after the war (or with the Nuremberg trials), the concept of the meaning had already existed.

[79] APP/800/146/73–74, H.J.B., Deutsche Volkstumsarbeit in der Kleinstadt, Wreschen (Wartheland), date unknown.

stories, imagining the future in place. In personal accounts of Baltic Germans, the narratives concerning the emotional sphere supported the concrete actions of performing and understanding.

A short time of introducing the resettlement and quick orders from the leaders evoked many feelings which had to be managed. A mix of different and often opposite emotions, like like joy and depression, forced the German community to prioritize their Personal accounts show that the emotional structure was challenged by new events and, as a part of victorious Germany, Balts were expected to reflect joyful and proud attitude. In the wartime biographies, happiness was mainly presented with a connection to the different state organizations (e.g. *Hitlerjugend*), the Führer and the Third Reich. Resettlers were encouraged by "small miracles" and enjoyed the privilege of sacrificing and making an effort. The ability to sacrifice was a way to show affection and a wish to have a relationship with Germany. On the other hand, the enthusiasm of the supposed well-managing Third Reich does not appear in post-war recollections. On the contrary, relocation is presented as a bitter obligation while the only consolation, and the reason to express happiness, is in the companionship of other Balts.

desires. They were compelled to say what was important to them: being a part of the Old Reich and recognizing other Balts' efforts to do so. The most intimate feelings had to have a public significance because Authors wanted to be a part of this undertaking; they wanted to belong.

Additionally, "small miracles" became natural internal forces, i.e., feelings[80], that could supernaturally move this community. Finding reasons for happiness during the burdensome relocation meant that Biographers prioritized emotions. Nevertheless, their space attachment with the Baltics was broken, and they could not relate to the new space of Warthegau. Since the physical place to connect to was missing, Balts deepened their understanding of their relationship with themselves. As the Nazi propaganda influenced their wish to be united with the German *Volk*, in reality, in the Wartheland, they experienced an emotional relationship within their Baltic *Volk*.

Dealing with sorrows was directly connected to the fact of leaving the Baltic land. Balts felt their inability to control what had already been planned for them. They wished to care for their relationship with the Baltics, but the occurring events left them with feelings of resignation. *Posenitis*, a mental condition described by Biographers, shows that they use emotions to maintain their own inner conflicts. The motif of the "stranger taking over" is present in most of the compositions, but in wartime texts, it is the awareness of the newcomers possessing Baltic Germans' goods. The intruders symbolise lost hope for returning to Old Heimat. Because of

[80] Term used in: Ikegami, Emotions, 333.

the censorship, the emotions of the place attachment were suppressed. Germans were expected to start "pioneer work" in the Wartheland and "close" their "Baltic" period of life. By contrast, Authors of post-war biographies realised that they themselves became strangers in the new land: strangers to each other who lost their position, identity, self-recognition and family history. Emotionally charged recollections from after the wartime go against the thesis that "the intensity of most emotions, particularly those based on events, would fade with time".[81] In the case of the Baltic Biographers, their recollection written decade(s) after the war were still filled with expressions of emotions.

When the sense of belonging, whether as a united German community abroad or with a connection to interwar Germany, was threatened in 1939, Biographers started to express the feeling of fear. The Nazi leadership declared the consequences of disobedience and Balts were exposed to this emotional manipulation. Authors of the wartime biographies recognized the authority of the Führer and realized they had been put to the test of their worthiness and value as a community. They decided to leave the space of the Baltics for fear of losing the precious *Gemütlichkeit* and *Wohlleben* forever. Abandoning was connected to leaving all possessions and ancestors' graves with the main question: how Balts can survive without the Baltics and without the Baltic roots.

Moreover, not to contradict the Nazi policy, German Authors used the voice of their neighbours (Latvians, Estonians and others) to express the fear of losing the war and to define the anxiety about their own future. In the wartime texts, the pressure of decision-making was revealed and stressed by the doubt of being appreciated or understood by generations to come. However, in the after-war autobiographies, the fear concerning the next generations has shifted from the desire to be appreciated for the sacrifice of 1939 to the hope that youth would not maintain resentment or anger against old generations for leaving the Baltics. This emotional shift was a direct consequence of geopolitical changes after 1945 and the general situation of Germany during the cold war. In both cases, during and after the war, Balts expressed their feelings of isolation and wished to be needed.

The after-war season forced Balts to face the judgment and opinions of their children. After the war and expulsion from the Wartheland to the West, Baltic Germans became a community of experience (or community of connection, identification) which personally lived through emigration in 1939. They got exposed to the new events, and their emotional struggle continued:

[81] Petersen, Western Intervention, 29.

suspension between a special relationship with their past[82] and the aftermath of 1945 in the West with its military occupations of victorious forces and explicit rejection of the Nazi regime.

[82] Mary Fulbrook calls different kinds of communities, which are related (on many levels) with their defining event (ex. war, expulsion), as "communities of experience, connection, identification", Mary Fulbrook, Generations and the Ruptures of 1918, 1945 and 1989 in Germany, in: Nicholas Martin, Tim Haughton, Pierre Purseigle (eds.), Aftermath. Legacies and Memories of War in Europe, 1918–1945–1989, Burlington/VT: Ashgate, 2014, pp. 7–24, here 8.

# Chapter 4. Baltic Germans Reflect the National Socialist Indoctrination

> "Die polnische Bevölkerung benahm sich bis zuletzt sehr still. Unsere eigenen Angestellten blieben höflich und hilfsbereit".[1]

## 4.1. German Minorities Led to Action in the Third Reich

Germanization was a project that included policies toward Germans, Poles and Jews. Catherine Epstein notices that while most historians told separate stories of each group, it is forgotten that the influx of ethnic Germans resulted in new arrangements towards the next group. First, it led to the deportation of Poles, then the ethnic cleansing of Poles slowed down the deportation of Jews and finally, the inability to remove Jews led to their ghettoization and, eventually, murder.[2] For the newly arriving Germans had to be convinced about the right purpose of these new arrangements and the question arises whether they had realized their influx resulted in new arrangements for other people.

Lisa Pine attempts to see how the Nazi government forged a new self-identity and national awareness among German people.[3] She asks whether Nazi authorities succeeded in creating the "national community", and she wants to know whether people reacting to Nazi ideas were just responding to them, or they were creating new myths, was it more of propaganda construct than reality. For instance, about the Hitler myth, she gives an example that it was not only a propaganda product, but the followers also invented the ideas of his "charismatic authority" or "exceptional powers".[4]

Going further, Catherine Epstein says they were ethnic-German leaders in the Baltic countries who feared Bolshevik terror if the Soviet Union took over their homelands. They persuaded Himmler, who convinced Hitler, that resettlement was necessary to protect the German minorities.[5] So there were external factors, like propaganda, that influenced Baltic Authors. Still, there were also ideas coming from them. That is why in this chapter, I would like to show how much they reflected the propaganda, with which issues they resonated the most and how they interpreted Germanness.

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[1] CSG Lüneburg, AR 75/19a, Bericht über die Entstehung den Aufbau und die Arbeit in der Heimoberschule für Mädchen in Wreschen, Warthegau, 6.
[2] Epstein, Model Nazi, 160–161.
[3] Pine, Hitler's "National Community", 7.
[4] Pine, 25.
[5] Epstein, Model Nazi, 162.

As I already mentioned in the methodology part, the Authors led my research. I followed the topics they wanted to present and analysed the issues they were interested in. In this way, I had to look closely at Balts as Christians. In all war-time texts, they showed themselves as believers belonging to either the Catholic or Protestant Church. Church as an institution, together with Wehrmacht, played a major role within German society, it was influenced by National Socialism, it was affecting the lives of millions of German people, and it attracted controversy in terms of its responses to Nazism.[6] Moreover, Balts placed their religion in resettlement, and I would like to show what role it played. Could Balts honour both Christian and regime values? One would assume that these two belief systems represent opposite ideas, but many Christians were National Socialists, and Baltic Germans were able to combine both in practice.

As already shown in the previous chapter, it is difficult to judge someone's feelings and say what someone sensed emotionally, and only these feelings' expressions can be analysed. That is why it is even more challenging to describe someone's "spiritual life" because spiritual matters may be arduous, strange or inconvenient to express, even for Biographers themselves. For this reason, in the following parts, I am not going to show how Balts were "connecting to god" or how they "cultivated a relationship with god", but I am going to discuss that, through specific actions, they were religious and committed to devotional practices. Their religion or faith was vital to them, and they saw the action of resettlement as "a will of god". They used biblical images as means of linguistic expression. Moreover, a considerable number of sources show Balts' personal submission to Adolf Hitler and how they gave him the position of the highest authority. This aspect of their Biographies must be considered because the Nazi rejection of Christian values places Baltic Germans in a unique position. Moreover, it shows how their own "belief system" did not lead them to see that their own Third Reich was against this "Christian belief system" and often against the Balts too.

**Indoctrination from the Third Reich**

"The term propaganda is more often used than understood", says Jay W. Baird, the author of "The Mythical World of Nazi War Propaganda, 1939–1945". He says that scholars have never agreed to one definition, be it "attempt to influence behaviour" or "the management of mass communication" and, on top of it, Nazi propaganda deserves a unique status because "Hitler, more than any other twentieth-century leader, focused on the irrational through myths and

[6] Pine, Hitler's "National Community", 83.

symbols".[7] Emerging topics went around the "mythical whole" and, according to them, Hitler was fighting against the "immorality of Weimar rationalism", the symbol of "cultural decadence, racial impurity and Jewish putrefaction". For those propagandees who did not respond much to the racial ideas of National Socialism, the Hitler cult was offered. Personal submission to the Führer was like a safe harbour where one could renew pride in the German nation to the point where genuine Germanness became indistinguishable from the Nazi Party.[8] The Nazi propaganda was a development process, which means it had to be continuously invented according to the changing events and, using the words of Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda – Joseph Goebbels, "it had nothing to do with the truth!" Expressions of the Nazi ideology embraced the mythical solar system: the racial struggle of Aryan man against the "international Jewish conspiracy" was at the centre, and revolving around it ideas were: mythical hierarchy with Führer cult, nobility of the warrior's death, Jewish-Bolshevik subhumans and English "plutocrats". These Nazi theories could prevail, and there were no discussions that could divide, or at least engage, German society because they were never argued or challenged in a meaningful way within the Party.[9]

For Lisa Pine, who examined social and cultural aspects of history, it was *Volksgemeinschaft*, i.e., national community, or creation of identity in terms of inclusion and exclusion from the national community, that was central to the Nazi ideology.[10] Pine presents an impact that National Socialism had upon German society, how "life of citizens was coloured by this murderous regime".[11] When she analyses the main developments in the social history of the Third Reich she refers to Richard Bessel who, in 1984, noticed that historians of Nazi Germany "at last have discovered the German people". The research on the everyday life experience of different social groups shows that historians' debates may go beyond the question of whether the Nazi system was revolutionary, reactionary, or was it modernisation. "Above all, what Hitler and the Nazis wanted was a change in people's spirit, their way of thinking and their way of behaving".[12] In this regard, the Nazi dictatorship aimed to break down traditional loyalties: class, family, region or religion. Still, the question remains: how people were responding to it? David Welsch has shown that the Nazi propaganda successfully reinforced pre-existing beliefs and popular opinion.[13] This ideally worked with the exploitation of anti-Semitism. Moreover,

[7] Jay W Baird, The Mythical World of Nazi War Propaganda, 1939–1945, Minneapolis/MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1974, 3.
[8] Ibidem, 3–4.
[9] Ibidem, 4–5.
[10] Pine, Hitler's "National Community", 2.
[11] Ibidem, 1.
[12] Ibidem, 5–6.
[13] Ibidem, 24.

Baird stresses that "the Jew had been stereotyped long before the Nazis began to make unashamed use of the prejudice". "This is not the Second World War, this is the Great Racial War", said Hermann Göring in 1942, meaning that the reason for the fight was to decide whether the German and Aryan race was going to prevail or if "the Jew would rule the world". Accompanied by shows of propagandist movies, like "The Eternal Jew" or "Jud Süss", the threatening biases were spread: that Jewish society is motivated by "lust for money" or that "Jew is a parasite!", or that "he differs from the Aryan" in body and soul, "for the Jew had no soul!" Picturing even more cruel ideas about Jews, like disseminating "information" related to the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" with age-old tales of Jewish ritual murders and magic, was to conclude that this "parasitical race was fit only for liquidation".[14] Seeing and watching working Jews (as enslaved workers) or their absence (because of the expulsion) or presence of ghettos had a direct and indirect impact on German society.

Other motives that the Nazi propaganda used to operate with were: the god who is present in one's blood but only in the pure blood and war with its combat symbols. Nazi indoctrination tended to glorify the sacrificial death where "war was life spirit fed from the spring of German blood and sanctified by the fallen". The next motif in the mythical Nazi structure was anti-Bolshevik and the motif of Jewry being equated with Marxism. According to Hitler, both international Jewry and Russian bolshevism expressed a drive to control the world, and since the source of both was Soviet Russia, it was this country that had to be conquered.[15] Last concept that Bair mentions in his book is the "British plutocracy". It expressed the love-hate impression of the English and the combination of respect and jealousy. After all, the English were of Germanic stock and thus fellow Aryans, however their character, according to the myth, expressed itself in violence, murder, and the exploitation of enslaved peoples.[16] According to Pine, the most consistent propaganda themes were: the need for racial purity, the hatred of "enemies", that is, Judaism, Bolshevism and Freemasonry, and the leadership cult.

Propaganda as ideology and thought that was wished to be transmitted to "one's mind" had to be reflected in practical activities. There was a process of co-ordination (*Gleichschaltung)* that was to bring all aspects of day-to-day life under National Socialist control. In March 1933, the Nazis took over the federated state governments and appointed Reichs Commissioners (the federal system ended in January 1934). All political parties, except for the NSDAP, had been banned, had dissolved themselves or had gone into exile. Until Mai 1933, 1.6 million people

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[14] Baird, The Mythical, 5–6.
[15] Ibidem, 8–9.
[16] Ibidem, 10.

joined the NSDAP to safeguard their employment.[17] Next to the "co-ordination" of the new regime, there was a "co-ordination" of the cultural life. The Reich Chamber of Culture enabled Goebbels to control all aspects of German arts and culture. Teachers were also "co-ordinated" into the National Socialist Teachers' League. Even though not everyone who followed the "co-ordination" was genuinely loyal to National Socialism, the process of *Gleichschaltung* succeeded in eliminating severe widespread of opponents to the regime.[18]

A new national consciousness was to replace traditional class loyalties. The Free Trade Unions, the Christian Trade Unions and the Hirsch–Düncker Unions, aligned with the liberal parties, were "co-ordinated" and the new German Labour Front (*Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, DAF) was set up. To some extent, worker solidarity still existed, but the Nazis managed to depoliticise the workers. The DAF had 20 million members by 1938, and its primary purpose was "to preserve industrial peace and to promote social welfare schemes, and thereby to raise the self-esteem and productivity of the workers". There was also an organisation called "Strenght through Joy" (Nazi association *Kraft durch Freude*, KdF) that was designed "to enhance workers' esteem (…) and to give them a sense of their importance to the 'national community'".[19] What the Nazis did not manage to accomplish was creating a classless society. Status and working conditions did improve, but there was no compensation for the loss of the trade unions or poor wages increases, and working-class people remained in a "them and us" mentality.[20]

Other activities within the Nazi propaganda and influencing its people were: the Winter Aid Programme and the Sunday "one-pot-dish" (*Eintopf*). The first was to encourage wealthier Germans to donate clothes, food and money to their impoverished "national comrades". The other one occured place on one Sunday once a month, and German families were called to make savings by having one-pot-dish instead of their usual Sunday lunch. It was a "meal of sacrifice for the Reich" and meant for people to serve the "national community" by getting rid of their selfish desires.[21]

To a certain extent, there was a gap between the claims announced in the Nazi propaganda and social reality. People kept complaining about the low wages, long working hours and the unavailability of consumer goods, but this "crisis" never went beyond the control of the regime. German citizens were not "powerless victims" of the then propaganda, and they "were able to utilize the system to their own advantage – whether to denounce a parent or neighbour, or to

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[17] Pine, Hitler's "National Community", 18.
[18] Ibidem, 18–19.
[19] Ibidem, 19–20.
[20] Michael Burleigh, Wolfgang Wipperman, The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, as cited in Pine, Hitler's "National Community", 23.
[21] Pine, Hitler's "National Community", 24.

gain advancement at work or within the Hitler Youth. Moreover, it was not uncommon for individual citizen to support some policies of the regime while rejecting others."[22]

Finally, mentioning different types of conflicts within the Third Reich is important. They appeared within the range of everyday life and were reflected in personal accounts of Baltic Germans. Peukert talks about external and internal conflicts. These areas were the most exposed to the propaganda as they seemed to be a space for articulating the Party's points or peoples' needs. Struggles of opponent groups like the labour movement or Christian churches happened within external conflicts. Mentioned groups possessed their own distinctive identities and traditions, and within them, they were responding to the Nazi system.

Internal conflicts were different altercations within the ruling National Socialism and were happening "horizontally", i.e., among people of the same political status. They were "competing power blocks" permanently in struggle and damaging, in the long run, the system's ability to function. There was also a conflict running "vertically", namely, between the Nazi elites and the masses or between the elites and individual groups within the population under Nazi rule.

Internal contradictions created situations where one needed to decide whether to comply with "above" orders or resist them. Often the decisions had to be made by people who were not conscious or persistent opponents of the regime. People asked: "should I contribute to the Sunday *Eintopf* collection? Should I send my son to join the Hitler Youth, even though it may have a 'bad influence' on him? Should I ignore the possible penalties and listen to foreign radio broadcasts, even if I only wanted to find out about the situation with the war?" In each situation, the individual would either be aware of the importance of his decision or act spontaneously and unreflectingly as his social background or everyday experience dictated. Some behaviours cannot be reached by police's intervention which leaves room for nonconformist actions.[23]

Detlev Peukert explains acts of nonconformist behaviour and talks about refusals: for instance, not sending one's daughter to the League of German Girls, protests, like various churches' campaigns or resistance, like the rejection of the regime or attempts to overthrow it. Many of these reactions could have happened as non-political, everyday behaviours. But, as Peukert stresses, National Socialism politicised society by importing political claims previously private domains, so the regime could also reach a simple retreat into non-political privacy. That is why many nonconformist actions must be seen individually. It poses questions: where were

[22] Welch, Nazi Propaganda, 236–237.
[23] Detlev J. K. Peukert, Inside Nazi Germany. Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life, New Haven/CT: Yale University Press, 1898, 81–83.

oppositionally-minded people able to take refugee? Were there areas where they could draw strength and encouragement for oppositional activity? The answer is traditional socio-cultural structures of solidarity within Catholicism among friends, neighbours or colleagues. But even these environments were touched by political and social changes in the Third Reich.
Religion or faith was important to German Authors. Since Baltic Germans, in their war recollections, often quote the Bible or refer to pastors' teachings or other religious gatherings, I must read these Authors as Christians. I want to show how they, as believers, interpretd the relocation and settlement in the new German territories.

## 4.2. Authors Portraying Themselves as Christians

### 4.2.1. Situation of German Church and Separatist Tendencies in the Baltics

The atmosphere seemed to be less tense in Estonia, but, in general, the German believers' community in both Baltic countries was facing significant difficulties and hostility.[24] I see it as a factor "pushing" Germans towards embracing the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft* and being "nationally" separated from Latvians and Estonians. Andrzej Topij describes the situation of the German Church in the Baltics.
97% of Germans in Latvia were Lutherans. The rest were Catholics, Orthodox believers and others. Before the First World War, the Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized and led by Germans, even though most believers were Latvians. There were also more German than Latvian pastors in the countryside. Growing nationalism only added problems to existing tensions between German and Latvian parishioners, not to mention the *jus patronatus* that always allowed Germans to occupy high positions within the church administration. In 1919 the *jus patronatus* was abolished, and parishioners could appoint their own candidates for pastors. The highest position as president of the Lutheran Church belonged to the lawyer Juris Lasdinšs, and his vice presidents were Latvian pastor D. Maldons and German pastor Peter Poelchau. Their cooperation was soon disturbed by the different views on the future of the Lutheran Church. Latvian side believed that the Church should receive and gather all nationalities, especially since 93% of all Lutherans were Latvians.
On the other hand, German pastors insisted on creating an autonomous German Church, and self-rule was important to them. They wished to be able to discuss all parish matters in their own circles because only this would allow them to sustain the actual autonomy of their Church. Finally, the German and the Latvian side could not continue to work together, and in 1922 the

[24] I write the term Christianity with the capital "C" when talking about the community of believers; otherwise, it means building or room for ritual gatherings or prayers.

synod with the Central Council of Church was established. Three seats in the council were reserved for Germans, and this was regarded as an excellent success for Baltic Germans because this solution met their expectations. Latvian bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church was Kãrlis Irbe and, Peter Poelachau was the bishop of all German parishes. In 1928 the Church's constitution was declared and guaranteed autonomy for all German parishes within the Latvian Lutheran Church. This, next to the German education system, gave the German minority a privileged and independent position within the Church.

Although in 1918 there were 18 German parishes and in 1939 this number grew to 50, the economic situation worsened because the Latvian government was not financially supporting the German Church. One in four Lutheran pastors in Latvia were Germans and the biggest churches (with about 5,000 – 9,000 believers) were in Riga. Additionally, Baltic Germans organized themselves in religious associations like Der Evangelische Verein junger Männer zu Riga, Christlicher Verein junger Mädchen zu Riga or Vereinigung deutscher evangelisch-lutherischen Pfarren Lettlands.

Even though pastors Irbe and Pelchenau made efforts to lead the two Churches as a part of one Lutheran Church, the hostility and reluctance between believers were increasing. There were issues when Latvian pastors denied service to Germans living in the countryside or the German side was unwilling to conduct rituals for Latvian farmers who received the land due to German land allotment. Finally, due to the concordat between Vatican and the Latvian government, one of the most significant conflicts appeared when Germans were divested of the two most prominent churches, i.e., St. Jacob and cathedral (*Dom*). Even bishop Irbe, some Jews and Russians or non-Lutherans were protesting together with Germans, and the whole situation was seen as *Kirchenraub* and presented internationally as violating the rights of minorities. Anyway, the final conflict was yet to come.

In 1926 the military chapel in Riga was established, and it was run by Jãnis Terinš and colonel Blumentãls. Both were extreme nationalists against the religious policy of bishop Irbe, who, according to them, was a friend of Germans. They also demanded the removal of German religious autonomy and postulated that the military chapel could co-administrate the cathedral. Finally, they requested that the Latvian parliament conduct the cathedral's nationalization process and that the War Ministry control this church. Press supported this idea because, in the opinion of many, too many churches in Latvia belonged to Germans.

On the other hand, many politicians, like Latvian Arveds Bergs, a Jewish member of parliament Max Laserson or Russian Michaił Kurszczinskij, supported the German minority. According to them, the idea that the War Ministry controlled the church was against the constitution that

guaranteed the separation of church and state. Finally, parliament rejected this bill, but it did not end the mutual enmity and complaints that the German minority lacked “christian readiness to reach agreement”.

In Estonia, Baltic Germans also managed to keep an independent position within the Lutheran Church. Compared to the situation in Latvia, the difference is that they did not have a German bishop. Leader of German parishes was Estonian Konrad von zu Mühlen. There were 14 German churches with around 17 000 believers, most of which lived in big cities like Tallinn and Tartu. Even though German pastors were respected among their Estonian believers, more and more Estonians joined Estonian parishes.

Like Latvia, Estonia’s most sensitive issue became the cathedral. But contrary to Latvia, Estonian church leaders, like bishop Kukk, wanted to remove Germans from the Dom. In 1925 the Minister of the Interior subordinated the church with all movable and immovable property to the Estonian state. Situation became very tense, Estonian and German sides had to go through a few legal affairs. During the church services, pastors, in their teachings, were attacking one another, and the new Estonian administrators started to remove the “German history” of the cathedral. They were, for instance, moving out German emblems and banners. Church became the main field of national battles, which was an immediate result of the nationalist attitude of bishop Kukk. Thus, one of the main questions was how, for the German side, the ideas of this national battle, Christianity and National Socialism, supported one another.

### 4.2.2. Church and Nazism

When talking about the Church and National Socialism, there are two denominations meant: Catholicism and Protestantism. For my research, I have not made any distinction, nor have I paid any particular attention to different catholic or protestant events or institutions that played a role in the Third Reich. Both Churches I understand as Christian, and so I refer to Baltic Germans. Moreover, the conclusions about the responses to the Nazi ideology are the same for both Churches: the two were determined by their nationalist and anti-Bolshevik sentiments, they did not recognise “the fundamental hostility of the Nazi regime to their position”, they “did not make any challenge to National Socialism”, and they could only “reluctantly accept it”. Besides, Christians not only did not confront the ongoing anti-Semitic policies or actions against other groups persecuted by the regime, but their theological and doctrinal anti-Semitism was exposed.[25]

[25] Pine, Hitler’s “National Community”, 83.

Hitler's priests or "brown priests" (brown being the official colour of the Nazi movement) are the theme of Kevin P. Spicer's work. The motivation of catholic clergy to align themselves with the Party may reflect the motivation to do so for other Christians. Spicer says that "even some clerics who repeatedly and forcefully challenged National Socialism and its anti-Semitic ideology had publicly embraced a form of racism sometime during their ministries".[26] Priests' position was very precarious because, apart from being religious figures, as pseudo civil servants they were subjected to state regulations and that is why, for instance, they had to offer "Heil Hitler" salute (as dictated the law from July 1933 about civil servants). Some priests enrolled in the Nazi Party, and a small number of them even left the priesthood and joined the ranks of the SS.[27] Behind the motivation of many brown priests was the belief that National Socialism could arrest a moral decline from the time of the Weimar Republic. Others believed that joining NSDAP would advance their state and church careers. Some supported Hitler because they longed for a "national saviour" and wanted to be a part of the political process. Some feared being called traitors to the new government. Priests believed in Hitler's promise (from the speech on March 23, 1933) that Catholic and Lutheran Churches could serve as the "underlying foundation of the German nation". In Spicer's words, brown priests were saying "yes" to Hitler and were "hesitant" about the Nazi *Weltanschauung*, always ready to "correct its moral errors". Catholics could deepen their trust in Adolf Hitler since he signed a concordat with the Vatican state, which promised official government protection and recognition of the Catholic Church and its institutions in Germany. And even though these promises were not fulfilled and soon many Catholic churches, institutions and schools were shut down and many priests arrested, one-third of brown priests who were highly educated, like having a doctoral degree in theology, did not see evil in National Socialism and believed it is compatible with Catholicism.[28]

Hitler's words regarding "Christianity as the unshakeable foundation of our national life and morality" and churches "as the most important factors for the preservation of our national culture"[29] do not surprise because it is known that, as a leader, Hitler wanted first to consolidate and strengthen his power and to align his position within the understanding of his Christian followers (only from 1937 onwards Nazi policies against the churches escalated). Less expected has been the response from different circles (from Nazi elites to ordinary elites, to priests, to

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[26] Kevin P. Spicer, Hitler's Priests. Catholic Clergy and National Socialism, DeKalb/IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008, 5.

[27] Ibidem, 7–15.

[28] Ibidem, 8.

[29] Pine, Hitler's "National Community", 84.

pastors and laity) which often affirmed Nazi re-interpretation of faith and re-placing the Führer in the new position of a god. Many accepted that the Nazi leaders were openly contemptuous of the Christian churches (like Heinrich Himmler). Others listened to their priests and pastors, like Joachim Hossenfelder – leader of the Berlin German Christians – who, in a pamphlet, *Unser Kampf* was writing about the god-given concepts of Race and *Volkstum* under the leadership of Hitler.[30]

Another thing is that Christians themselves let the regime to coordinate the church. The German Christian Movement (of the Protestant Church) was strongly nationalist and anti-Semitic in its outlook and openly embraced the Nazi ideology. With Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller, the German Christians believed they are on a *völkisch* mission ordained by god. Manfred Gailus's argument shows that the penetration of Nazism into the protestant churches "was not primarily accomplished by trickery, force, terror or usurpation on the part of the Nazi party". He says it was "rather by a process in which Protestants enthusiastically delivered up their own institutions" and openly they received "ideas of 1933". In this way, swastika flags hanging in the churches were no dismay and the majority of 28 regional churches experienced "an extensive Nazification of faith, religiosity and church structures"[31].

Because Baltic Germans did make some remarks about Jews in their recollections, it is worth noticing how the Church was justifying its anti-Semitism. The sermons, teachings and writings of brown priests "aligned traditional Catholic religious anti-Semitism with National Socialist racial anti-Semitism".[32] And the traditional anti-Semitism had already a long history of blaming the Jews for Christ's crucifixion.[33] Also, according to the Catholic rhetoric and popular thought the negative perception of Jews included that they were outsiders and with no hope unless baptized, for salvation.[34] In this way National Socialism used this religious anti-Semitism to "build its broader racial and annihilative anti-Semitism".[35] In March 1937, Pope Pius XI published his encyclical "With Burning Concern", expressing that the Concordat was being violated. He condemned Nazi racism and started to harden the stance towards the Third Reich. This policy was not continued by Eugenio Pacelli, who became Pope Pius XII in 1939. The last one "favoured Nazism as an ideology that was opposed to atheistic Bolshevism, which he

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[30] Robert P. Ericksen, Luther, Lutherans and the German Church Struggle, in: *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1999), pp. 297–307, here 300–301.

[31] Manfred Gailus, Overwhelmed by Their Own Fascination with the 'Ideas of 1933'. Berlin's Protestant Social Milieu in the Third Reich, in: *German History*, vol 20, no. 4 (2002), pp. 462–493, here 462, 468.

[32] Kevin Spicer, Hitler's Priests. Catholic Clergy and National Socialism, Cornell University Press: Ithaca 2008, 9.

[33] Ibidem, 6.

[34] Ibidem, 6.

[35] Ibidem, 9.

regarded as greater evil".[36] Similarly, the German Christian movement propagated anti-Jewish Christianity and approbated the Nazi racial policy. Their hatred towards Jews was not leading to the genocide conclusions at all, but it made it more comprehensive to the ordinary Christians and acceptable to the millions of Germans. Committed National Socialists and German Christians liked to demonstrate their religious traditions; many personal accounts present celebrating Christmas, singing favourite hymns and showing cross symbol. Bergen says this Christian phenomenon could give an impression to secularized Germans that "the eastern war front is a holy crusade and condemn Jews as the killers of Christ".[37]

In general, Church did fail to develop a morally adequate response to the Nazi regime, and Lisa Pine says this response "might be expected from these institutions".[38] Pastors were relatively free in their actions. Yet, they allowed their churches to be penetrated by Nazi ideology. Suppose any Church was "struggling" and pastors were arrested (like 700 pastors arrested by the end of 1937) it was usually the fight against the unscriptural theologies. In that case, that is sermons that were not derived from the Bible. Still, it was not the fight against the state.[39] To the biblical doctrines, Church authorities applied some "twists". For instance, they used racial categories to define the *Volk*: race was interpreted in religious terms, the church on earth was "a vehicle for the expression of race and ethnicity", and it had nothing to do with the church described in New Testament). Another "twist" was in claiming that race was sanctified, part of a divine plan for human life and that establishing a purely Aryan people's church was a god-given task. Manipulation of Christian doctrines and showing anti-Semitism were both directly and indirectly manifesting Christians' loyalty towards National Socialism and in this was another way to make people "immune to open opposition".[40]

#### 4.2.3. Manifestation of Christian Values

"Ordinary Christians" were "ordinary people", or another way round,[41] who sometimes showed their attachment to the religion. Unlike the Bolshevik biographers, they did not rely on their rationality or intellectual rigour but on tradition and Christian values. Bolshevik autobiography was modern because the authors were self-reliant and positively affirmed, but Baltic Germans dwelt and remained within the Christian orbit since they found subjectivity in the sacrifice of

[36] Pine, Hitler's "National Community", 89.
[37] Doris L. Bergen, Twisted Cross. The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich, Chapel Hill/NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996, 9.
[38] Pine, Hitler's "National Community", 90.
[39] Here, one needs to mention Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the only pastor actively engaged in the resistant movement, attempting to overthrow National Socialism, executed in Flossenbürg in April 1945, Pine, Hitler's "National Community", 86.
[40] Bergen, Twisted Cross, 11, 43.
[41] Ibidem, 10.

the Self. [42] They regularly manifested their faith; they said that they prayed, talked about church services, quoted the pastors and their sermons, and referred to the Bible. The most often said place related to religious meetings or services was the Evangelical Lutheran Cathedral of Riga (*Dom zu Riga*). Autobiographers, with nostalgia, refer to it as a place where Germans regularly meet, participate in church services, and talk to their spiritual leaders. Moreover, the church is part of the landscape. The church's architecture as a building is present in every description of old Heimat.

Anxiety and fright were common feelings on the eve of the resettlement. During the church services pastors attempted to embolden or buoy the believers. First, they called to remain calm and at peace and then reassured about god's protection. This is what one Biographer remembered:

> Am zweiten Sonntag hatte Pappi seinen letzten Gottesdienst. Er betete für Ulmanis und die Regierung, wie das vorgeschrieben ist, dann aber für das deutsche Volk und seinen Führer. Wie das durch ging! Heimlich hatte man um Schutz und Segen gefleht, aber nun auf rigaschem Boden laut ausgesprochen! Das presste einem Tränen in die Augen. Pappi Text war, Geh aus deinem Vaterland und deiner Freundschaft in ein Land, dass ich dir zeigen werde und ich will dich segnen und du sollst ein Segen sein! Die Kirchen waren nun immer Pfropfenvoll und feierlich war es. (…) Es gibt Dinge die grösseren Wert haben und das haben wir gespürt. Wir waren ja bereit, nur mit Handgepäck hinüberzugehen.[43]

From the text above, one realizes the Author's father is a pastor. First, it is said that the pastor prayed for Kārlis Ulmanis (the then Prime Minister of Latvia) and the government because *das vorgeschrieben ist*. It is a reference to Apostle Paul's epistle to Timothy (1 Ti. 2, 1–4) that says that people are urged to pray "for kings and all those in authority". In other words, Author relies on the Bible and stresses that, following what is "prescribed" in the Bible is mandatory for a believer. Following the commandment from the Bible means that the Author wants to, above all, be obedient to god, and regardless of the circumstances, he expresses the obligation of prayer for the Latvian government. The second citation from the Bible (*Geh aus deinem Vaterland ...)* indicates the very concrete Bible text named The Call of Abraham. According to it, in the book of Genesis, god says to Abraham: "Go from your country, your people and your

[42] Halfin, Red Autobiographies, 3–5.
[43] APP/800/146/104, S.K., Meine lieben beiden Mädel!, Posen, date unknown.

father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you (…)".[44] The land, that is meant here, is the land of Canaan (or the Promised Land) where god wanted to start and maintain his special connection to his chosen people – the Jewish people. The Author uses this comparison as an encouragement for resettlement and a promise that god will take care of Baltic Germans. It is again presented as a commandment "to leave the familiar land", and in this context, the resettlement is seen as the will of god. It is a popular connection made by Baltic Biographers who were "common believers".
Very often, it is stressed that *Gott will es*, and there are more scriptural references inclined: another Biographer says the answer to "all our questions" came from "Mund unseres Predigers, und sie lautet: Gottt gab uns nicht den Geist der Furcht, sondern den Geist der Kraft, des Glaubens, der Liebe und der Zucht".[45] With the resettlement in the background the word *Zucht* (discipline) suggest that god expects from his believers to be disciplined for leaving the Baltic Heimat. In other Bible translations instead of *Zucht* there is *Besonnenheit*[46] which means sound mind. This similarly indicates that those of sound mind are opting for the resettlement.
On some other occasion, another pastor guaranteed that no action is meaningless or in vain if one is "raising his eyes to god". The phrase "rising eyes towards heaven" in the Bible means looking up to god and searching for his help or blessing. Here Author, a pastor, intends to say that one can do no wrong if devoted to god or that every action is sanctified and justified if done "in prayer". In the same text, there is a description of the celebration of the last harvest festival. During the worship and prayer meeting, the *Kollekte* (which is an offering of money made at a religious service) was raised, and it was to be offered as help for the resettlers in need (*für die Reiseausrüstung der Bedürftigen*). According to the Author, nobody left the church after the service because it was their last gathering, and believers did not want to go through it alone: they stayed and dined together. And this action could be interpreted as something natural: a religious community remains together while facing a radical change. But, as the description of the harvesting festival goes on, it suddenly changes its mild indoctrination overtones to the concrete one:

> Unsere Vertreter sind aus Riga eingetroffen. In atemloser Spannung hören wir ihre Botschaft. Sie ist hart und klar: Der Führer ruft. Nicht soll jemals wieder deutsches Blut vergossen werden, wie in den furchtbaren Schreckenstagen in Polen. Der Führer ruft. In

[44] Bible, New International Version (NIV), Book of Genesis (Gen.), Chapter 12.
[45] APP/800/146/184, A.S., Abschied von der Olaikirche, place unknown, date unknown.
[46] Bible NIV, Second Epistle to Timothy (2 Ti.) Chapter 1, verse 7 (the German translation of Schlachter Bibel uses the word *Zucht*).

einer Woche stehen wir fertig da. Vieh? Haus? Land? Lasst es stehen und liegen, wie es mag. Wer Deutscher ist, folge dem Ruf! [47]

In this paragraph, there is another allusion to the biblical reference to Jesus Christ, who shed his blood for the salvation of sinners. In the Bible, it is always meant as a sacrifice that has the power to redeem people. In this sense Author talking about "German blood that could be shed" encourages Balts to understand the resettlement as a sacrifice in a divine sense that could be redemption for all German people who would later benefit from it.

As befits evangelicals, German Authors continued to refer to the biblical texts as a primary platform for their convictions (in opposition to Catholics who value the Bible equally with the Tradition). In the "Parable of the Sower", a sower sows seeds and depending on the ground they fall (sideway, rock or among thorns), they either bear no fruit or, when they "fell into good soil, they produce grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and hundredfold". As the Gospel of Mark (chapter 4) continues, Jesus explains the parable. He says that the sower sows the word, and the word needs a particular soil, i.e., the person's heart, to be received and bear fruit. Bringing it to the context of resettlement, does the German Author refer to Hitler's speech which they listened to on the radio? "Jeder Rundfunkstrom braucht seine Welle, auf der er läuft. Jedes Korn braucht sein Erdreich, damit es wachsen kann. Eine Sendund wie diese brauch die herzen, für die sie bestimmt ist, und keine andern".[48]

While Baltic Germans often narrate about the difficulty of leaving their ancestors' graves (as one of the hardest things when leaving old Heimat and what is showed in chapter 2 of this work), they do see it in another way in the context of their spiritual life: "Vielen war die Trennung von den Gräbern so schwer und man musste ihnen das hartklingende Wort des Heiland zurufen: Lasset die Toten ihre Toten begraben. Viele konnten sich von Haus oder Geschäft oder auch von Hund und Katze nicht trennen".[49] This is an apparent reference to the Gospel of Matthew (chapter 8) and Luke (chapter 9) in which Jesus says: "let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the Kingdom of God". In other words, those who do not understand what is essential or proper should forget about the issue of the resettlement and continue to care for things that do not matter. Only those who have a true revelation of what the resettlement call is, are able to join it with a deeper understanding of the spiritual reality.

[47] APP/800/146/67–68, Pastor T.v. B., Unser letztes Erntefest, place unknown, 8 October 1940.
[48] APP/800/146/204, H.C., Rücksiedlung! Warum fahren wir?, place unknown, date unknown.
[49] APP/800/146/106, S.K., Posen, Meine lieben beiden Mädel! Place unknown, date unknown.

There is a temptation to conclude that the above examples show how people were manipulated by their religious leaders. Using biblical references was like questioning peoples' intentions, love for god and other fellow humans or even their life after death. According to the Christian doctrine, being disobedient towards god is a sin; thus, the sinner is predestined to end up without salvation. In other words, not joining the resettlement (which was understood as god's commandment) could cost the believers salvation, that is, life after death. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the experience of religious leaders and other believers suggests that the Authors themselves were convinced that their beliefs were just and rightful. And this is what exactly resonates with Lisa Pine's thesis that the community was not only responding to the Nazi indoctrination but also creating its own ideas and convictions. Hitler called the German community to be obedient and to conduct the *Umsiedlung*. Still, this Christian community continued with their ideas further and made the mass relocation a god-ordained event.

Remembering the historical events from the Bible, like the history of Israel, miracles or the teaching of Jesus Christ or his disciples, is a common practice for Christians. It nourishes their faith by attaching meanings to past events, and gives hope for the future according to the rule: "all good things god has done to our ancestors, he can do to us". Jacques Ellul's article examines the role of memory and hope in faith. First, he emphasizes that "biblical revelation always deals in the present: it is only the present, the *hic et nunc*, which counts. (…) Now is come salvation, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation, and now is the judgment".[50] Baltic Authors do the contrary: they dismiss the present (not historically but spiritually) and concentrate either on the past (like events from the biblical times) or the future life in Germany. They do not express their faith as active in the present but rather recall past sentiments and try to make sense of it. Ellul takes a closer look at Hebrew verbs in the perfect and imperfect tense, that indicate that the Bible says people must not live in the past, nor yet must they live in the future: "The Bible constantly exhorts us to regard present reality as being all-important. People cannot escape to the past nor the future. The prime importance is that believers "are making life now". In other words, only the present counts biblically and it is not to reject the memory or aim, but in the present to "actualize them".[51]

Baltic Germans not only did not actualize the stories from the Bible (did not give them appropriate meaning for the present time), but they interpreted them to their advantage. Still, it is impossible to determine whether they did it on purpose or believed in it). Ellul says that for

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[50] Jacques Ellul, The Role of Memory and Hope in Faith, in: The Aberdeen University Review, no. 49 (1981–82), pp. 156–180, here 171–174.

[51] Ibidem, 172.

Christians, the hope is the fact that the Kingdom of God "is coming", which means that, despite the unknown future, God is coming towards his people to deliver them (that is, to offer them salvation and life after death) regardless of what they do. In this case, regardless of whether they stay in Baltic region or they leave it. Additionally, the recollections do not express any hope for the future in the biblical sense, but their hoped destiny is National Socialist Germany. The Authors did not regard that the Letter to Philippians (chapter 3) says that their citizenship (which is sometimes translated as homeland), is in heaven. They never mentioned "heaven" – the ultimate destiny for all Christians.

Nonetheless, after arrival to the Wartheland, Balts tried to recreate their religious life, but it was not easy since the surroundings were so different and new. C. Ch. W Szejman writes about German soldiers abroad looking for the same churches or communities they used to know from home. They longed to experience peace and familiarity because after leaving their Heimat, they were separated from it physically, but the mental and spiritual connection remained.[52] Similarly, old rituals were meaningful for Balts. In a letter written by Baltic Biographer, there is an expression that pastor administered the sacrament of confirmation "in a Baltic style".[53] Still, the distinction of what was left in the Baltics was striking, and one woman, after seeing a church building in the Wartheland, stated that *die Kirche ist nichts besonderes*, it is not inseparable (like in Riga) part of the landscape. Moreover, she said that it is not familiar and its baroque interior is simply disturbing.[54]

The Nazi Party was oficially supported "positive Christianity" (both Catholic and Protestant church), but only if it was not too much connected to any organization. Other Party's ideas included trust in the ethicality and morals (*Moralgefühl*) of the German race.[55] Except that Hitler had already uttered his views in *Mein Kampf* and made it clear that he had disassociated himself with the Catholic Church, he expressed the hatred towards Jews and Christianity. Nazi authorities decided about the associations and religious societies in Warthegau. They created: *Posener evangelische Kirche deutscher Nationalität im Wartheland, Litzmannstädter evngeliche Kirche deutscher Nationalität im Wartheland, Evanelisch-lutherische Kirche deutscher Nationalität im Wartheland and Römisch-katholische Kirche deutscher Nationalität im Wartheland*. The state authorities controlled religious life, which had nothing to do with the freedom of confession. Moreover, propagandist announcements were usually suggesting and

[52] Claus-Christian W. Szejnman, Soldiers and Heimat Abroad, in: Szejnman, Umbach, Heimat, Region, and Empire, 121.
[53] Letters, private collection of Ms Renate Adolphi, 21 (own pagination).
[54] Ibidem, 24 (own pagination).
[55] Bernhard Stasiewski, Die Kirchenpolitik der Nationlasozialisten im Warthegau 1939–45, in: Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, vol. 7, no. 1 (1959), pp. 46–74, here 46.

compelling to officially leave the church (like particular recommendations for NSDAP members or teachers). Bernhard Stasiewski describes manipulative actions and discriminations of Polish believers (not to mention policy towards the Polish Jews) and the whole *Kirchenprogramm* in the Wartheland. He stresses that "Der Kampf ging in Wahrheit um die Seelen gläubiger Menschen, auf die der Nationalsozialismus seinen Totalitätsanspruch erhob."[56]

The reports that were written by women from *NS Frauenschaft* offer descriptions of their spiritual or religious life in Wartheland. It is well known that *NS Frauenschaft* Authors were fighting, according to the Nazi ideological reasons, with any manifestation of Christian culture. In analysed here sources they were especially complaining that *Kirchlich sind die Siedler sehr gebunden.*[57] One report expresses indigination that *die Siedler in diesem Dorf sind noch sehr an den katholischen Glauben gebunden.* For instance, one ethnic German claimed that he "was speaking to god", and another person spread information about *Seelenwanderung*. In general, women from the NS League had to try to explain to the ethnic Germans that there was a difference between *Herrgott* and *Kirche*, but settlers did not seem to understand it. Unfortunately, the text of the report does not explain it either, so one could doubt whether the Author herself knew this difference.[58]

The lack of a "normal life" where one could practice Christian rituals is often given as an obstacle integrating with the new place. The resettlers were complaining about the "spiritual emptiness"[59], and the church was the place they were searching for consolation in their circumstances.[60] Most of the time, they could not receive any support or reassurance since access to church life was limited or often nonexistent. In their reports, Women's League agents criticised German immigrants for not being interested in attending meetings organized by *NS Frauenschaft*. This became an issue, especially on Sundays, because people preferred attending the church that day. On purpose, these propagandist meetings were organised on Sundays to draw people away from the church.

On the other hand, elderly people among immigrants, because of their health condition, could not attend any church service, making them "not to integrate with the new environment". In other words, Christian beliefs were necessary for the ethnic Germans to integrate and assimiliate

[56] Ibidem, 74.
[57] Bundesarchiv Berlin (BAB), R 49/3062, Berichte, 160.
[58] BAB, R 49/3062, Berichte, (here subpart called: Religion), 160–170.
[59] BAB, R 49/3062, Berichte, (here subpart called: Feiergestaltung), 60–70.
[60] Ibidem.

with the new place. But at the same time, the resettlers were under constant pressure from the NS League, which was trying to discourage the migrants from their religious practices.

## 4. 3. Post-War Recollections: God and Faith Neglected. New Expressions about the Locals

### 4.3.1. Religion Ignored. Distancing from the Nazi Ideology

In post-war accounts, one can find a complete shift in spiritual life. First of all, German Authors ignore religion or faith and secondly, they notice, in a new way, the local people of the Wartheland. Authors choose their word carefully when writing about the reasons, motivations and general beliefs about the resettlement. It is quite natural that years after the war, the discourse about participation in the war would not be seen from a spiritual perspective or as a "god's will". Or at least it would not be easy to find an Author who would like now to explain his actions with biblical references. In other words: god, faith, religion were not the matters to mention as reasons or motivations behind any actions. Nevertheless, one can assume believers do not necessarily abandon their faith or religious perception of god throughout the war. Instead, they would try to rethink or reconsider their perception of god, and how they speak about it, and later either keep it private or re-represent it.

The Marburg Survey, for instance, does not mention god, faith or any form of religious life. No hint would indicate that the interviewee is a Christian, nor is there a question from William von Bremen that would come close to the spiritual matters. Of course, one could assume that the Historical Commission would not be interested in these questions. Nevertheless, while describing other people's reactions and behaviours, the topic of faith and seeing the resettlement by the Christian values could have appeared. In post-war texts, the only explanations within the context of the church were that "closing German churches and schools in the Baltics" (because of the resettlement) helped people to realise that the mass relocation was happening, and some moral reflection came up:

> Natürlich ergaben sich schwierige Situationen und Gewissenkonflikte für diejenigen deutschen Pastoren, die auch – oder ausschliesslich – bei lettischen Gemeinden waren. Ihre Zahl war aber nicht sehr gross. Aber ich glaube, es waren besonders viel ältere Herren unter ihnen, denen die Trennung von ihren Gemeinden wohl besonders schwer gefallen ist. Aber im grossen und ganzen, kann man sagen, hat die Kirche sich auf den Standpunkt gestellt: die Umsiedlung muss gemacht werden.[61]

[61] Herder Institut Marburg, Archive (HIM), DSHI 140 Balt 491, Befragung, A.L., 97 (own pagination).

The above quotation explains that the difficult part was to leave the people who belonged to certain parishes or protestant communities. Still, the Author quickly adds that, fortunately, these were only a "few and old pastors".

The survey does not say anything about the Christian lifestyle, but if it mentions anything connected to the church, it is only the institution meant. Only two pastors took part in the survey, and again they do not say anything about god or biblical references, as one could expect from the pastor as a spiritual leader. There are rather explanations about the influences from the Third Reich, and basically, the central attitude is contained in one of the pastor's comments:

> Aber Befehlsvehältnisse bestanden natürlich nicht. Natürlich wurde das ganze Gedankengut von Deutschland freudig aufgenommen und auch gelebt, so das eine intensive Schulungsarbeit innerhalb die Jugendgruppen bei uns getan wurde, eine weltanschauliche- Schulung die sich mit dem Nationalsozialismus und eben sehr stark mit den Fragen unserer Heimat befasste. Unser Ziel war, als Deutsche, die die völkische Erneuerungsbewegung des Nationalsozialismus mitmachen, in der Heimat unsere Aufgabe auszufüllen.[62]

With the post-war recollections written by women, it is a different matter, but there is a change though. Unlike the war-period documents, this time, women, apart from appearing Christian, keep god in a private dimension. If god "does something", he does it for the family or individual, and his actions are no more nation oriented. This spiritual shift where god's influence and support had narrowed from the country to the family of Baltic Germans about the time in Warthegau characterizes these post-war records.

While war-time recollections deliver the message that the Wartheland was to become some chosen land where god is sending the Balts, now, i.e., twenty, thirty years later, it is being expressed that there was a unique leading from god. Still, the family was not destined to stay in Warthegau. Suddenly it was not "god's will" for them to settle well in German East. One woman describes that one day a mirror fell from the wall on the Bible and it broke, and this incident of the broken mirror was a sign, "an omen", according to the Author, that soon the family would have to leave their possession (*Gut*) in Weidenhof (Polish: Czachory). While describing this occurrence Author brings a new piece of information that would detach her and her family from the Nazi racial ideas. Indeed, as Author narrates, in three weeks, after the mirror

[62] HIM, Befragung, Pastor B. B. von, 20 (own pagination).

broke, the family was moved to a smaller property because, as she says: “SS has thrown us from the house because we were not clean Arians”.[63]

“Religion” and “god” are ignored terms in post-war recollections, but when they appear, they are there to accompany different stories. Not the stories of legitimisation of the war or the resettlement but rather the stories of becoming victims (“SS threw us”) or distancing themselves from, for instance, an ideology of racism, like: “during my stay in Warthegau I met only good Polish people”.[64]

#### 4.3.2. New Narration. Noticing the Locals

The theory says that perpetrators (or those regarded as the accused one) avoid speaking of the victims.[65] In this work, the Baltic Germans are regarded as “being on the perpetrators’ side”: they sided with occupying forces, recognized themselves as citizens of the Third Reich and had the actual perpetrators among themselves. Von Kellenbach refers to a philosopher – Arne Vetlesen – who says: “collective evil is where the individual agent from the very start sees himself as acting *on behalf of his group*. (…) the agent thinks, feels and acts in a manner *giving importance to his relationship (bond) with his co-actors over his relationship with his victims*” (emphasis in original).[66] This statement can be argued with because German Authors tell a lot about their contacts with the local people of Wartheagu. Of course, the relationship with the Third Reich is regarded as higher, but there is particular importance given to the locals. The question appears: how do they talk about them and why?

Years after the war, the Authors started to notice the locals in Warthegau. There is an apparent avoidance of describing the relationship with the locals negatively or using negative words, like “untrustworthy”, “lazy” or “thief”. There are rather trials of understanding the situation and proving that the locals did not suffer because of the Author. In other words, post-war recollections try to point out that the tragic case of the locals was not directly connected to the Authors. On the other hand, the Jewish community is absent, and there is no comment about it. In further references, no reflections beyond the simple information like “Jews were not there” or “they were transported away” will be shown.

First, concerning the Jewish community, it is stressed that “the situation could not be changed”. Life, relationship and policies in Warthegau were shaped by Nazi leaders, but Authors did not identify themselves with Nazi authorities, and there was nothing one could do about it: *Unsere*

[63] CSG Lüneburg, manuscripts, Gertrud von Aderkas, Memmo erzählt aus ihrem Leben, 1968–1969, 45.
[64] Ibidem, 42.
[65] It must be stressed that analysed German Biographers were not involved in killing orders, and this work does not investigate people who partook in war atrocities.
[66] Kellenbach, The Mark, 16–17, 27.

*Eltern machten sich wohl über manches Gedanken, aber man konnte nicht viel ändern. Man richtete sich mit den Gegebenheiten ein und versuchte, nicht an später zu denken.* The Author who was a student in the Wartheland says that in the classroom instead of the Karlis Ulmanis' portrait there was one of Adolf Hitler's and, as she narrates, everyone got used quickly to the Heil Hitler greeting: "Der Unterricht begann mit Strammstehen und 'Heil Hitler'– Grüß, an den man sich rasch gewöhnte. For the first and the last day of school, Author remembers, students had to wear BDM uniforms which erschien uns nicht weiter sonderbar. Author continues further that Wie alle Jugendlichen waren wir auch in der HJ [...] um den für mich langweiligen Heimabenden auszuweichen, meldete ich mich als Sportwartin".[67] In other words, Author again stresses that any kind of activity that would recognize the rule of the regime was nothing unusual or special. Von Kellenbach notices: when agents of the Nazi state defended their actions, they used platitudes and clichés, and their phrases were devoid of original thinking and personal insight.[68] All phrases like "nothing could be done" or "it did not appear special to us" only confirm the refusal of acknowledging the personal responsibility. Avoiding any connotation to the Holocaust means that Authors were saying that the Second World War was cruel but "normal".[69]

Additionally, participating in various activities or belonging to notable organizations resulted in boredom or fitting into the situation. Moreover, the Authors observed distinct differences between themselves and those who were fanatic Nazi followers. Here one Author tells about school life: "Von den Lehrkräften waren nur wenige fanatische Nationalsozialisten, die meisten fügten sich in die Lage, wie unsere Eltern auch".[70]

With the example of Jews, it is even more evident how much the Authors want to stress that daily aspects could not have been changed. And Authors believed it themselves because, in their post-war recollections, they do not give much attention or reflection to the "Jewish topic". They do say that the apartments of the local Jews were "confiscated", that "they were housed in the newly built and fenced ghetto" and that "they were transported further to the east". Nonetheless, it is always described in the form of passive, meaning there is no subject responsible for it. Some specific things "were done" to the locals without naming who did it. And if any question arose, again there was the same answer: "nothing could be done", "one knew nothing":

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[67] CSG Lüneburg, manuscripts, Dietlind, Kinderjahre im Baltikum. Jugend im Schatten des Krieges, 1994, 42–43, 47.

[68] Kellenbach, The Mark, 18.

[69] Maja Zehfuss, Wounds of Memory.The Politics of War in Germany, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 26.

[70] CGS Lüneburg, Dietlind, Kinderjahre, 42.

> Uns wurde eine beschlagnahmte, jüdische Wohnung im 3. Stock eines finsteren Hinterhauses zugewiesen, zweieinhalb Zimmer und Küche, allerdings modern möbliert. An den Türen waren überall kleine Schriftrollen mit uns unbekannten Schriftzeichen – aus der Thora? – angebracht [...]. Die ehemaligen bewohner? – Keiner wußte, wo sie geblieben waren.

Or:

> In Lodsch […] wir ashen fast nur scheue, zerlumpte Gestalten mit und ohne gelben Judenstern. Eine bedrückende Szene. Spatter wurden die Juden im neu errichteten und eingezäunten Ghetto untergebracht , wo sie von Jahr zu Jahr weniger wurden. Man wußte da nichts genaues. Es hieß, sie würden weiter nach dem Osten abtransportiert. Man flüsterte auch von Seuchen, die sie dezimierten.[71]

Similarly, the following fragment mentions ghetto but does not give any additional comment about it:

> Für G. Und mich begann im Herbst 40 der Schulalltag. Die Schulen lagen in der Innenstadt. Um sie zu erreichen, mußten wir mit der Straßenbahn durch das eingezäunte Ghetto fahren. G. kam in die Handelsschule. Ich [...] meldete mich in der Mittelschule an.[72]

Why, in the above text, did the Author mention ghetto? To recognize its existence? After saying “fenced ghetto”, the Author immediately continues the story about the school and leaves the ghetto topic. Was it used only to describe the way to school? Or does the Author describe how she thought about it during the war? The Author herself answers:

> Haben wir uns viel Gedanken darüber gemacht? Vielleicht unsere Eltern? Ich selbst war da noch viel zu jung, auch viel zu sehr mit mir selbst beschäftigt, der Propaganda in Schule und Zeitung ausgesetzt. Man gewöhnte sich an diese Tatsachen, nahm sie hin, konnte man doch nichts daran ändern.[73]

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[71] Ibidem, 37–38.
[72] Ibidem, 42.
[73] Ibidem, 38.

Since the Author uses the word "propaganda", she seems to apply critical reasoning to her past actions. Nonetheless, she only uses it to justifiy her former daily life and, there are no reflections from "up-to-date" perspective, like recollections written in the nineties. This approach to critical judgment is confirmed in her other example when she attempts to criticize the then police. She says it was an obligation to belong to the HJ, and those who refused to be a part of this organization risked "to be taken by the police" – "jedenfalls wurde uns das so gesagt. Then she continues Ich denke mir jetzt, ob da die Polizei nicht wichtigeres zu tun hatte? " This exposes three issues. First of all, the Author "shows" a lack of knowledge of the Nazi police system because the control of belonging to the Nazi organization was one of the primary tasks of the police. Secondly, the Author tries to ridicule the then police ("as if they had nothing more important to do"), which is her trial to distance herself from "them". Finally, the she says *Ich denke mir jetzt* with which she presents the thinking process from the time perspective. Unfortunately, she does not apply it to other topics like ghetto, Poles, crimes or controversies from the church. In other words, Author shows she can think about it now but does not do it regarding other issues.

Controversial themes contained short sentences which play the informative role: "Kontakte zu Polen bestanden nicht or Juden waren ohnehin nicht mehr in der Stadt".[74] Here again, there are no additional comments or explanations: in which way there were no contacts with Poles? How come Jews were no more in town? Another piece of information: "Die Isolierung von den Polen ging so weit, daß selbst in der Straßenbahn eine Trennung erfolgte, Deutsche durften nur im Triebwagen fahren, Polen in den Anhängern" is misleading. It was not the isolation from the Polish people that led to the separation in the town tramways but another way round: the regime's public transport law forbidding people of different nationalities to travel together led to their isolation. The Author admits in her text the hardships that the Nazi laws created for the locals, but she fails to express them justly and precisely.

In another attempt to explain that there was propaganda, the Author says:

> Wir hatten "Totalen Krieg". Die Siegesfanfaren der ersten Jahre waren verklungen. Man hörte nur immer von Frontbegradigungen, unsere Soldaten gingen Stück für Stück zurück. Was das eigentlich bedeutete, war uns gar nicht klar, ein eventuelles Uberfluten der Heimat mit all seinen Konsequenzen nicht vorstellbar. Der "Endsieg" wurde uns

[74] Ibidem, 46.

> durch die Propaganda so eingehämmert, daß man trotz aller gegenteiligen Beweise immer noch daran glaubte.[75]

The above text shows that the Author again seemed to consider or judge the former actions from a later perspective. Still it is not explained how, against the "opposite evidence", the Author believed the propaganda. Nonetheless, it was essential to the Author to express that she was helping the former, evicted Polish house owner (the house that the Author lived in) to get their belongings, even though it was against the German authorities: "Bei Nacht und Nebel holten die Leute den Hausaltar, einen Tisch und anderes ab. Aber man mußte vorsichtig sein, grenzte unser Grundstück rückwärtig doch an das Polizeirevier".[76] Good relationships with the locals or describing "good local people" are a common characteristic of the post-war memoires. "Coming clean" with Poles does not serve to actually come clean but to show disloyalty to National Socialism.

With this "noticing" or "speaking about the sensitive issues" the Authors try to reason with their past. Everything that happened in the past, in Warthegau was an aftermath of the government-sponsored *Umsiedlung* and the actions of the individuals. Only the Authors knew how much their efforts were limited or aligned with the Nazi regime. In every action, they had to make an individual decision, a plan. Standardly, the strategy makes future actions contingent and acceptable. In this case, when the Authors write about their life in occupied Poland, they try to rationalise their past actions. One can talk about two parallel worlds: one lactated in the past in Wartheland, where the Authors lived, and the other one as a story about this past. In both cases, the Authors are in a decision situation which is very internal to them as it includes their beliefs, views, desires or other "determinants of rational actions".[77] This strategy of rationalisation forces the Authors to evaluate their actions, whether they do it successfully or not.

#### 4.3.3. "Noticing" Poles

I wrote "noticing" with quotation marks to indicate that there was another meaning to it. Baltic Authors in the post-war texts described many examples of their relationship with the local Polish people, usually in a positive light. They do so because they wish to describe themselves and their attitude and show their disloyalty to National Socialism.

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[75] Ibidem, 49.
[76] Ibidem, 42.
[77] More about the strategic rationality one can find in Wolfgang, Spohn, Strategic Rationality, in: Konstanzer Online-Publikations-System (KOPS) (1999), pp. 1–55 (27.04.2023), retrived from: https://kops.uni-konstanz.de/server/api/core/bitstreams/adf383c4-3342-43ca-aa39-fcf71dd50340/content.

One Author gives more significant and specific attention to her relationship with Poles. The owner of the house that the Author was placed in (in Warthegau) lived in the same house. The document says: “In unserem Hause wohnte die Besitzerin. Als wir einzogen, kam mir eine Dobermann-Hündin entgegen und legte mir ihren Kopf in den Schoß, das nahm ich als wunderbare Begrüßung an”. Later it is said that this dog typically was not going to people (meaning strangers), which means the Author wanted to stress that this acceptance by the dog meant, in general, accepting her presence there as the dog was wonderfully welcoming her.
Again, the Author wrote about the house owner (a woman who died after four months because of cancer) and that they both had “good relations”. She also noted that it was forbidden for Polish people to receive medical care, so the house owner had to die without the doctor’s assistance, but, as she wrote three times, “luckily she died without pain”. Writing it three times may indicate that the Author wanted to emphasize that the woman did not suffer because of the occupational policy or, as she calls it, *Besatzung*. She fails to say that even though the patient suffered a deadly disease, what mattered was the fact that she was denied medical care and not her painless death.[78]
About a person’s dignity, she wrote:

> Man konnte ja verstehen, daß die Polen uns mit Haß empfingen – als die Besatzung – aber wir mußten verlangen, daß wir von allen gegrüßt wurden. Es passierte daß deutsche Menschen einem Polen, der ihn nicht grüßte, den Hut vom Kopfe schlugen. Ich habe gesehen, daß junge Menschen es alten weißhaarigen Polen taten, zu meiner unendlichen Empörung. Ich wollte vor allen Dingen gut mit meinen Leuten auskommen, denn ohne Liebe zueinander geht keine Arbeit und gedeiht kein Werk. Und ich habe wohl in diesen Zeiten erfahren, daß ich immer auf der Seite der Getretenen stehen möchte und daß das einzig Richtige und Wahre ist, daß man Menschen nicht ihre Würde nimmt.[79]

What does the phrase “love towards one another” mean in this context? The Author calls the German presence as *wir – die Besatzung,* so can this phrase mean love between “the occupying” and “the occupied”? Morover, in the very next sentence Author wrote: “Im allgemeinen wurden ja alle polnischen Gutsbesitzer und auch die Besitzer von Fabriken und Firmen in das polnische Generalgouvernement transportiert”.[80] In this case removal of people from their own businesses

[78] CSG Lüneburg , Aderkas, Memmo erzählt, 38, 40.
[79] Ibidem, 39.
[80] Ibidem, 39–40.

does not seem to be taking their dignity. The Author expresses her concern about the treatment of the old local people or the personal street fights but does not pay attention to other tragedies of the locals. Does dignity apply only to direct harassment and malice? Could one assume that the Author says that "friendly" or "sensitive" *Besatzung* is justified?
Von Kellenbach talks about human dignity. She uses the story of biblical Cain, who killed his brother Abel and tried to hide this fact from god. Hiding, she explains, is the classic perpetrator behaviour and "the guilty one" reflects evasive denial and an attempt to cast a wide net of complicity. Cain's retort expresses his emotional detachment and indifference toward his brother. In the words of philosopher Claire Elise Katz, "Cain's reply indicates that he is unable to assume responsibility for the death of his brother, but it also implies his detachment from humanity in general. He is disconnected and unwilling to assume accountability for the effects of his actions".[81] In other words, the "blameworthy" ignores and disregards the human dignity of other people.
Moreover, like in the previous Biographer's example, the word *Besatzung* does not point out to any persons; again, no concrete people are meant.
When the house owner (mentioned before) died, the Author wrote the following:

> Wir wollten gerne, daß sie richtig auf ihren Friedhof ausbegleitet würde von den wenigen Nachbarn, die noch nicht ins polnische Generalgouvernement verschickt worden waren. So luden wir sie ein und es kamen auch einige Gutsnachbarn zusammen, wir ließen sie zu den Mahlzeiten allein, damit sie sich einmal untereinander ausprechen konnten.[82]

The Author appears here as the one who took care of the funeral. She wanted the late to be accompanied, by those who had known her, to the graveyard, so she invited the neighbours. This may appear as a nice gesture for the deceased, but could it be possible? First, because of the Nazi occupational law, it was impossible to have contact between German and Polish people, which means the Author could not have organized the funeral. She also could not invite the neighbors as she was not the one organizing the gathering. Third, and most probably, the funeral (in the sense of a meeting) was a secret event since any kind of gathering among Polish people was forbidden.

[81] Kellenbach, The Mark, 12.
[82] CSG Lüneburg , Aderkas, Memmo erzählt, 42.

Moreover, one needs to remember that Polish churches were closed, and priests, if still not evacuated, were not allowed to conduct any religious events (that is why secret funerals, baptisms or weddings at night were common). The Author had probably let the people gather and allowed them to perform their traditional rituals. She also left them alone and let them have a funeral meal. And probably it was not because of the good relationships but because Germans and Poles were not allowed to meet, gather or eat together. The Author, as German, was in a privileged position, so all her actions toward Polish locals could only be understood as a favour rather than a purposeful relationship.
Moreover, one cannot forget that between 1939 and 1946, the position of Germans in the East was marked by racist ideology and many harsh actions were reinforced by national stereotype. A comment on this "networking" between people says:

> True, illicit contacts between German and non-German persisted in the black market, notably that servicing German requirements for luxury goods. Only Poles could meet this demand but they were largely driven by the desperate need to survive at all costs. So it came about that even the criminal world was permeated by ideology. Anything remotely approaching an ordinary relationship, that is to say something other than collaboration, between German and non-German was, under these conditions, unusual in the extreme.

There were a few who had rejected Nazism and sided with Poles, "but such a relationship was so high-risk that it was 'abnormal' in the context of the time".[83]
Going back to the quoted text, German Biographer presents how good the Polish people were to her. When her son left the house and was sent to fight on the war front, the locals offered help and they also said they would pray for her and the son. When the son came home from the war front, the Polish neighbours were helping in organising his wedding day. Author also wrote that Poles were surprised that she was going everywhere on foot and not using horses for transportation and that she was working in the garden because, one could assume, this was the gardener's job. In all descriptions, the Author emphasized that people were good, but above all, she was liked and accepted:

> Ich habe wohl nur sehr gute polnische Charakterzüge kennengelernt. Zum Beispiel hatte unser Hofschreiner eine kranke Tochter, die im Krankenhaus dann sterben mußte, weil

[83] Hiden, Housden, Neighbours, 101.

> sie viel zu wenig Betreuung kriegte. Die Polen galten bei den Nazis ja nicht als vollgültiges Volk. Ich hatte mich sehr um sie bemüht und war auch bereit, Blut zu spenden, was ich als Deutsche nicht durfte, das wußten die Eltern, und als sie von der Beerdigung zurückkamen, kam die Mutter zu mir, mir die Hände küssend und mir für das gute Herz denkend. Ich hatte ja nichts erreicht mit meinen Bemühungen und trotzdem hat sie es mir so hoch angerechnet.[84]

The above examples show that, in their personal accounts, Authors were unable to express new perspectives and, in a way, were still trapped in the then discourse. “Nothing could be changed” or “we were different from the Nazi fanatics” were common attitudes in the post-war period. They could not talk directly and they used descriptions of something actually to say something else. For instance, no Author could say: “I believed and followed the ideas of National Socialism, but I do not now”. Instead, they seem to be disloyal towards the Nazi system by talking well about the Polish people (a thing that they do not do in the war texts). That is why I argue that the post-war accounts describing a “good relationship” with the locals have no intention of saying anything about these locals. The primary purpose is to tell: “I am not the guilty one because I was not hated”, “I did not do anything wrong because I got along with Poles” or “yes, they were victims, but we were not the responsible ones”.
The illustration of how attitudes have changed over time is shown by the evolution of the *Baltische Historische Kommission* (the one responsible for the Marburg Survey):

> In the post-war atmosphere, the Commission members felt uncomfortable with close examination of the recent past. Thus, apart from their preoccupation with their own experiences in the *Umsiedlung*, Baltic German historians tended to dwell on nostalgic examinations of their glory days in the former Baltic provinces. *Adelsgeschichte* (history of aristocracy) ruled. There were few papers at the Comission’s annual conference examining the implications of a former landed ruling caste settling on land stolen during the Second World War from Poles. Equally there was a deafening silence on the role of Baltic Germans acting as translators for the Nazi security police. And what of the role of Baltic Germans managing life in German occupied Baltic States between 1941 and 1944? [85]

[84] CSG Lüneburg , Aderkas, Memmo erzählt, 42.
[85] Hiden, Housden, Neighbours, 133.

In post-war recollections, Authors tried to be disloyal towards the Nazi regime, but they were unable to tell directly that this regime was wrong. Can this be understood as a real disconnection from it? Nevertheless, the beliefs and convictions were profound, and especially dedication towards the Führer was one of the most meaningful.

### 4.4. Imagined Connection to the Führer. Personal Submission

On purpose, I say "connection" instead of the "myth of the Führer" because Balts, in their writings, never moved their leader "into the realm of the gods".[86] Despite the illegality of his actions, Adolf Hitler was regarded as a defender of the "little man". His reputation was elevated, and crowds saw him as the leader of Germany's destiny. In the eyes of his people, he was a trustworthy man who changed the situation of many: his achievements were the recovery of the nation's economy, the elimination of mass employment in the mid-1930s and the massive public works schemes (like motorway construction). Lisa Pine reminds that "Hitler was popular among all social groups and was personally exempted from criticism of the regime". The Hitler myth enabled people to complain and criticize many of the then policies and actions and, at the same time, to remain content with the Nazi regime as a whole. If there was someone to blame, there were usually other Nazi leaders or authorities. Pine says that "this co-existence of complaint and compliance is significant to our understanding of the nature of popular opinion in the Third Reich".[87]

According to this popular opinion, in 1935, Hitler "brought home" the Saarland and three years later the *Anschluß* with Austria was another success and enhanced the sense of the national community. The Führer, through his foreign policy, was regarded as a great wartime leader (especially after the Nazi occupation of Paris in 1940). This illusion slowly disappeared after the Battle of Stalingrad in January 1943. Since Stalingrad, there were more cases of personal and direct criticism of Hitler and the Hitler myth started to decline, but, what is worth mentioning, this dissatisfaction did not lead to any form of communal reaction or resistance.

Like many other Germans, Balts were caught up in the sense of the "national community" and the Hitler myth. Similarly to the Reich Germans, they were looking for security, recovery and order, and the Nazi regime appeared to offer all these things.[88] Baltic Germans seemed, in general, very fond of Adolf Hitler and saw him as a figure that was personally calling them for the resettlement. In their writings, they utterly related to the propaganda and took the Führer's

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[86] According to Walter Knoche, placing a person into realms of gods is needed to contribute to the myth of Hitler.
[87] Pine, Hitler's "National Community", 25.
[88] Ibidem, 27.

call individually. They believed and saw him as trustworthy: “Glaube an useren treuen Führer. Moege er uns viel, viel Arbeit geben und, so Gott will, eine Frieden”.[89] They also expected that Hitler would bring peace. Documents express unlimited love: “Alle haben nur einen Glauben im Herzen und eine grenzenlose Liebe zum Führer”.[90]

The way the Biographers expressed their personal submission to Adolf Hitler was natural. In other words, it reads that this submission was neither obligation nor enforced. Baltic Germans wrote very openly way that having the Führer was a gift; he was an inseparable part of their new Heimat, and all his actions were under “god’s ways”. J. Stern writes that this image was “as much created by the masses as it was imposed on them”.[91] This means that opinions about Hitler were not only the response to the then indoctrination, but they were new myths that people had created because there was a need of such charismatic and heroic authority.[92] Pierre Ayçoberry wrote that “the construction of the Hitlerian myth resulted from a combination of autosuggestion, deliberate fabrication and quasi-universal acceptance”.[93] Baltic Biographers saw the great possibilities that were bestowed upon them through Hitler and they were emphasizing their enthusiasm for him: “Es bleibt nur die Hoffnung, dass Gott auch weiterhin Adolf Hitlers Tun segnen moege, wie Er es bis jetzt getan hat und man dann ein friedliches, frohes Leben anfangen kann, als gleich berechtigte Bürger eines grossen Reiches”.[94]

German Biographers called Adolf Hitler either by name or “the Führer”. No other expressions would indicate him or suggest a clear allusion to Hitler. The Führer is eulogized; he receives words of glory and praise for what he does and who he is. Nonetheless, it is not much about idolizing him as it is about the relationship that Biographers want to express. Knoche says about the relationship that the Nazi poets developed towards their Führer and how they portrayed it as a work of the sculptor. Hitler, being the sculptor, was working on his people – the raw material– “who have no will of their own and they are completely dependent on the artist for the end result”.[95] Similarly, Baltic Germans understood that their role is to obey and to “mould” their attitudes by the Führer’s will.

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[89] APP/800/146/15, T.S., Mein Baltenland, place unknown, date unknown.
[90] APP/800/146/27, Dr. P., Liebe Olly, Posen, date unknown.
[91] Stern, J., Hitler. The Führer and the People, London: Fontana, 1974, 111.
[92] Max Weber, Economy and Society, Berkeley/CA: University California Press, 1978, as cited in Pine, Hitler’s “National Community”, 241–242.
[93] Pierre Ayçoberry, The Social History of the Third Reich, 1933–1945, New York: The New Press, 1999, 68.
[94] APP/800/146/31, L.P., Das Erleben einer baltendeutschen Frau aus Reval 1939, Posen, date unknown.
[95] Knoche, The Political, 20.

### 4.5. Concluding Thoughts

With all the struggles (personal and as a community) Balts failed to express the consequences of their influx to the Wartheland for other people and did not seem to realize how inaccurate and misguided the perception of their Christian belief system was. Moreover, they not only reflected the Nazi propaganda in their personal accounts from the time of the war but seemed to continue the propagandist attitude in their post-war memoirs. This post-war propagandist attitude was expressed in the trials of distancing from any Nazi connections, Nazi support and descriptions of the good relationship with the local Polish people.

Baltic Germans, as ordinary Christians who were ordinary people, tried to live biblically, i.e., in accordance with god's created lifestyle for people that is proposed in the Bible. They prayed for the governmenta and they saw themselves leaving their homeland as once biblical Abraham did. They turned to the Bible as the source of encouragement for the resettlement. But as a result of their misinterpretation, they understood that the "Christian believer follows the call of Adolf Hitler" and mixed the meanings of "god's bloodshed for the salvation of sinners with the German bloodshed at the battlefields". Finally, they seemed to understand that the *Umsiedlung* was god's commandment. With the help of Jacques Ellul's article, I also pointed out that Balts wrongly saw their Christian destiny in National Socialist Germany instead of, again according to the Bible, "in god's kingdom" or, in other words, "in heaven".

On the contrary, post-war Baltic Germans did not portray themselves as Christians. The topics of god and faith are neglected, and if they appear at all it is within the private family sphere. The conclusion is that in both cases, Biographers used religion to make their stories meaningful. In post-war years it was purposeful silence about the faith that was to make their point. In after-war awareness, god could not have been mixed into the war. This would mean that god was supporting the war. In the rationalization process, emotions or faith as seen as irrational motives, even if they were applicable earlier.[96]

Additionally, it was already "post Holocaust" (including the knowledge about mistreatments of other nationalities) reality, and thus Biographers would sound unwise to put god into their stories. Moreover, from their Christian definition as almighty and all-knowing, god could not have made a mistake. And if god did not make a mistake, then German Balts did. But German Biographers did not admit it. Not their mistake of taking part in the resettlement but the mistake of involving god in it, of seeing Balts as god's chosen people and blessing Hitler. Even pastors, from whom one could expect a response, do not mention god or any of their church activities.

[96] Patricia Greenspan, Emotional Strategies and Rationality, in: Ethics, vol. 110, no. 3 (2000), pp. 469–487, here 470.

Post-war recollections try to enter the new narration: Biographers present that they notice the local Polish people, describe good relationships with them and occasionally confess things trying to distance themselves from Nazism. The word “try” is appropriate here because the Authors remain in the stream of the then discourse, saying that “nothing could have been changed” and they write about complex topics, like the Jews, in passive form. At this point, it is worth mentioning that the then historical discourse saw the Christian Church as the victim of Nazism. Only in the 1960s historians started to be critical of the role the Church played during the period of the Third Reich.[97]

German Authors also used the word “propaganda” which means they tried the critical reasoning of the past, but again not to reason their actions in their history. Additionally, a considerable part of after-war sources presents Biographers proving their good relationship with the local Polish people in Warthegau. Nonetheless, the main intention behind it was not to tell about the relationships there but to describe the Author, who seemed to try to deal with his guilt of the Nazi past by exposing his disloyalty towards the Nazi regime. In the same way, the opening quotation of this chapter, which was written after the war, presents how the Author wished to tell nothing by stating the obvious and most safe facts: the Polish population behaved quietly. Our own employees remained courteous and helpful.

[97] Spicer, Hitler’s Priests, 4.

## Chapter 5. Construction of Others

"Wir lebten in zwei getrennten Welten".[1]
1958

### 5.1. Focusing on the Difference

The perception of the significant Other, sometimes called Othering or imagining Otherness, leads to inventing a self-image which, among others, helps construct a national identity to describe any national Self. Nationalism and ethnicity literature discuss the concept by exploring how it matters in historical developments, how many Others may exist at one time, whether it is negative and how it plays different roles in a crisis. Pille Petersoo, in his article about reconsidering Otherness for Estonian identity, suggests that the image of Others may also be positive, or change from negative to positive according to the social age. "In the making of identity, there is a primacy of otherness over sameness" which means that when the community wishes to construct, transform or maintain the Self, it has to concentrate on the difference.[2] By recognizing and describing Others, the identity could be built, because "who are they" reveals "who we are not", and conversely.[3]

Ethnic and national groups work on their relationships with other communities to find their own position in a political and social space. Times of rapid changes produce the particular need for identity because "it unites people in front of a common enemy", thus othering is intensified during wars or any other breakdowns of order.[4] Imagining of Otherness often happens in the war propaganda when the attitude, like a political view, and order are imposed from above. As a result, the individuals process their own understanding and new qualities of personal and collective narratives from below appear.

As already established, accessing the ego sources gives an exceptional insight into the nature of the subjective experience. Ego-documents provide the information about the Self who produced it and show the positioning of the "structure and subjectivities", namely, person and the system, by revealing motives, prejudices, ambitions and so on.[5] These "self-narratives", or

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[1] HIM, DSHI 140 Balt 491, Befragung, W. H., Stuttgart-Degerloch 1985, Survey 12 (own pagination).

[2] Petersoo, Reconsidering Otherness, 117–118, 123.

[3] More about the topic of Otherness one can find in: Riva Kastoryanko, Codes of Otherness, in: Migration Politics, vol. 77, no. 1 (2010), pp. 79–100.

[4] It is worth noticing that Petersoo also mentions the existence of others of non-national entity (e.g. women, non-western peoples, people of colour, people of subordinate social classes and people with different sexual desires), Petersoo, Reconsidering Otherness, 119.

[5] In their article M. Fulbrook and U. Rublack exhaust the topic of the relationship between the "social Self" and ego-documents, presenting the central questions of how to approach and read ego-documents. They also include methodological and theoretical considerations, Mary Fulbrook, Ulinka Rublack, In Relation. The "Social Self" and Ego-Documents, in: German History, vol. 28, no. 3 (2010), 263–272.

"testimonies to the self", give perspectives that "seek to understand the emotional character of the experience and how events and developments were processed internally". Finally, one gets an insight into the construction or invention of a person who is shaping his identity is provided. For instance, under extreme conditions of Nazi Germany, the racial distinction was constructing the Self as "a vehicle for realizing the historic 'mission' of the *Vaterland*, led by the supposedly invincible *Führer*".[6] Analysis of the propaganda-influenced documents considers the description of the nature of this racial distinction.

With 40 study cases based on Qualitative Interview Method H. Honolka and I. Götz show various characteristics of the German identity.[7] Authors present ambivalence of their interviewees, which is based on the knowledge of the negative past of Germany and their perception of "typical German" behaviour. The core of every national identity is a special feature or attributes (*Merkmale*) to which members of one nationality are subordinated. For an individual, all these features mean an imagined community.[8]

In the German identity discourse, one should consider, among others, shared history and responsibility (for instance, the Holocaust as part of the German identity), common language, literature, cultural heritage, the vision of values of a Christian community, concept of shared ethnic origin. Moreover, the discourse includes the awareness of the common desire to be one nation and experience of shared Room (like characteristic landscape, nature as commonly experienced space, *Erlebnisraum*).[9] National identification takes place not only in the cognitive dimension but also in the affective. In coexistence with strangers (Others, *Fremde*) it means that a range of affective orientations must be considered. These could be positive affects such as pride, trust or love. As negative, one could include shame, guilt, feeling inferior or self-hatred. And finally, there is a normative dimension of the national identity, and it implies instructions for actions, like "German first" (*deutsche zuerst*) or "one must learn from the recent German past" (*Man muß aus der jüngsten deutschen Vergangenheit lernen*). Analysing "us" and "them", like outsiders, led to naming different types of values (*Bewertung*) of specific groups or nationalities, which again led to judgmental depiction and finally conclusions about which one is better (or worse). Lastly, one could determine three categories of how to examine dealing with *Fremden*. First is the perception of strangers in the concrete everyday situation (also generalizing stereotypes). The second category deals with strangers on the action level

[6] Ibidem, 265, 268.
[7] Honolka, Götz, Deutsche Identität.
[8] Even though these study cases were conducted after 1945 (i. e., for example, Holocaust was already a part of German identity) they show valid consideration of identity discourse in general.
[9] German identity discourse also includes other things like the national flag, emblem and expression "made in Germany", in: Honolka, Götz, Deutsche Identität, 31.

and concerns the actual behaviour towards an individual or group (for example, support for a particular immigration policy). The final category contains expressed feelings against strangers. While imagining others, the narrative counts because "what matters is not the representation of the other as such but the actual nature of the difference that is constructed".[10] When rhetoric is enemy-based, it eventually produces xenophobia and racism. The war propaganda provoked German Authors to recognize, describe and finally negate others. This part attempts to present the nature of this rhetoric.

### 5.2. Othering and the Three Levels of Identity: Regional, National and New National with its Production of Racism

In the construction of German Balts' national identity, the concept of otherness appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century. In her book, Anja Wilhelmi presents the life of German women in the Baltic States and, she analyses the writings of women who belonged to the German elite from 1800 to 1939. Through the unique perspective of biographies, the sphere of the German minority is told by three generations of women. It is said that the German Baltic women started to discover their national identity no sooner than the Revolution of 1905. On the contrary, their neighbours – women from Estonia and Latvia – began their national awareness in the nineteenth century. Before 1905 Balts' identity did not have a "national outline". It was somewhat imaginary of regional or provincial attachment. German women called themselves "*Kurländerrinen, Estländerinnen, Livländerinnen or Rigenserinnen"* (that is, female residents of Courland, Estonia, Latvia or Riga).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Germans started to assign loyalty, social and political structures to their own nationality. Especially in the Russian context, they had begun to use the phrase "to be a German" (*Deutsche zu sein*).[11] Wilhelmi points out that then in the Baltics, national identity played an essential role since childhood. Children were often confronted with it at school, where they met students from other communities. It was evident within the limits of different language pronouncing, i.e., the accent.

There are examples of international families that experienced exclusion from the local society.[12] When Estonia and Latvia gained their independence in 1918, the socio-economic situation of German Balts changed, and also the tone and approach of biographies (analysed by Wilhelmi) became different. The change of Balts' position was reflected in their mental acceptance of the new order. It was noted that in the new Republics, some women had a new attitude towards the

[10] Petersoo, Reconsidering Otherness, 119.
[11] Wilhelmi, Lebenswelten, 296–297.
[12] Ibidem, 316.

local inhabitants: the "broken" Estonian language (*Küchen-Estnisch*) was no more popular, and it became apparent that one should try to speak proper Estonian. Additionally, towards the local farmers, the German minority tried to keep good, namely "patriarchal-friendly" relations (*patriarchalisch-freundschaftliches Verhältnis*). Nonetheless, the division between the national groups was still noticeable. About family life, that is, where local Estonians were working for a German family, one woman wrote that there was "warm, caring atmosphere" (*eine warme menschliche Atmosphäre*), and "Estonians care for and trust my parents, but my parents wouldn't see them as equal (*gleichwertig*)".[13]

During the 1930s, the third level of national identity appeared. National Socialism "elevated" the term "national" with the new properties based on race, blood and soil. Gradually the Nazi ideas started entering the then autobiographies. German elite considered its number and confessed the fear of death (in the sense of the elimination of their group) that could be a consequence if there was no protection of the "blood purity": "Darum bedeutet Blutmischung den nationalen Tod für eine dünne Oberschicht (...)". These kinds of "racial ideas" intensified with sarcastic expressions of "nice Latvians" or "typical Russian race" although Wilhelmi stresses that in most of the documents she analysed, most visible was the distance towards "Jews and Gypsies" (*Juden und Zigeunern*).[14]

National Socialism saw the society not as the social classes alone but as a hierarchy according to the races and people.[15] In the Nazi rhetoric, the Others were ethnic and national groups. They became an enemy that was usually characterized as threatening. The enemy was supposed to be recognized, described and fought with until it is finally uprooted not to threaten National Socialism. The Nazi system did not propose new antagonists; it continued to develop a new approach to the old enemies: Poles, with ideas going back to the anti-Polish sentiments of the Bismarck era, and Jews.

It is worth mentioning that during the nineteenth century, "the deeper logic of eliminationist racism" started to develop and was the main focus of works by leading intellectuals like Heinrich von Treitschke, Friedrich Ratzel (who popularized the idea of *Lebensraum*) or Paul Rohrbach.[16] Von Treitschke portrayed a Slav thread and a duty of Germany to expand eastwards to establish a German reserve. He saw Germanic peoples as natural warriors and called them

[13] Ibidem, 300–301.
[14] Ibidem, 301–303.
[15] Nevertheless, the issue of social class as such in Nazi Germany existed. It is worth remembering that the Nazi regime tried to impact the working class, the middle class and the aristocracy, claiming to create a classless society. After all, NSDAP was a Worker's Party.
[16] Helmut Walser Smith, The Continuities of German History. Nation, Religion, and Race across the Long Nineteenth Century, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 167–210.

"a superior race" to recognize their world-historical destiny.[17] But as a bridge from the long nineteenth century to the short, violent twentieth, H.W. Smith points out to the "If I were the Kaiser" by Heinrich Class. In this work, the author brought together ideas which earlier used to be separated: anti-Semitism, racism and the elimination of people. And elimination became a new concept for Adolf Hitler, who had considered it as killing and no more exclusively as removal of people from certain spaces of the German national state.[18]

#### 5.2.1. Russians

Dealing with Russification, managing the provinces for Imperial Russia, significant changes of the 1905 Revolution, and life under the Bolshevik regime marked a long and intense history with this Slavic group. During the Second World War, the Baltic States fell under the Soviet sphere of influence (due to the Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact and its Secret Additional Protocol of August 1939), and Baltic Germans understood the danger of the Molotov line. Division of influences reminded them about Bolshevism and the conflict events that followed the 1905 Revolution. During that time, the rebellion was aimed against "hated German barons", and the German minority faced many violent attacks (next to the central protest issue against czarist authorities). Remembering the revolutionary events, German Balts usually expressed their fear of Bolshevism, which was often given as a reason for leaving the Baltics in 1939.

According to the Baltic Germans' personal accounts, Russians were seen as a different race, which, next to Latvians and Estonians, could not comprehend the German task of leaving the Baltics. Slavic peoples were there to be lived next to, and there were also cases of mixed married couples, but Authors of the personal accounts from 1939 do not focus on them. On the eve of the resettlement, Russians are portrayed as a group watching their German neighbours preparing to travel to the new territories. According to the German Authors, many Russians wished to join the resettlers, which was impossible because they did not belong to the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Although war-time texts do not present any particular way of discrimination towards Russians, they are viewed as a separate group which could not understand why Germans were sad about leaving the Baltics. They are portrayed as unable to understand the sacrifice that the German community was undergoing.

Moreover, Germans saw in the Russian group some "lively" characteristics, especially when Russians spontaneously asked if it was possible to join the resettlement: "Rief sie mir gleich auf Russisch mit dem lebhaften Temperament ihrer Rasse entgegen".[19] As opposed to their

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[17] Evans, Languages, 38.
[18] Smith, The Continuities, 208, 210.
[19] APP/800/146/132, H. J. B., Deutscher Sieg in Kandau, place and date unknown.

neighbours, German people were able to sacrifice their possessions for the Third Reich, they were able to sense the importance of Adolf Hitler's call, and they wished to be part of united *Volksgemeinschaft*. However, according to the personal documents the German group was not led by any "lively temperaments", but as an organized and mature community, it received the call to go to new territories and continue the German mission of creating new political, economic and cultural space. In this way, the characteristics of the Russian people allow constructing the selfness of the Balts.

### 5.2.2. Poles

Production of racism which, was constructing the new national level of identity, turned to another group of Slavic peoples – Poles. Chapter 4 shows how describing the relationship with Polish people was used for presenting the Authors. In this part, the documents play the same, role but they relate and are produced during the war. In opposition to the Russians, Polish others had to be first imagined because it was before Balts arrived in the Wartheland. As scholars notice, the discourse of difference creates racism, anti-Semitism and ethnicism.[20] R. Wodak investigated anti-Semitic discourse between the First and the Second Austrian Republic. They referred to three types of racism: ideological (a structured cluster of representations and views), prejudice-based (a sphere of opinions, attitudes and beliefs) and behavioural (practices of discrimination).[21] The case of rejection of Polish people by Balts looks moderately different. In the autumn of 1939, there was no ideological racism against Poles in the Baltics because, in practice, there was no contact with them (or at least to a significant extent). Nevertheless, through the connection with Russians, there was, to some degree, an image of Slavs.

Repudiation of Polish people was a natural course of events since detecting "groups deemed not to belong" (others) is a central element of any nationalist movement of whatever political ilk. The imagined German community of Nazi ideology defined itself as excluding Jews, communists, homosexuals and Slavs.[22] Although Baltic biographers never mentioned the rejection of homosexuals, they saw their enemies in Polish people. Even though their personal accounts do not reflect the ideology of eliminationist racism, they present several thoughts and behaviours derived from racial prejudice.

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[20] Ruth Wodak, *Das Ausland* and Anti-Semitic Discourse. The Discursive Construction of the Other, in: Stephen Harold Riggins (ed.), The Language and Politics of Exclusion. Others in Discourse, Thousand Oaks/CA: Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 65–87, here 67.

[21] Ibidem, 69. It is worth mentioning that Wodak also talks about the discourse of justification (or varieties of justification and defence) that started after the collapse of the Third Reich.

[22] Evans, Languages, 33.

Polish people were integral and inseparable parts of the New Heimat of Warthegau. They were a part of the reality Balts were about to face, and before leaving the Baltics, Polish people had to be imagined. As already mentioned, the Nazi propaganda in the Baltic States did not focus on Poles and the German community was somewhat reserved in concrete assumptions, and now and then, the personal accounts applied some comments. Despite propagandist expressions of "going back to German territories", Balts noted that, on the eve of the resettlement, families were "looking at the map"[23] to see where they were going. German names were on the map, like Bromberg, Posen or Kalisch. Still, it was probably clear that these were Polish territories because "unser Führer uns jetzt im fernen Polenlande brauche".[24] This means that despite of propagandist views, resettlers recognized other inhabitants and their locality in the ex-Polish place that they were going to.

Personal accounts expressed fear because "we do not know Polish people" as opposed to the Latvians: "den die Letten – wir kennen sie".[25] The fear of the unknown co-residents again became the opportunity to present the German group as worthy and valuable. They could show themselves as brave pioneers who were about to go to an area with no German population or at least no Germans who cared about "being Germans" (*als Deutscher zu gelten*). They also wondered how this area, with no "real Germans", was going to look like.[26]

Poles were a group to be somewhat accepted and to live with (under special conditions) in the new Heimat of the Wartheland. Two factors influenced Germans' understanding of "who the Polish people were": propaganda and the law. Arthur Greiser made himself a source of the first information about the "locals" and, as he stated, he had "his whole life to learn the peculiarities of the Polish mentality", he knew "certain characteristics of the Polish nation" and these were: "Polish people were incapable of maintaining a state; that they were always engaged in the egoistic struggle; that they overestimated their potential (…) and that the intelligentsia, middle class, and clerics always brought forth great 'haters of Germany (…)'. Greiser was warning that the Pole had a different mentality".[27] According to him no assimilation was possible.

Greiser, born and brought up in the then occupied territories, could be a reliable source of information about Polish neighbours. His regular speeches, official meetings with Germans and press releases were to enable the *Volk* to handle these inhabitants adequately. As Biographers respond: "Trotzdem war es schrecklich, die ausgesiedelten Polen immer zu sehen und ihrem

[23] APP/800/146/129, M. S., Aufbruch, place unknown, 3. November 1939.
[24] APP/800/146/256, F. S. von, Als wir von der Umsiedlung erfuhren, place and date unknown.
[25] APP/800/146/152, E. S. H. T., von, no title, Stargard (Pommern), date unknown.
[26] APP/800/146/137, A. I., Zurück!, place and date unknown.
[27] Epstein, Model Nazi, 194–195.

halb unterwürfigen, halb hasserfüllten Blick zu begegenem".[28] It shows that the Authors of the personal accounts were those who received the "Polish attitude" that was marked with half-submission and half-hatred. However, the reality of a new situation was rather distressing. The German group had struggled with basic adjustments: the oddity of receiving new households, which usually led only to remembering the expelled Poles. This altogether went against the idea of Balts as *Kulturträger*, who, in new Heimat, were rejected and seen as brutal invaders.
The law was there to support the propaganda, or another way round, and there is an example of a German priest who served German Catholics in Poznan from 1944 to 1945. He remembers many decrees that were announced to regulate the attitude towards Slavs. First of all, the Nazi system wished to establish a clear division (*Trennung*) between Germans and other groups, and it was based on racial purity and was to recognize the so-called German masters and enslaved Slavs. All kinds of discrimination, like the compulsory greeting of any German person in uniform, leaving the first wagon of the tramway to Germans, prohibition of entering many shops (with the sign: only for Germans) or curfew, were to humiliate other communities and so that Germans could adapt and become accustomed to new circumstances of their new *Heimat* of the Third Reich.[29] Propaganda named Slavs with the term of *Untermenschen* which meant they had to be lead and supervised in basically all areas of everyday life. German biographers justified their arrival with a mission of bringing new order to the (*richtige) Polnische Wirtschaft*[30] because the farms were seen as primitive and unkempt.[31] In this way, resettlers, in the light of Polish others, were seen as not "unorganized and inefficient" or "unable to run the state". They seemed to be bringing standards of cleanliness and order.

#### 5.2.3. Jews

The topic of Jews in wartime personal accounts is exceptional. The abovementioned literature says that the German newspapers in the Baltics wrote about the standard issues of separation from Jews. It was also said that in Estonia hotel owners did not want to receive Jewish guests. Although these facts correlate with the general ideas of National Socialism and the expressed wish of the German Balts to be separated from other nationals, only two Authors wrote about Jews in their wartime documents. Still, I decided to use these texts in this work because they

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[28] APP/800/146/397,I. K., Mein lieben Keppners!, Rakwitz (Wartheland), 3. Januar 1940.
[29] Hilarius Breitinger, Als Deutschenseelsorger in Posen und im Warthegau 1934–1945. Erinnerungen, Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald Verlag, 1984, 45–47.
[30] Stereotype from the 18th century that articulates the unorganized and inefficient Polish economic system. The expression is used to emphasize "German order" and the "proper way" of doing things.
[31] BA, R 49/3051, Berichte (Report 3), 22.

complete the general mood and conceptions of the German wartime Authors about the Others. They also correspond with the after-war personal accounts and do not introduce opposite ideas. I do not know why only two sources mentioned Jews or why the text corpus I analysed contained only two entries about Jews. Still, since I have the context of Balts as supporters of National Socialism and their after-war memories, I believe it is worth showing how these two Authors wrote about Jews.

Jewish people were present in the Baltics and can be classified as the internal Others for the German minority. Like Russians, Jews were there to coexist; they were known and recognised, but, like all non-Germans, they could only be called non-positive internal Others. In the process of "common discerning of the group" Jewish people were perceived as adversely affecting Germans' everyday life in the Baltics, even though these two groups existed effortlessly on a daily basis. In the non-positive imagery of Jews, the central idea was that they were violators of values and morals. Stereotypical ideas were spread: Jewish people with their lifestyle were contaminating or overwhelming because "Jews always seek the power". "Anxiety about the 'Jewish bacillus' and the 'Slavic flood' (or 'Slavs' – a code word meaning Poles, Belarusians and Russians), metaphors highly suggestive of the inner and outer enemy, were surely two of the more unsavoury leitmotifs, if you will, of German culture".[32] Studies in prejudice showed that when individuated experience is lacking, the new social experiences become to lead. Thus, there is no new learning or development, but mechanical reinforcement of established imagery.[33] The old stereotypes became even stronger without personal interactions.

When in autumn of 1939 the German group gradually started to leave the Baltics, many German stores were shut down and people had no access to the supplies in usual places. According to the sources, Biographers as customers had to turn to other traders and marketers, in this case the Jews. It was noticed: "Kaufte man in jüdischen Handlungen – es blieb einem jetzt ja nichts anderes übrig – wurde man sehr liebenswürdig bedient: Ja, Sie fahren natürlich auch, alle deutsche Kundschaft verlieren wir – Gott helfe Ihnen (...)".[34]

Separation from the "Jewish business" is a clear wish. According to personal accounts, Germans had no way out; it was not their choice to become customers of Jews. Therefore, it is justifiable that in 1939 German writings expressed a lack of interest in contact with Others, including Jewish people. Possibly the Author was exaggerating German separation from Jewish people because of the Nazi policy and to manifest the connection and relation to the Third

[32] Rieber, Repressive Population, 16–17.
[33] Daniel. J Levinson, The Study of Anti-Semitic Ideology, in: Theodor W. Adorno et al. (eds.), The Authoritarian Personality, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950, pp. 57–101, here 95.
[34] APP/800/146/99, S. K., Meine lieben beiden Mädel!, Posen, date unknown.

Reich. Another possibility would be, again, the presentation of the German group as respected, enjoyed and faithful clientele. In this way, it is said that *Baltikum* was about to suffer the loss of German element.

Different recollections mentioned that Germans had a lot of money: "Geld war ja in Haufen da. Nie haben wir so viel gehabt wie damals!" There is a suggestion not to buy anything there (in the Baltics) but instead take the money and buy a cake (*Kuchen*) in Reich because why leave money in Riga with Jews? ("weshalb das Geld in Riga bei Juden lassen? "[35]). One more time, German Biographer expresses his misery of being treated unjustly. First, their wealth was taken by "Latvian slaves" after Latvia gained its independence. Again in 1939, Jews used the opportunity to do the same and "hopefully it happens for the last time".[36] Ego-documents Authors used the resettlement to contribute to the mainstream belief of the Nazi policy about Jewish group and existing imagery of them, as a social threat, was consolidated. Scholars raised the question: why do all of these ideas originate in Jews and are imposed on Gentiles? The hypothesis proposes: the creation of these ideas represents an attempt on the part of the prejudiced individual to resolve an inner moral conflict by externalizing or projecting his own immoral tendencies; a new conflict between groups replaces the internal conflict: the stereotypically ordinary "we" and the stereotypically immoral "they".[37] By othering German Authors seem to expose "immoral" Jews which had naturally created an image of a "moral" and a "trustworthy" German person, a very desirable notion among the propagandist idea of *Volksgemeinschaft*. The inclusion and exclusion language helped them to add more information to their own picture of themselves.

### 5.3. Changing Language of Exclusion and Inclusion

Othering chooses to create divisions and draw the demarcation lines. Stating differences helps explain and interpret the ingroup to these people (in the group). Nevertheless, constant exclusion, where others are not a part of "our group", may not be enough for commenting and answering the Self. Latvians and Estonians, in a way, were hosting a German minority in their Baltic States. As the locals, they were the immediate and most common neighbourhood because, let it be stressed again, the German group was dominant but a minority.

According to the archival sources, the relationship description between Latvians and Estonians develops in two ways. The first approach usually stresses the conflicts between them and sees it as something natural: different communities living together must experience their struggles,

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[35] APP/800/146/108, S. K., Meine lieben beiden Mädel!, Posen, date unknown.
[36] APP/800/146/188, F. F., Aufkäufer, Mogilno (Wartheland), date unknown.
[37] Levinson, The Study of Anti-Semitic, 98.

and this provides security and continuation of social surroundings. Biographers know their Others; they know the relationships with them in the past, and they know what to expect. "(...) so ist es an der Ostseeküste der baltischen Staaten, und hinter den hohen sandigen Duenen liegt das Land, um das Liven, Letten, Esten, Litauer, Polen, Russen, Skandinavier (Wikinger) und Deutsche erbittert grausam immer wieder kämpfen".[38] It says the struggle is certain and it is all right. Moreover, there is no complaint about it, but rather an acceptance that "this is how history works", and there is no wish to change it. Most Biographers, when referring to the past, admit that existing with other national groups was acceptable and most of the problems between them solvable, or at least all sides could offer an understanding.

During the resettlement, Germans displayed a different manner of relating to Latvians and Estonians. With few exceptions, the German minority, in their writings, argues that the resettlement was a significant loss to the people of the Baltic States. They pictured themselves as a group whose absence was difficult to accept by Latvians and Estonians because their presence was valued, they were good neighbours, and they offered good companionship.

When German Balts were confronted with losing of their old Heimat the relationship towards the local Latvians and Estonians began to be defined as friendly. Nevertheless, the friendship was not on equal terms. Documents show other groups were still seen as lower or inferior. Additionally, affection was expressed from "them" which means Germans were "receiving" this friendship. On the resettlement day, Latvians and Estonians were warmly seeing them off: either by walking them to the transporting ships or by the emotional outburst of lament. A typical impression of the melancholic "locals" who accompany German groups is seen in most of the war biographies: "Unterwegs noch dasselbe Bild: Fussgänger, Radfahrer und auch einige Gespanne. Letztere sind lettische Wirte, die sich mit ihrem deutschen Nachbarn gut standen und sie auf der letzten Fahrt aus der Heimat begleiten".[39] So pedestrian, cyclists, other groups and the Latvian innkeepers, they all wanted to escort their German neighbors on this last journey from their homeland.

The German Authors portrayed Latvians and Estonians as sad because, from now on, Germans would not be a part of their country. In their texts, the German minority wanted to communicate they were going to be missed, especially all economically significant persons: clerks, medical doctors, lawyers and traders, artisans, workers, house and land owners.[40]

[38] APP/ 800/146/12. S., Mein Baltenland, place and date unknown.
[39] APP/800/146/51, no author, Sonnabend, Riga, 7. Oktober 1939.
[40] APP/800/146/209, L. S., Letzte Fahrt, place and date unknown.

According to the Biographers, Latvians and Estonians were the "honest and righteous" locals who usually referred to their German neighbour as *Herr*. One Author described a tight affection of two families: "Herr, Herr, wie lange leben wir schon beisammen, Ihre Familie und wir. Haben wir nicht Ihren Herrn Grossvater, – Gott hab ihn selig, – auf unseren Schultern zu Grabe getragen? Brachten nicht unsere Väter Ihren Urgrossvater zur letzten Ruhe?" [41] Here, the two families are connected through the past, and this entry highlights that during important family events, like a funeral, the "local family" was there for their German neighbours. The typical traditional events brought two groups together. In documents, the German side appears as usually the one who had been offered help and had been supported in momentous times. The respectful coexistence is also presented during the last days as the ships were set to sail from the Baltic shores. To stress this connection between Germans and the locals, it is said that during these moments, when the ships were set sail, there was always the Latvian or Estonian national anthem played, and then German hymns and songs followed it.[42] Notwithstanding there were some fractions in this "friendly connection".

Only few examples present Latvians or Estonians in a good light. German Authors try to show their disappointment and describe distressing events. They explained how shortly before moving from the Baltics, they were facing the drama of deciding what to take and what must be abandoned and how Latvians or Estonians used this situation. Apparently, the locals did not act friendly, or some sources call them thieves who tried to get things from leaving Germans: "Wie eine losgelassene Bande von Dieben überfielen sie Haus, Hof, Garten, Scheunen, alles was uns gehörte, jeder wollte nehmen was ihm passte (...)".[43] Writing about "their dirty money", that locals were offering for buying the things German could not take or calling them "villains" or using quotation mark for the "dear Latvians" express that German minority felt used (or abused?). The message is articulated: "we are being robbed, we are facing injustice, and we do not deserve it".

Baltic Germans, who showed Latvians and Estonians in a bad light, seemed to disagree about the relocation's unjust effects, like money or real estate loss, leaving the job, travel to an unknown place and future. There was an uncertainty regarding the financial care and provision even though German resettlers were promised compensation after reaching their new places of residence. Thus, calling the locals "released gang" or "thieves" is to name the frustration of the resettlement and addressed to the immediate environment of co-citizens. The frustration was

[41] APP/800/146/142, A. I., Zurück!, place and date unknown.
[42] APP/800/146/269, W. C., Unser Schiff, place and date unknown.
[43] APP/800/146/127, M. S., Aufbruch, place and date unknown.

doubled because it was not allowed to show it to the Nazi authorities since it was the main organ responsible for the then circumstances.

### 5.4. No Room for "German Barons" in Wartheland. The Problem of the Bourgeois

Baltic Germans as a group also became a subject of exclusion. Historical research gives little consideration to the antibourgeois character of National Socialism. German Balts, who, in general, were seen as nobility and the ruling class in the Baltics, were altogether inadequate, in theory, to be a part of the Third Reich. H. Beck, in his article about the antibourgeois thrust of Nazism, discusses, among others, particular antibourgeois statements and propaganda themes, the seeming paradox of antibourgeois feelings on the part of the *Bürgertum* itself and the concept of New Man.[44]

The antagonism towards bourgeois values in National Socialism was not explicitly aimed towards German Balts but rather *Bürgertum* in Germany (in the years before 1932). Nonetheless, since the idea of "bringing together all German minorities", the idea as such must have applied to all who wished to be a part of new German society. Thus, German Balts were to arrive at the Warthegau, which had no room for bourgeois identity. Repudiation of *Bürgertum* was the rejection of its character. To name a few, bourgeois virtues were solidity, reliability, integrity, decency, modesty and, most of all, the cult of privacy. Nazis opposed *Bürgertum* with its cultural attributes, especially the impact of bourgeois values and behaviour on German society and politics and especially that "they railed against a class-ridden educational system, the exclusion of the working classes from the political mainstream".[45]

Adolf Hitler was truly convinced that the cowardice, frailty and indecision that were characteristics of the bourgeois, were rooted in the fact that, as a propertied class, it had too much to lose. This meant *Bürgertum* was useless in political struggles. In other words, whoever had possessions to protect would not willingly risk his life, unlike those who had none. The Nazi ideology wanted the destruction of the private realm with "no single cell that did not feel responsible for the well-being of the entire community".[46] The *Bürger*, who was private, tended to cultivate his *Innerlichkeit* which means he exposed the weakness of the nation.

Balt's response to the character of National Socialism certainly qualified them for the Hitler's vision of a New Man who is "one with his people" and represents the Nazi values: "imperative of truthfulness", "readiness to help others" or "honourable behavior". On the eve of the

[44] Hermann Beck, The Antibourgeois Character of National Socialism, in: The Journal of Modern History, vol. 88, no. 3 (2016), pp. 572–609.
[45] Beck, The Antibourgeois, 572–573.
[46] Ibidem, 587–588.

resettlement, the German community announced the wish to belong to the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The readiness to sacrifice, which was revealed in following the Führer's call for migration, was stated as well. In the Wartheland, Germans were always reminded of their new role; they were no more Balts and were to forget their Baltic past. The Nazi system was not to continue any sentiments of old Heimat and to remember the Baltics. Nevertheless, Balts seemed unaware that their "noble character" was an obstacle to becoming a New Man.

### 5.5. Concluding Thoughts

This chapter shows that imagining Otherness became a tool for Baltic Germans to define their position in the Nazi system and ideas of the new geopolitical order. Compared to the previous chapter, this part focuses on the personal accounts written during the war, showing how Others were understood during the rapid change. For Baltic Germans, many Others existed simultaneously, and they were of different nationalities. Internal and positive or negative Others were Latvians, Estonians and Russians. Jews seemed to be always presented as negative, and finally, Polish people were external others that needed to be imagined before the resettlement.
Description and answering the question "who are the others" was used by German Biographers to present "who they are not". Russians were reminders of Bolshevism and the inability to comprehend important historical tasks (like the resettlement). Poles were unknown enemies, and the only knowledge source about Slavs was propaganda and the law. The Ethnic German Register was established to make these differences even more straightforward. Jews, according to the sources, seemed to be "value and moral violators"; stereotypes about them were spread, and finally, Authors wished to show that they distanced themselves from the "Jewish business".
In analysed documents, the language of inclusion and exclusion regarded the local Latvians and Estonians. Biographers "gave voice" to the "local hosts" because they wanted to show the German perspective and their allusions to the extraordinary character of the *Volk*. The narration developed in two ways: presenting both conflict and friendship.
Finally, Baltic Germans called "barons", were excluded from the Nazi ideology. For Nazism, they were the Others because of their character. Repudiation of *Bürgertum* was a rejection of bourgeois virtues i.e., solidity, reliability, integrity, decency, modesty and the cult of privacy. Authors failed to see who they were for the Third Reich because they appeared to occupy themselves with explanations of their own value for the German country.
Writing about others revealed the motives, prejudices and ambitions of German resettlers. There are expressions of hidden disagreements like leaving the old Baltic Heimat or fear of Germany losing the war. There are also disappointments like living conditions in Wartheland or losing

the privileged position as Balts and indirect statements that the resettlement resulted in unjust treatment, like the loss of properties.

Personal accounts of German resettlers belong to the ethnocentric ideology where others are naturally rejected. In the context of international relations, it transformed into pseud- patriotism, which could be loosely translated as: “we” are the best people living in the best country in the world. German resettlers were more or less willing to cooperate; they belonged to the “ordinary Germans” who applied the “new rules of the game” and implemented “new racial identity scripts”.[47] Second World War, in reaching its worst stage, recognized the social self, especially in terms of racial belonging and participation in the national cause.[48] Years after the war, the German Authors expressed how unique their situation was in 1939 and how Others could not comprehend it, because “they lived in two different worlds”.[49]

[47] Mary Fulbrook, Dissonant Lives. Generations and Violence through the German Dictatorships, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 165.
[48] Ibidem, 166–167.
[49] HIM, DSHI 140 Balt 491, Befragung, W. H., Stuttgart-Degerloch 1985, Survey 12 (own pagination).

*Epilogue.* **The Memory in Postwar Germany.**

The flight, and memory of it, of Baltic Germans from Poland to Germany at the beginning of 1945 does not belong to the story of this work. Even though Balts were a part of seven million German expellees from the former eastern provinces of the Reich, they had shared the history with other German ethnic groups, like Bessarabia Germans or Volhynia Germans, that also responded to the *Heim ins Reich* policy and were resettled only in 1939. This means they were leaving Poland after six years of staying there. Forgetting this may be misleading, and that is why one needs to remember the remarkable story of war-related expulsions (*Vertreibung*), together with other events that started in 1939 or 1933 and not in 1945.

Martin Schulze Wessel considers that the flight in 1945 meant for the expellees "a fundamental break in their lives. Being uprooted and in many cases also traumatized, expellees suffered much more from the results of the war than other Germans". As I already mentioned, in this case, Baltic Authors were resettled six years earlier, and in 1945 they were not fleeing their homes because these they left in Latvia and Estonia. In practice, they were instead fleeing their second Heimat. Moreover, Schulze Wessel notices that "marginalized by their western German compatriots, expellees complained that they alone had to pay the price of a lost war. This was especially an imposition for the German expellees who came originally from regions that had not belonged to the German Reich before the Second World War, and who bore no responsibility for the rise of National Socialism in Germany".[1] This again is not the case with Baltic Authors who, together with their leaders, were enthusiasts of the Nazi regime. Naturally, they were not responsible for the rise of it in Germany, but as active supporters of Adolf Hitler, they bore the responsibility of actions in occupied German territories.

Finally, it must be highlighted that Balts expressed in 1939 their wish to be German citizens and to be relocated to Germany, not Poland. Since the borders were moving, it can be assumed that, regardless of expulsion, they would emigrate further to Germany, as they opted for this. Nonetheless, their experience of displacement cannot be ignored, denied or underestimated. As expellees, they had suffered and were exposed to the excesses of violence and revenge. A big part of their postwar and post-1989 memories describes the flight in January 1945, and this material is worth analysing, nonetheless, it deserves to be a separate story.

[1] Martin Schulze Wessel, The Commemoration of Forced Migrations in Germany, in: Cornelia Wilhelm (ed.), Migration, Memory, and Diversity. Germany from 1945 to the Present, New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2017, pp. 15–32, here 16–17.

**Rhetorics of Victimisation and the Debate on German Expellees**

In the last months of the war, the "wild expulsion" phase started, and until today this period belongs as the one of the most influential factors in German memory of the Second World War. German expellees were confronted with violence and revenge (for the crimes committed by Wehrmacht and SS) from the local Poles and Czechs, and in August 1945, the international Potsdam Agreement regulated the expulsions. Because "the poverty of the immigrant population and the social and cultural tensions between the resident population and the immigrants created an explosive atmosphere", politicians were supporting the hopes that expellees could reclaim their lost possessions in the East, they pledged not to acknowledge the eastern border and the image of the expelled as victims was invented.[2]

The victim-centred narrative described expulsion as "a tragedy caused by an irresistible fate which strikes the whole community" and this collective fate overshadows "all sorts of social, gender and generational distinctions". In 1953 the German Federal Expellee Law was created. It defined that expellees were "all German nationals and ethnic Germans having a primary residence outside postwar Germany and who lost their residences in Second World War-related flight or expulsion".[3] Even though this definition embraces all people who experience the forced migration, for Baltic Germans it is valid only when speaking of events in 1945.

In the first decade after the war, the victim status was incorporated into public memory and politics. Robert Moeller says the tragic past was no taboo. Stories of 600 000 dead, 900 000 wounded, 12 million expellees, a million and a half German women raped by the Red Army soldiers and 9 million German soldiers who died during the war were ubiquitous.[4] Similarly, in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) ceremonies commemorated the February 1945 bombing of Dresden. It was remembered how communists suffered from the Nazi regime. Some eighteen million West Germans counted themselves among the "war-damaged" – victims of falling bombs, expulsions from their homes by the Red Army, or a currency reform that had wiped clean the colossal debt that the Nazi state had accumulated during the war and which obliterated the savings of millions of Germans. The regional organisations of expellees became an occasion to mourn the "lost Heimat in the German East", and monuments were constructed in the "memory of those who died in the Heimat". Moreover, in the Federal Republic in 1950,

[2] Ibidem, 17–19.

[3] Ibidem, 19.

[4] Robert G. Moeller, The Politics of the Past in the 1950s: Rhetorics of Victimisation in East and West Germany, in: Bill Niven (ed.), Germans as Victims. Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 26–42, here 27–28.

the “People’s Day of Mourning” (known as *Voklstrauertag* from 1920) was reintroduced and, in this way, the suffering of the war was remembered.[5]

Anna Holian notices a missing narrative about the Displaced Persons, i.e., about more than eight million refugees who were foreign civilian workers, prisoners of war and prisoners who survived concentration and extermination camps. Nevertheless, she says, “the focus on the German refugee problem was so single-minded that the term *Flüchtlinge* became a synonym for specifically German refugees and expellees”. [6] Also, the U.S. Army’s practice of racial segregation and anti-black racism taught Western Germans that “democratic forms and values could be consistent with racialist, even racist, ideology and social organisation”. Although West Germans rejected the idea of race and its associations, they gradually absorbed alternative models of racial distinction. It was seen especially when the economic takeoff that began in 1950s brought guest workers, and these foreign workers were not understood as members of the West German society.[7]

In the era of Willy Brand’s new Eastern Policy (*Ostpolitik*), the political rhetoric in West Germany did become more realistic and revisionist promises were withdrawn (even though the official discourse of the German expellees had already been framed by the discourse of the 1950s).[8] According to many 1968ers, the older generation, or the “Auschwitz generation”, had failed to deal with the past and it “had blindly pursued capitalist prosperity and embraced anti-communism at the expense of taking responsibility for the Nazi crimes”.[9]

Furthermore, the postwar debates showed how each Germany was “occupied” by developing images of the other. The German Federal Republic (FRG) “contrasted its democratic political system and capitalist economy with the socialist dictatorship in East Germany”. At the same time, GDR presented “its own antifascist credentials and portrayed the Federal Republic’s commitment to capitalist democracy as the continuity of fascism by other means”. As a counter to the coupling of West Germany’s acceptance into NATO and its rising economy, which could easily absorb repatriations payments to the victims of the Holocaust, East Germany’s antifascist origin story not only denied shared responsibility for the Second World War but also firmly established its moral superiority as the “better Germany”. This narrative preoccupied both

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[5] Ibidem, 30–31, 33, 41.

[6] Anna Holian, A Missing Narrative. Displaced Persons in the History of Postwar West Germany, in: Cornelia Wilhelm, (ed.), Migration, Memory, and Diversity. Germany from 1945 to the Present, New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2017, pp. 32–55, here 33, 38.

[7] Rita Chin, Thinking Difference in Postwar Germany. Some Epistemological Obstacles around “Race”, in: Cornelia Wilhelm (ed.), Migration, Memory, and Diversity. Germany from 1945 to the Present, New York, Oxford: Berghahn 2017, pp. 206–229, here 209–211.

[8] Schulze Wessel, The Commemoration, 17–18.

[9] Chin, Thinking Difference, 212.

Germans sides also after 1989. During the *Wende*, a process in which GDR was transformed from a communist to a democratic state, FRG disputed about GDR as *Unrechtsstaat*, and East Germany was criticising West Germany for the lack of just treatment of the former Nazis "who were entitled to state pensions despite their service to a fascist dictatorship".[10]

Also, Jews were present in German postwar memory. In 1948 the World Jewish Congress expressed a strong desire that after the mass murder of European Jews by the National Socialists, Germany should never again be home to Jews. Nevertheless, there were Jews in Germany, namely, German Jewish survivors, returnees from exile, and those who had survived the Holocaust in Eastern Europe (Displaced Persons). Additionally, there was the Central Council of Jews (*Zentrlrat der Juden in Deutschland*) that was founded in 1950 in West Germany. Jewish presence had served as a reminder for questions about "national identity that grew out of a sense of historical responsibility for the Holocaust".[11] Nevertheless, there was some resistance to Holocaust remembrance, and Annette Seider–Arpaci asks whether this resistance was "home-grown or linked to an immigrated disinterest or hostility towards the commemoration of the Holocaust and towards the Jews". She quotes Theodor Adorno, who said that "Jews came to represent the memory of the suppressed crime. (…) Jews are disliked as a persistent reminder of the Holocaust" (so-called "secondary anti-Semitism"). Seider–Arpaci also reminds us that after 1989 the alleged taboo meant that it was not possible to criticize Jews.[12]

### The Tragic Past Present in Historiography

Similarly to Moeller, Stefan Berger confirmed that, for historians, there is no controversy about the German past. What is controversial is how the Germans dealt with the memories of their own victimhood during the war. He says a tendency to psychologise rather than "historise" is also present in historical writing. In the 1960s, changes had started, and historians began to focus on research which dealt with victims of Germans. The "Historians' Dispute" of the mid-1980s triggered the search for more aspects of the Holocaust. Scholars started to look for information about the institutions, mechanisms and individuals who played a crucial role in the Holocaust. This perpetrator-centred research continued to dominate after reunification in 1990,

[10] Kathrin Bower, Learning to Live with the Other Germany in the Post-Wall Federal Republic, in: Cornelia Wilhelm (ed.), Migration, Memory, and Diversity. Germany from 1945 to the Present, New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2017, pp. 256–275, here 265.

[11] Karen Körber, Conflicting Memories, Conflicting Identities. Russian Jewish Immigration and the Image of a New German Jewry, in: Cornelia Wilhelm (ed.), Migration, Memory, and Diversity. Germany from 1945 to the Present, New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2017, pp. 279–297, here 276–277.

[12] Annette Seidel-Arpaci, Swept Under the Rug. Home-grown Anti-Semitism and Migrants as "Obstacles" in German Holocaust Remembrance, in: Cornelia Wilhelm (ed.), Migration, Memory, and Diversity. Germany from 1945 to the Present, New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2017, pp. 297–322, here 309–310.

and in the second half of the 1990s, the extent of German crimes and German guilt was accepted. Since then, Germans as victims could tell their stories differently, i.e., acknowledging the historical guilt.[13]

Rita Chin says that the "serious public discussion of the Nazi past began in the late 1950s, and in 1960 'young Germans became dissatisfied with the descriptions of the Nazi era in their schoolbooks'".[14] Nevertheless, there was no prediction or sign of this changing situation in Baltic Germans' recollection in the late 1950s. Frank Matthew reminds again that the "amount of scholarly and popular literature available in the Federal Republic on *die Flucht* and *die Vertreibung* is and always has been huge, irrespective of claims that these are 'forgotten', 'ignored' or 'taboo' subjects; and judging from the most recent flood of books, documentaries and exhibitions, it is a trend that seems set to continue".[15] Within this context the Marburg Survey from 1958 shows that the Baltic Germans were interested in telling the story exclusively about their own group and especially about the times in the Baltics. In the late 1950s, they ignored the topic of six years in Warthegau, and focused on their history before 1939. Significant is the fact that they elaborate on why they could not stay in Latvia or Estonia. They especially underlined that there was no future for the next generation because of the economic situation. According to them, the German youth in the Baltics would not have found living or working there possible since the economy was worsening. They also firmly pointed out the growing nationalism and Latvian chauvinism that forced them to leave.[16]

Both the worsening economy and Latvian chauvinism are given as primary factors to indirectly explain to the younger generation why they, that is, the second generation, are now in Germany. Probably there was also a need to explain why the next generation had to face now the memory of the past. In general, the overtone of the Marburg Survey suggests that there was no other option and, the next generation would not survive (economically and as an oppressed minority) if they stayed in the Baltics. In the Survey, there are no signs of any responsibility for Nazism. Even though there are no direct crimes presented in this study, what may count is, says Harald Welzer, the perception of morality. For him, the key is to consider not only the crimes but also their context. Welzer argues that perceptions of morality and normality under the Third Reich

[13] Berger, On Taboos, 211–218.
[14] Chin, Thinking Difference, 211.
[15] Matthew Frank, Expelling the Germans. British Opinion and Post–1945 Population Transfer in Context, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, 3.
[16] HIM, DSHI 140 Balt 491, Befragung, H. B. P., Wiesbaden 1958, Survey 5 (own pagination) and HIM, DSHI 140 Balt 491, Befragung, W. H., Stuttgart–Degerloch 1958, Survey 12 (own pagination).

had altered to such an extent that perpetrators felt themselves acting in the state's best interests. Accordingly, most did not consider themselves criminals, even after the war.[17]

Relocated Baltic Germans belong to the group that has a personal experience of a salient past. In the West, among people who had gone along with Nazism, a popular claim (referring to the war crimes or the Holocaust) was that one had "always been against it" and had "known nothing about it".[18] These expressions or "explanations" were not yet present in 1958 recollections because, as I already mentioned, during this time Balts were not talking about the war. This happened in the context of Konrad Wolf's *Sterne* from 1959 – a film that vividly portrayed the dilemmas and difficulties of an ordinary German soldier who recognized the extreme inhumanity of Auschwitz. In 1958 Baltic Authors were not showing any kinds of dilemmas. Wolfgang Staudte's *Rotation* from 1949, which offered the possibilities of reconciliation[19], also did not prompt the German Authors to if any any agreement or rapprochement was desired.

From the 1970s through the 1990s this victim-centred narrative added tales of "individual acts of goodness" and is present in most sources (generally, not only in the ones used for this work). In Germany, Baltic Germans belonged to this part of the society that "in some sense was responsible, directly or indirectly, actively or passively, for their suffering".[20] While Germany was "coming to terms with the present" – the Wall, military conscription, challenges of 1968, and declining economy – and focusing more and more on the future, Baltic Germans were exclusive describing their past without relation to their present place in postwar Germany.

[17] Harald Welzer, Täter. Wie aus ganz normalen Menschen Massenmörder werden, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2013, 12 as cited in Caroline Pearce, The Role of German Perpetrators Sites in Teaching and Confrontin the Nazi Past, in: Bill Niven, Chloe Paver (ed.), Memorialization in Germany since 1945, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 169.

[18] Fulbrook, Generations and the Ruptures, 18.

[19] Ibidem, 18.

[20] Ibidem, 18–19.

## Conclusion

### Summary

The Biographers led this research because it investigated the themes they elaborated on the most. And so, the matters of homeland, emotions, propaganda, Christianity and the construction of Others were investigated. In the process of this work, naturally, these topics were atomised into various other issues of identity, attachment, guilt, transformation, relationships with other people, National Socialism and after-war discourse.

As a reminder of the nature of this research, it must be stressed that only written accounts were taken into consideration, and there was no personal contact with the Authors. Additional questions could not have been asked, and the "listening to the story", meaning reading, could not have been moderated. Personal texts of Baltic Biographers carry the character of testimony because they point back to past events. Although their experience of trauma and injustice may be questionable, especially from the time perspective, i.e., what was tragic for them in the past does not have to be classified as such for today's historians. Moreover, some stories are similar, but some are isolated and do not comply with commonly expressed attitudes. Nonetheless, they were selected for this analysis because "it is the singularity of each life story that makes the greatest impression".[21]

In 1933 Paul Schiemann accepted that Baltic Germandom in Latvia was not a community of political opinion; its political front was about promoting the general defence of the Baltic German community. He believed that German Balts needed to trust their elected leaders and respect the interests of different sectors of the Baltic Germandom. He said: "two strong movements are against peaceful coexistence. The one demands one people, one ideology and one way of life. The other demands one sociological class, one ideology and one way of life. To me, both claims seem equally intolerable".[22] When Adolf Hitler came to power, he not only launched the war in the east without provocation but also "set in motion the massive uprooting of peoples throughout the region".[23]

Balts' personal accounts start with the outbreak of the news about the resettlement. *Umsiedlung* would become a caesura, and from then on, all events would be divided into "before" the mass relocation and "after". How and where the news about it reached them took long passages of their writings. They learnt about their final destination only during the journey. Since they were not welcomed in the Reischsgau Danzig-West Prussia (according to the local Gauleiter Albert

[21] Davoliūte, Balkelis, Narratives of Exile, 12.
[22] Hiden, Defender, 199.
[23] Rieber, Repressive Population, 14.

Foster, Baltic Germans were unnecessary mouths to feed and bodies to house[24]), they were redirected to the Reichsgau Wartheland.

The Wartheland was called a new Heimat only in wartime accounts. Understood as a final destiny where Balts were supposed to conduct their mission for Germanizing the East. Life in the new territories was seen as a task given directly by Adolf Hitler, the chosen Führer of his chosen people. Nonetheless, the reality was harsher than imagined, and the new situation soon showed little familiarity. All hardships that were the outcome of the war and bad conditions (compared to the homeland in the Baltic) that economically set back the settlers quickly resulted in the depressive mood of the German community. But still, one needs to remember that compared to those Germans who did not participate in the *Umsiedlung* and stayed in the Baltic States, Balts in Warthegau faced a less depressing future, "if only in the immediate term".[25] In the after-war recollections the Wartheland is never called a new or second Heimat. It is never regarded as a home or place where Germans "could be", especially in the texts that belong to the Marburg Survey the topic of Warthegau does not exist. In the 1950s, many German groups understood themselves exclusively as expellees and victims of 1945.

Here the digression about the early 1950s serves as the appropriate context for the post-war ego documents:

> Those crowding into lecture halls and seminar rooms were hardly in a position to provide the most objective accounts of their recent fate, which to their extreme annoyance was not even discussed by the Czech and Polish governments. Moreover, refugees often allowed their sense of grievance to divert them from confronting painful question about their own role in Germany's pursuit of Lebensraum after 1939. Instead, historical bodies, such as the *Baltische Historische Kommission*, dwelt at first selectively on the past. Rather than asking searching questions about their own community's relationship with National Socialism, or why exactly they chose en masse to leave their homeland in the *Umsiedlung* of 1939, they were initially prone to compartmentalize their experience. Topics for the annual conferences of the early post-war years rarely touched on the Nazi period, only briefly dealing with those very few far-sighted members of their community, such as Paul Schiemann, whom they had once

[24] Epstein, Model Nazi, 163.
[25] Hiden, Defender, 232.

marginalized precisely for his attack against Hitler and Germany's renewal in the 1930s.[26]

The above quotation expresses a disappointment that the complex topics of Nazism were not taken into consideration by "historical bodies" after the war. That is why, although the Authors did not lead me into these topics, I also wanted to mention the work of Paul Schiemann or the topic of guilt. These two issues alone are valid for both war and post-war recollections and they continue to serve as a context for possible further research.

Finally, a considerable part of this project contains stories that are very often inconsistent. Sometimes Authors express their belonging to the Baltics, sometimes to the Third Reich and sometimes to the landscape. The wish to belong was usually clear, although "what to" was not always clearly defined. These variations suggest that people write contradictions because they are inconsistent in what they say at different times (even within the same text). This happens "because a speaker says different things for different discursive purposes: he or she is speaking on different issues and in different interactions and debates, as a party to both the immediate interaction (with the interviewer) and to longer ongoing debates in which the talk does rhetorical work, possibly against the arguments of people who are not present".[27] Here Stephanie Taylor talks exclusively about the interviewing, but it applies to the content analysis as well. Still, one needs to determine which parts and which topics are inconsistent, and at the same time, remember that there is a difference between the publication of the text and how it is being read.[28]

Alfred J. Rieber reminded us that "forced migration and resettlement are as old as human history", and they happened on a massive scale. Nonetheless, it is essential to highlight that "the significance of settlement projects cannot be measured simply by size, but must be studied for how they impact colonial state structure, colonial economies, and indigenous populations".[29] This project studies the impact the mass population transfer had on the resettlers in the context of others (Estonians, Latvians, other German groups and local people in Wartheland), propaganda, Christianity and a personal transformation for supporting the National Socialism

[26] Hiden, Housden, Neighbours, 112.
[27] Taylor, Narratives of Identity, 81.
[28] Davoliūte, Balkelis, Narratives of Exile, 13.
[29] Elkins, Pedersen, Settler Colonialism, 17.

## Findings and Observations

At the beginning of this work, it was said that the primary intention of all written sources, i.e., including the ones used for this project, is to make the story meaningful and that every Author tries to make sense out of his writing, in other words, out of his life. Susan E. Chase points out that scholars debated the nature and the significance of narrative in personal documents such as diaries and letters but most of them always concluded that "all forms of narrative share the fundamental interest in making sense of experience, the interest in constructing and communicating meaning".[30] All sources that were analysed confirm this theory. In every topic of this work: Heimat, emotions, propagandist reflections and constructing Others, Authors always seemed to communicate the meaning of the events and their experience.

After reading the archival materials, I had an impression, and so proposed the thesis that compared to the post-war recollections, the nature of the personal accounts from the time of the war is more authentic. Balts conveyed more of their opinions, and they seemed to be more open about their personal experiences. It was not only about the content, that is, what the Authors wrote, but how their texts were composed. During the war, the Authors chose a personal way of expression using poems, emotions and expression of faith.

In reality shaped by the Nazi violence that discriminated against any opposition, Baltic Germans chose to freely describe their moods, opinions and attitudes because they supported the Nazi ideology. On the other hand, Balts' post-war recollections tend to be more moderate in their expressions, and their stories are marked with the process of re-thinking: the Authors avoid some topics, they seem to feel guilty and shape their narratives to describe the Self especially. Moreover, Authors remained in the "old mentality", which is why their narration "did not fit" the after-1945 reality because they could not describe their experience freely. In other words, as long as the Author's conviction relates to the political reality, he is free to express himself and can use personal means of communicating, like poetry, emotions or faith. On the contrary, when the Author limits himself in his expressions or seems inauthentic, it is because he disagrees with the then political and social reality. Decades after the war, when Authors decided to show disloyalty towards Nazism, they failed to express it on a personal level (way of expression that they used during the war).

## Other observations

A considerable majority of German Biographers described or mentioned Heimat, which means it was a significant concept for them. Peter Blickle talks about the progress from German

[30] Chase, Taking Narrative Seriously, 273.

provincialism into German nationalism, and Celia Applegate explains the significance of locality. German Balts reflected these two ideas: in the Baltics they expressed the wish to belong to the Third Reich and, at the same time, were unable to break with the locality of their homeland regions. Additionally, changing spheres of political influence (after the Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact) only added to the inner struggles the Authors had to go through.

As a tool for the transition into the national community, Balts invented poetical works that helped them to make sense of this relocation experience. Applegate argues that if communities stayed faithful to their familiar local localities (in this case, Baltic Heimat), it could have had the last word, which means it could have saved them from welcoming the Nazi regime. It is true because Balts received the term "ground" (which in German means not only "land" or "soil" but also "reason") in a new context of *Volk ohne Raum* or *Blut und Boden* ideology. Additionally, they experienced inner conflicts: desire for the Wartheland to be a secure place, contradictory feelings of longing to be the Third Reich community and belonging to the Baltics. The conflict the Biographers were experiencing in the Wartheland was happening on two levels. First was an actual worsening of their situation, like living conditions and occupational setbacks, as the case of the Rogasen town showed. The second one was the inability to express this conflict since Balts were not ready nor in a position to question the settings created by the Nazi authorities.

The observations from chapter 3 present the spectrum of emotions that Germans expressed in their accounts. Through expressed feelings of happiness, sadness and fear, one gets an insight into the emotional part of the mass population transfer. Baltic Germans' emotions were expressed as personal, subjective descriptions and heard or witnessed stories. Again, they were prompted by the Nazi propaganda to express their wish to be united with the German *Volk*. Still, as their expressed feelings show, they experienced an emotional relationship only with the *Baltic Volk*. Emotions played a vital role for the German community during radical changes because they helped them prioritize their desires.

One of the most desired things was the ability to sacrifice for Germany. Readiness and actual relocation proved that Balts were able to sacrifice. Sacrifice for Fatherland was a shared high value that only "well-informed and aware people" could do. Therefore, sacrifice was acknowledged as a value. In the case of the Balts, they sacrificed life in the Baltics, but after five years, they had to flee from the Wartheland, and when Germany lost the war, their Baltic community ceased to exist. That is why their sacrifice seemed to be useless.

Ute Frevert explains how the sacrifice counts, even if it is "useless", with the case of famous German artist Käthe Kollwitz whose son died on the battlefield in the First World War. Kollwitz

had to deal with the emotions of a mother sacrificing her son for the war. Meanwhile during the war, when the enthusiastic "spirit of 1914" had disappeared (in other words, some realized that German Empire should not have entered into the war), Kollwitz and some others of her generation wished an end to the war and were left with feelings of anxiety. Still, as mothers, they felt they had sacrificed their sons for the war front and wanted this sacrifice to be somehow known and accepted. They wanted that their sufferings mattered. In this way, expressing emotions helped Balts recognise how significant the sacrifice was for them.

Similarly to the topic of Heimat, there was also an experience of inner struggle. Unable to accept the detachment from the Baltics, Germans faced the problem of assimilating into the new place. As a proper *Volksgemeinschaft*, they were to deny their Baltic origins and expressing their emotions was the way to approach this disconnection. With time, their emotions "did not fade", which may mean the after-war Biographers had not managed to work through the resettlement experience.

Baltic Germans "were analysed" as Christians for this work because this is how they portrayed themselves. As ordinary people who tried to live "biblically" they recognised Hitler as a chosen leader, saw themselves as chosen people and understood the resettlement like a "biblical exodus to the promised land". Their example shows how German communities misinterpreted the biblical texts, leading them to see their Christian destiny in National Socialist Germany.

After the war, Biographers kept god in a private sphere of family life, and he is not mixed into the topic of the war. It must have become apparent to the Authors that they had made a mistake in recognising the resettlement as god's commandment; nonetheless, they did not admit it.

Moreover, in post-war texts, the Biographers entered a new narration. First, they started to see other local people in Warthegau (i.e,. they began to write about them. There were exceptionally long descriptions about the "good relationship" with the locals), and they used passive form for writing about "sensitive themes" (like ghettoisation of Jews) so that the responsible one did not have to be named. This way of constructing their narration became a tool to present the Self as disloyal to the Nazi regime.

Personal accounts of German resettlers belong to the ethnocentric ideology where Others are naturally rejected. In the context of international relations, it transforms into pseudo-patriotism. Imagining of Otherness was used to present the German minority in a particular light, valuable for the Third Reich. Delivering facts about their relationship with Latvians and Estonians focuses mainly on Self-presentation and identifying German values. Giving voice to the "local hosts" was to show the German perspective and their allusions to the extraordinary character of the *Volk.* On the contrary, in the Wartheland, they were Balts who became Others because they

could not identify themselves anymore. They wished to develop and experience their nationalism, but two main conditions for it were not fulfilled: there was no attachment to the new territory, and the society in the Wartheland was too diverse.[31]

To sum up, within the context of the historical events, this dissertation confirms that German ethnic communities abroad were part of Hitler's intended national community. In the case of Balts, it showed that this community received and practiced pseudo-nationalism disregarding other nationalities' rights to their own ideas and freedoms. Qualitative content analysis of the wartime materials showed that during the time of military conflict, Authors chose a more personal way of communication: writing poetry, describing their emotions and writing about their experience through the perspective of their Christian faith. During the time of freedom from the regime, their recollections remained more reserved and withdrawn, manifesting that the Authors were not ready for the confessing character of their memory.

This work presents the issues the Authors wanted to tell and asks questions about what they ignored. It shows that the story they told during the war became a limiting factor for their later stories. This study shows the nature of writing about the experience from the perspective of the Biographers who were "on the perpetrators' side" (contrary to the vast literature about victims' accounts). It also shows how writing within the regime's propaganda background disabled the writers from breaking the discourse for the recollections produced after the war. In other words, Biographers could not establish a platform for a personal expression of history, trauma, memory, and relationships with others regarding their salient past. This platform could provide material for future studies.

**Potential for Further Research. Exposing the Guilt**

The new platform for postwar personal expression, namely, for further stories (written or told), would have to be followed by the ideological conversion. The significance of this conversion is explained by the abovementioned Katharina von Kellenbach, author of "The Mark of Cain: Guilt and Denial in the Post-War Lives of Nazi Perpetrators". She reminded us that most extended German families, on some level, must cope with the presence of perpetrators in their midst. In a way, "all Germans were affected by racist policies, and that is why they all generate(ed) guilt which was often unacknowledged and usually dismissed or denied". The experience of the accused one was both intellectual and emotional. The first question is who the offender is; only then the can ideological conversion follow.

[31] Evans, Languages, 44.

If one assumes that there are Baltic Germans (still as living witnesses) who went through an ideological conversion, meaning they consciously accepted that their ideas about National Socialism were wrong, and they would like to be interviewed about how they realised it, the study based on such interviews could be proposed.

As this project shows, guilt has (had) been maintained by the Baltic German Authors. That is why von Kellenbach strongly proposes that the guilt must be worked through. However, she also asks if there is any acceptable way for everyone to do it.

Von Kellenbach points out the power of narratives. She agrees with the philosopher Maria Pia Lara that "stories are better than abstracts or formal theories because they offer a better approach and better understanding". For telling these stories, she proposes the terms rooted in the religious traditions: guilt and redemption, remorse and reconciliation, repentance and forgiveness, atonement and expiation. Only biographies that would confirm spiritual rebirth or ideological conversion could provide authenticity:

> By listening attentively to what perpetrators were actually saying, one realizes that the paradigm of unconditional forgiveness cannot be the right starting point for moral recovery and redemption. Instead, we need stories that express the circuitous and complicated processes of moral transformation and ideological disentanglement. We need religious stories because the realms of politics and law cannot address guilt and forgiveness in post genocidal societies without the conceptual and ritual tools of the religions of the world (…). Religious traditions provide important narratives and rituals to facilitate the healing of nations.[32]

Since Baltic Germans portrayed themselves as Christians, the religious tradition could provide a narrative for their new expressions.

It is true that Germany, in its political culture, has accepted itself as a perpetrator nation. The government has acknowledged moral obligations of repair and financial commitments to pay reparations, gestures of restitution or initiated commemoration projects. Nevertheless, as long as guilt has to be hidden, on a private level, as a "shameful secret, it turns into a paralysing burden". Not the time but, "open engagement, public debates and private conversations, and reparative acts of reconciliation do change the attitude". In this way, the descriptive skills of the historian combined with the normative discourse of the theology could tell the stories that

[32] Kellenbach, The Mark, 5–6, 9, 20–21, 25.

would bring recovery (in the sense of freedom) and would be acceptable by both sides: the culpable and the victim.[33]

In the above context, the question should not be "why the person supported the Nazi regime" but "why and when he stopped supporting this ideology and what happened after it". Would not the analysis of people's "political belief" deconstruction tell more about why they supported the regime in the first place? Because it is possible that the people started to support the regime subconsciously, i.e., without being aware of it, but it is impossible (or at least less impossible) that they deconstruct their ideological worldview without being aware of it.

Another thing is that this potential further research of telling stories by combining the descriptive skills of the historian and the normative discourse of the theology could be extended to (or include) other (national, ethnic, gender, population) groups who have things to say about their individual or collective wrongdoings. These stories could become a platform for re-telling the old stories that no longer satisfy historians and societies.

The last point concerns both languages: the one in that Authors narrate their experiences and the one in which historians describe their studies. Throughout this study, I needed to remember that "there may be a need to battle the language of protagonists" because the language of their times and culture, the cliché of national values and what it meant to be German were different. Today's historians must consider new ways of telling the story of mass population transfers and personal accounts from the time of the Second World War.[34]

### One More Word

Studying the personal documents produced during the time of the Nazi regime often raises the question of how much the propagandist texts can be helpful for historians. The adjective "propagandist" means consisting of or spreading propaganda, and "propaganda" is biased and misleading information. In other words, can the biased and misleading text be worth studying, and will it tell more than a lie?

[33] Ibidem, 22–25.

[34] Weronika Grzebalska, in her book "The Gender of the Warsaw Uprising" (Płeć Powstania Warszawskiego, Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2019), discusses the ways of understanding Polish Warsaw Uprising in 1944. Her research focuses primarily on gender, and how much certain "male myths" are monopolizing the memory of the 1944 Uprising. Nevertheless, her opinions are universal and relate to scientific research in humanities in general. She stresses the importance of releasing men and women from certain myths and beliefs. She also says scholars should not just add new perspectives to the old ones (in her case, female to existing male) but write the story from the beginning using the universal language where everyone can take part in the discussion about the things that had been so far rejected from the collective memory, in: Michał Fal, "Płeć Powstania Warszawskiego", czyli o powstańcach i powstankach. "Ta książka uderza w nasze narodowe przekonania" (2014), (18.04.2023) retrived from: https://natemat.pl/91485,plec-powstania-warszawskiego-czyli-o-powstancach-i-powstankach-ta-ksiazka-uderza-w-nasze-narodowe-przekonania.

At the beginning of this work, I said that scholars assume that during the time of any regime when communication in the public and private sphere is dominated by political or wartime (or both together) propaganda, the narratives, like diaries, letters and other kinds of personal accounts, that are constructed by ordinary people are marked with censorship and self-censorship. But on the other hand, it is significant to pay attention to the documents written for "public display" because it is crucial to listen to what authors of personal accounts wanted to say when they knew they were heard the most.

For me, as a researcher, the key was to remain flexible and open to new questions and approaches to the investigated material. Through qualitative content analysis, I could re-interpret the Authors' texts to detect and describe the issues that had been unrealized. In this way I found out that for Baltic Germans , who were on the perpetrators' *side*, it was meaningful to describe themselves in 1939 and 1940 as victims ("vielmehr ist es an der Zeit für eine historische Analyse, die danach fragt, wie es für Menschen und Gruppen überhaupt plausible, vielleicht sogar nötig wurde, sich als Opfer zu beschreiben"[35]). Analysing the personal accounts of people who had gone along with Nazism is complex. Maja Zehfuss reminds us that "expressing memories of the Second World War in Germany is fraught with difficulties; they are always contested, problematic, ambiguous".[36] Reading descriptions of the experience of a salient past requires awareness that people were allowed to understand this past in a different way that they are allowed to understand it now. Authors were also a "product" of their own culture and context, which differs from ours. The analysed group of Germans was not involved in genocide, and there are no recollections of those directly responsible for war atrocities. Nonetheless, their texts were marked with guilt as they engaged with notions and explanations that "nothing could be done".

Different stories happened during "the German dictatorship". Sometimes the nature of specific actions was top-down, that is, forced on people by the apparatus of surveillance and control. Sometimes "ordinary Germans had relative freedom of choice to resist or not to resist" and thus acted as volunteers in their relationship with the Third Reich.[37] This work showed that, at times, it is difficult to discern how much things are forced on people and how much freedom they have. Even though Baltic Germans did not belong to any group that the Nazi regime was discriminating against and fighting against (like Communists, Social Democrats, Trade

[35] Svenja Goltermann, Opfer. Die Wahrnehmung von Krieg und Gewalt in der Moderne, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2017, 17.

[36] Zehfuss, Wounds of Memory, 2.

[37] Richard J. Evans, Coercion and Consent in Nazi Germany, in: British Academy Review, vol. 10 (2007), pp. 53–81, here 53 (15.03.2023) retrived from: https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/coercion-and-consent-nazi-germany.

Unionists, liberals, and Catholics), their story was being shaped by the Nazi violence (actual or threatened) "that was used deliberately and openly to intimidate opposition and potential opposition. It was used to create a public sphere permeated by violence, and it provided a ready reminder of what might be in store for *anyone* who stepped out of line and failed to show loyalty to the new order". Another story is what people did not say once the regime violence had been removed because practicing silence is "never equivalent to the complete absence of meaning" and "it is our business as historians to read between the spoken lines of history to hear them".[38]

[38] Jay Winter, Thinking about Silence, in: Nicholas Martin, Tim Haughton, Pierre Purseigle (eds.), Aftermath. Legacies and Memories of War in Europe, 1918–1945–1989, Burlington/VT: Ashgate, 2014, pp. 183–198, here 184–186.

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