

Labeling and the Management of Displacement – Current Research on ‘Displaced Persons’ and ‘Heimatlose Ausländer’ in the Aftermath of World War II

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Violence-induced mobility and questions of the regulation of mobility had a decisive impact on the 20th century and have continued to be of great global significance in the first quarter of the 21st century. One of the largest migrations in history was the displacement of millions of people during and after the Second World War. The end of the war left eleven to fourteen million Holocaust survivors, forced laborers, and refugees in Germany, Austria, Italy, and other Western European countries.¹ The Allies placed them in the charge of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the International Refugee Organization (IRO) and later the Federal Republic of Germany as so-called „displaced persons“ (DPs) and „Heimatlose Ausländer.“ During the first phase of the operation, the repatriation of these people was the primary goal. Beginning in 1947, the IRO increasingly pursued a policy of resettling DPs. The Federal Republic of Germany had to take responsibility for those who remained in Germany in 1951 and could not or chose not to be repatriated or resettled. The international conference „Labeling and the Management of Displacement“ was dedicated to these groups of people displaced by World War II and how authorities addressed and treated them. Across nine panels, the participants focused on the labeling and management of migrants, migration itself, and the agency of the various actors involved.²

MARTINA BLASBERG-KUHNKE (Osnabrück) and MIRIAM RÜRUP (New York)

greeted the participants, and CHRISTOPH RASS (Osnabrück) and SEBASTIAN HUHNS (Osnabrück) provided introductory remarks. The first panel, entitled „External Determination and Agency,“ examined options and patterns of DPs’ actions. SARAH GRANDKE (Hamburg) presented her paper „‘Imported’ Commemoration? – Early Remembrance Initiatives by Polish DPs on the Move“ that explored the agency of DPs in Camp Sikorski in Flossenbürg. These DPs negotiated forms of commemoration in interaction with other actors, including DPs of various origins, formerly persecuted Germans, and representatives of various authorities. Grandke showed that the initiative of DPs was characterized by cooperation and conflict and that DPs played a central role in the early forms of transnational remembrance of persecution and violence under National Socialism. SEBASTIAN HUHNS (Osnabrück) highlighted the interaction between DPs and the IRO in negotiation over care and prospects for resettlement in his talk entitled „The Presentation of Self in the Negotiation of Resettlement.“ He demonstrated that DPs presented themselves to the IRO to address specific goals and that DPs and IRO staff repeatedly negotiated access to the IRO aid program. In his lecture on „DPs in Disguise,“ RENÉ BIENERT (Flossenbürg) explored how former Axis collaborators succeeded in acquiring DP-status. In this context, he focused on Ukrainian, Baltic, and south-eastern European collaborators as well as Jewish people involved in the persecution of Jews. In particular, Bienert examined Simon Wiesenthal’s efforts to track down such war criminals.

The second panel, „Remembering Displacement,“ discussed forms of remembrance and commemoration and the for-

¹ Lukas Hennies / Sebastian Huhn / Christoph Rass, Gewaltinduzierte Mobilität und ihre Folgen. „Displaced Persons“ in Osnabrück und die Flüchtlingskrise nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, in: Osnabrücker Mitteilungen 123 (2018), S. 183–231.

² For the German version see: Jessica Wehner / Maik Hoops, Tagungsbericht „Labeling and the Management of Displacement – Current Research on ‘Displaced Persons’ and ‘Heimatlose Ausländer’ in the Aftermath of World War II“, <https://ngm.hypotheses.org/3458> (02.02.2022).

mation of narratives about the experiences of violence-induced mobility. SERAFIMA VELKOVICH (Jerusalem) shed light on the present-day museum „Badehaus Erinnerungsort“ in Wolfratshausen-Waldram. The building served as a sauna in the former DP-Camp Föhrenwald from 1945 to 1957. It now houses a museum that functions as a place of cultural exchange among various international groups, including the descendants of Jewish Holocaust survivors born in Camp Föhrenwald. NICHOLAS YANTIAN (Berlin) provided an insight into research results on his father. He presented numerous visual and textual sources from his father's estate documenting the elder Yantian's work as a relief worker in various positions of responsibility between 1944 and 1949. Hyman Yantian engaged in caring for Jewish Holocaust survivors as well as in organizational activities in the context of humanitarian aid. ANGE-LIKA LAUMER (Giessen) addressed forced laborers' descendants' and forced labor in rural Germany. She investigated narratives of relatives and descendants of forced laborers who remained in a rural Bavarian region. The results of her interview study revealed a far-reaching forgetting of biographical details although their ancestors' experiences of forced labor and forced migration are reproduced in specific patterns of interpretation.

The first panel on the second conference day „Negotiating Options“ began with a presentation by SHEILA FITZPATRICK (Sydney) on Soviet DPs in Germany and their options for repatriation, resettlement and remaining. She spoke about the possibilities of Soviet DPs acting against the background of intensifying conflicts between the victorious powers in the context of the Cold War. Ultimately, the IRO broadened its perspective to include possible aid measures for these DPs. RUTH BALINT (Sydney) discussed in her lecture the repatriation of DPs who had emigrated to Australia and had been classified – based on the „Aliens Deportation Act“ of 1949 – as „unsuitable as migrants“ and repatriated to Germany, Austria, and Italy. This process led to conflicts between the IRO and the Australian authorities. EBONY NILSSON (Sydney) highlighted the case study of Nazi collaborator Juris Pintans, who was able to obtain DP-status and migrate

to Australia. Proceeding from here, she illustrated the possibilities of influencing external categorizations within the context of the Care-and-Maintenance-Program and avoiding possible repatriation by deliberately omitting or emphasizing certain biographical information.

In the panel dedicated to „Building Refugee Subjectivity,“ MILINDA BANERJEE (St. Andrews) delivered a talk about transnational Horizons of Bengali refugee subjectivity. It addressed the massive migrations of Muslim and Hindu refugees in the Bengal region as a result of the division of India into Pakistan and India in 1947. Banerjee showed how these refugees began thinking transnationally, discursively linking their experiences with those of global refugee contexts, and thereby developed new forms of democratic-political thinking. KERSTIN VON LINGEN (Vienna) addressed the elaboration of the concept of „Crimes against Humanity“ by exiled intellectuals and lawyers in the United Nations War Crimes Commission. Von Lingen highlighted the lines of development of international law and the significance of the experiences of flight and mass violence for the establishment of the concept. ANNE SCHULT (New York) discussed the agency of refugees as active subjects under the regime of statistical recording. She used documents from the League of Nations and the IRO, as well as contemporary academic publications, and those written by refugees themselves to explain how individuals influenced, adopted, or resisted being counted.

The next panel examined aspects of „Policies of Displacement.“ JOSÉ MARTIN (Westerbork / Hooghalen) spoke about the fate of German Jews who fled to the Netherlands. She used the example of the Westerbork camp, which served the Nazis as the „Durchgangslager Westerbork“ for organizing deportations. Dutch authorities used the facility as an internment camp for both collaborators and Jews who had fled Germany and treated both groups as equally hostile subjects. LUKAS HENNIES (Osnabrück) discussed the importance of different interest groups in the negotiation of „eligibility“ for the Care-and-Maintenance Program. Hennies demonstrated this process through the exam-

ple of the clergyman Octavian Bârlea, who as the Romanian delegate of the *Missione Pontificia* successfully lobbied for Romanian nationals not to be categorized as „ex-enemies” but to be granted DP-status (because of the Royal Coup d’état in Romania in 1944). JANA KASÍKOVÁ (Prag) examined the implementation and coordination of the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens and the transit of other DPs through Czechoslovakia. Kasíková focused on the networks of various actors involved in the process, such as the Czechoslovak Repatriation Department.

The panel „DPs and ‘Heimatlose Ausländer’ in Germany” focused on the integration of DPs who remained as „Heimatlose Ausländer” in the Federal Republic of Germany. STEPHANIE ZLOCH (Dresden) an insight into the negotiation of practices of schooling DP-children. She illustrated this by focusing on private schools that DPs organized themselves, the integration of DP-children into state schools, and the legal framing of their status through the 1951 law „Gesetz über die Rechtsstellung heimatloser Ausländer im Bundesgebiet.” LINDA ENNEN-LANGE (Osnabrück) illustrated how local actors negotiated the financing of housing and care for „Heimatlose Ausländer” and perceived them as a burden for the majority society. Ennen-Lange emphasized this attitude as an expression of the persistence of racist prejudices and resentments from National Socialism.

The panel „Lives and Narratives” included the presentation about homeless’ ukrainians in Germany by KATERYNA KOBCHENKO (Kyiv). It shed light on the political, religious, and cultural life of the Ukrainian „Heimatlose Ausländer” who remained in Germany until the 1980s. She emphasized the importance of the political and institutional organization of Ukrainian nationalists, who shaped an anti-Communist discourse and activism from within the diaspora. NATHANIEL WESTON (Seattle) illustrated the Care-and-Maintenance files as sources for reconstructing the lives of Holocaust survivors who applied for assistance from the IRO. Weston also highlighted the utility of the documents as sources for exploring early narratives about the Holocaust.

The last day of the conference began with the panel „Care and Maintenance and the IRO.” CHRISTIANE WEBER (Bad Arolsen) gave a presentation about DPs, refugees, and their representation in DP documents kept by the Arolsen Archives, which emphasized the importance of the archive’s file holdings and their potential as sources for reconstructing the categorizations and their development within the framework of the Care-and-Maintenance Program. RAMON WIEDERKEHR (Neuchâtel) spoke in his lecture about the conflict between considerations of utility and humanitarian responsibility, which intensified in the course of the emergence of a so-called „hard core”. Although nations admitted DPs from the „hard core” as a humanitarian act, they further differentiated this group with utilitarian considerations in mind. This process led to the further marginalization of less desirable people, such as those who were chronically ill. VITALIJ FASTOVSKIJ (Giessen) discussed new sources on the History of DPs and „Heimatlose Ausländer” and the significance of the Tolstoy Foundation, which as an internationally active humanitarian aid organization helped resettle Soviet DPs in the „West.” Fastovskij highlighted the files of the Foundation as promising sources for a transnational history of DPs and migration.

The last panel of the conference, entitled „DPs in the International Migration Regime,” focused on areas outside the geographical focus of Western Central Europe. JOCHEN LINGELBACH (Bayreuth) shed light on refugees who ended up in camps on the African continent during World War II. He argued that in these little-known camp systems, orders developed that were shaped by colonial circumstances, strategic military logic and logistics, transnational diaspora networks, and the institutions of the newly emerging UN refugee regime. JULIA DEVLIN (Augsburg) spoke in her presentation about the individual experiences of several eastern Polish DPs. Through deportation and evacuation, they eventually ended up in camps in British colonies in Africa. Devlin reconstructed the routes of displacement and the negotiation processes of the actors involved from the Care-and-Maintenance

files, which transformed due to the intensifying Cold War. ANDREAS BOUROUTIS (Thessaloniki) talked about the return of the few surviving Greek Jews to Greece, their struggle with bureaucratic obstacles, and their treatment by Greek authorities as „dangerous communists.“ Bouroutis focused on the reactions of the returnees to their precarious and threatening situation. ILDIKO BARNÁ (Budapest) told the stories of Hungarian Jews who resided in Italian DP-Camps and their screening procedures in the context of their applications for assistance from the IRO. Barná emphasized how temporal, spatial, and individual differences affected the application decisions, although the Eligibility Officers had to operate within specific guidelines that limited their decision-making.

Overall, the conference brought together many different international and transnational as well as interdisciplinary research perspectives on the group of people known as „displaced persons“ and „Heimatlose Ausländer.“ The conference brought into view several hitherto less-considered groups of persons within the DPs and offered new perspectives and additional source material on migration movements in the immediate post-war period. The conference highlighted the potential for new research on DPs and the emergence of the modern global migration regime after World War II. Above all, it offered new theoretical and methodical approaches, interpretations, and sources for a topic, which began to attract academic attention only late in the 1980s and initially developed slowly. This conference indicates that it has since grown into an important field of research today for contemporary history, forced migration, and the formation of the modern migration regime.

Konferenzübersicht:

Welcome Address

Martina Blasberg-Kuhnke (Vice President for Studies & Teaching, Osnabrück University) / Miriam Rürup (Chairperson of the Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Leo-Baeck-Instituts) / Christoph Rass (Professor for Modern History/ IMIS, Osnabrück University) / Sebastian Huhn (Modern History/

IMIS, Osnabrück University)

I. External Determination and Agency

Sarah Grandke (Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial, Germany): „Imported“ Commemoration? - Early Remembrance Initiatives by Polish DPs on the Move.

Sebastian Huhn (Osnabrück University, Germany): The Presentation of Self in the Negotiation of Resettlement.

René Bienert (Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial, Germany): DPs in Disguise.

II. Remembering Displacement

Serafima Velkovich (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel): Negotiations on the Holocaust Memory in the Place of Remembrance: Refugee History in the Local Context - Waldram Badehaus museum's Case Study.

Nicholas Yantian (Berlin, Germany): The Activities of My Father, Hyman Yantian as a Jewish Relief Worker in Italy, Austria, Germany and France.

Angelika Laumer (Justus-Liebig University Giessen, Germany): Logics of Everyday Remembering and Forgetting of Nazi Forced Labor in Rural Society. An Empirical Study of the Sociology of Knowledge.

III. Negotiating Options

Sheila Fitzpatrick (Australian Catholic University, Australia): Soviet DPs in Germany and Their Options (Repatriation, Resettlement and Remaining), 1949-52.

Ruth Balint (University of New South Wales, Australia): Return to Germany: Australia's Deportation Policy and the DPs Who Returned.

Ebony Nilsson (Australian Catholic University, Australia): From Legionnaire to DPs: A Latvian's Journey Navigating the IRO, Resettlement, and Identity.

IV. Building Refugee Subjectivity

Milinda Banerjee (University of St. Andrews, Scotland): From „New Jews“ to „External Proletariat“: Transnational Horizons of Bengali Refugee Subjectivity.

Kerstin von Lingen (University of Vienna,

Austria): Legal and Intellectual Subjectivity: Epistemic communities in Exile and the refugee lawyers from Central Eastern Europe.

Anne Schult (New York University, United States): Being Counted or Accounted for? Refugees’ Self-Perception as Subjects of Statistical Inquiry, 1940s-1950s.

V. Policies of Displacement

José Martin (Camp Westerbork Memorial Centre, The Netherlands): Stateless and Displaced: the Netherlands’ Harsh Attitude Towards Jewish Refugees Before, During and After World War II.

Lukas Hennies (Osnabrück University, Germany): Lobby Groups and Negotiating Eligibility with the IRO.

Jana Kasíková (Charles University, Czech Republic): The Czechoslovak Network of Institutions and Organizations Managing the Flow of DPs After World War II.

VI. DPs and ‘Heimatlose Ausländer’ in Germany

Stephanie Zloch (Technische Universität Dresden, Germany): „The Steady Danger of Germanization“? The „Law on the Legal Status of Homeless Aliens“ and the School Attendance of DP Children in Germany in the 1950s.

Linda Ennen-Lange (Osnabrück University, Germany): Negotiating Participation in the Local Space - Categorization and Integration of „Heimatlose Ausländer“ in Society and Administration.

VII. Lives and Narratives

Kateryna Kobchenko (National University of Kyiv, Ukraine): „Homeless“ Ukrainians in Germany: Émigré Community Life in the Time of Cold War.

Nathaniel Weston (Seattle Central College, United States): Applications for Assistance to the IRO: Early Holocaust Narratives by Jewish DPs in Vienna.

Sarah Grandke (KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme) – Chair

VIII. Care and Maintenance and the IRO

Christiane Weber (Arolsen Archives, Germany): „The Person is Within the Mandate of the IRO“: DPs, Refugees, and Their Representation in DP Documents Kept by the Arolsen Archives.

Ramon Wiederkehr (University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland): The Blurred Boundaries of Humanitarian Solidarity: The Admission of IRO ‘Hard Core’ Refugees to Switzerland, 1950–1952.

Vitalij Fastovskij (Justus-Liebig University Giessen, Germany): New Sources on the History of DPs and „Homeless Foreigners“ in the Early Federal Republic.

X. DPs in the International Migration Regime

Jochen Lingelbach (University of Bayreuth, Germany): The Order of Colonial Refugee Camps - European DPs in Africa Between Self-Organization, Colonial-Racist Social Order, and the International Refugee Regime (Approx. 1942 - 1950).

Julia Devlin (Textile and Industry Museum in Augsburg, Germany): Polish DPs in Africa During and After World War II.

Andreas Bouroutis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece): A Welcoming Return? The DPs in Greece.

Ildikó Barna (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary): Hungarian Jewish DPs’ and Refugees’ Journey Through the Maze of Administration in Italy After the Holocaust.

Tagungsbericht *Labeling and the Management of Displacement – Current Research on ‘Displaced Persons’ and ‘Heimatlose Ausländer’ in the Aftermath of World War II*. 28.10.2021–30.10.2021, Osnabrück, in: H-Soz-Kult 08.02.2022.