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13 Commemorating vanished 'homelands'

Displaced Germans and their
Heimat Europa

Ulrich Kockel

The twentieth century has been described (e.g., Piskorski 2015) as a century of displacement. While globally the comparative scale of involuntary population movement may not have differed significantly from earlier centuries, its perception has changed radically, leading in the early twenty-first century to the dramatic resurgence of xenophobic populism across Europe and beyond (see Kaya 2017; De Cesari and Kaya 2019). Throughout the 'refugee crisis' of the 2010s, the German government's moderate policy towards new migrants was widely criticised. The ideological foundation for that policy was, arguably, the country's experience of integrating millions of ethnic German expellees and refugees from Central and Eastern Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Annual heritage events celebrating the regions of former German settlement have been a regular feature of the German festival calendar since the institution of the annual *Tag der Heimat* ('Day of the Homeland')¹ as an official day of public commemoration that usually takes place in various state capitals during September. Its original impetus came from a mass demonstration in Stuttgart on 6 August 1950, where the controversial Charter of the German Homeland Expellees² was proclaimed. Individual regional associations have held their own festivals, such as the *Deutschlandtreffen* of the Silesians or the *Sudetendeutscher Tag* of the Sudeten Germans. While these festivals were initially quite similar in style and tone across the range of expellee organisations, and have retained similar formats, they have diverged considerably over the years in terms of political outlook, with especially the Sudeten Germans developing a strong European perspective, while other groups have remained rather more irredentist.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and archival research, this chapter examines ways in which the vanished homelands of the expellees are performed, in terms of both physical spectacle and rhetoric, and in more subtle material and non-material representations of heritage. Given their explicit emphasis on a European identity, the primary focus here is on the Sudeten German associations and on the DJO-German Youth in Europe; the latter began as an umbrella organisation for expellee and refugee youth from various ethnic German regions but has since evolved into a more broadly based youth organisation (Becker 2002; Kockel 2015a; Hamel 2017). Placing the investigation in

the wider context of post-war reconstruction and European integration, the analysis asks to what extent and how these organisations have indeed been exponents of a 'European spirit', as often represented by their leadership and in their own literature, and if so, whether their experience offers lessons for the formation of European heritages.

13.1 Historical background and political context

The settlement of German-speaking people in Central and Eastern European regions was extensive and varied (Hahn and Hahn 2010; Beer 2011). In the Baltics, returning crusaders established power bases, the largest of which evolved into the German province of East Prussia while the smaller ones created local élites that endured conquests by other powers. Having received migrants from German-speaking parts of the Holy Roman Empire since the Middle Ages, most of Silesia, formally incorporated into the Habsburg monarchy in 1526, was captured by Prussia in 1742. The boundaries of these territories remained disputed and some were subject to plebiscites after the First World War.³ A third major area, later known as *Sudetenland* (Figure 13.1) remained within the Czech part of the Habsburg Empire until 1918, when it became part of Czechoslovakia. Further east and south, settlement was more dispersed, creating what ethnologists referred to as 'linguistic islands' (*Sprachinseln*)⁴ – areas with unique patterns of interethnic cultural practices – along the Danube, in the Carpathians, the Balkans and the Russian Empire, often at the invitation of the monarch.

At the end of the Second World War, many of these settlers fled from the advancing Red Army; others were expelled by local militias or civilians. The



Figure 13.1 Map of the Sudetenland regions within the Czech Republic (including 'linguistic islands')

total number is uncertain but likely to have been in the region of 12.75 million by 1950 (Beer 2011: 85), with most finding a new home in the British and American zones of what was then West Germany. However, integration was difficult (Lehmann 1991) as the displaced were often perceived locally not so much as fellow Germans but according to the ethnic environment from which they had come. Derogatory labels, such as *Pollacken* for expellees from Poland or *Batschacker* after a Yugoslavian region on the Danube, were used commonly; many expellees found Germany a *Kalte Heimat* ('cold homeland'; Kossert 2009).

Already in 1946, various initially informal groups emerged, quickly evolving into inter-linked organisational strands: the *Landesverbände* ('state associations'), mapping onto the states that made up post-war West Germany, represented the socioeconomic interests of expellees in their new homeland, while the *Landsmannschaften* ('compatriot societies'), based on ethno-regional origin, reflected the politico-cultural orientation towards their lost homeland. Silesians and Sudeten Germans, the largest groups with some three million each, were particularly influential in West German politics, as were the East Prussians (Kossert 2009; Franzen 2010). Relations between the *Landesverbände* and the *Landsmannschaften* were marked by personal animosities among the leadership, political power struggles and debates over the 'proper' policy (Stickler 2004; Kossert 2009).

On 5 August 1950, the day before a major rally of expellees in Stuttgart, representatives of *Landesverbände* and *Landsmannschaften* signed the Charter of the German Homeland Expellees (*Charta der deutschen Heimatvertriebenen*). This declaration, with its emphasis on the 'renunciation of revenge and retribution', unification of Europe 'without fear and force', active participation in the reconstruction of Germany and Europe and 'right to home(land)' as a fundamental human right, became a significant foundation for the subsequent work of the expellee associations and especially for the DJO (Müßigbrodt 2011: 14). However, the declaration remained controversial, its commitment to the 'renunciation of revenge and retribution' attracting particularly strong criticism (Giordano 1997; Niven 2006; Schmitz 2007).

The diverse range of expellee youth organisations proved an obstacle to securing funding from the federal government, who preferred to deal with a single body, and this led to the establishment of the DJO-*Deutsche Jugend des Ostens* ('German Youth of the East') in 1951 (Becker 2002). The *Sudetendeutsche Jugend* (SdJ; 'Sudeten German Youth') joined the DJO soon after and has played a key role in the association since. In the same year, the *Bund der vertriebenen Deutschen* (Federation of Expelled Germans) was established. *Landesverbände*, organised according to place of residence and especially important in the northern and western states, saw their role in helping the social and economic integration of expellees, whereas *Landsmannschaften*, organised by homelands and playing an important political role in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, saw their task more in preserving their respective cultural heritage and being concerned with politically supporting a return to the homelands rather than

social integration (Becker 2002: 52f.), although there were notable differences between them.

The expellee associations were very much part of the Cold War constellation in Central Europe. Relatively few expellees had settled in the Soviet zone that became the German Democratic Republic, while for the vast majority their 'lost homelands' lay entirely on the other side of the Iron Curtain. De Gaulle had not been invited to the Potsdam conference in 1945, and consequently the French resisted implementation of the agreement reached there, which meant their zone received hardly any expellees. The establishment of the European Communities during the 1950s was in part an attempt to fortify western Europe against the threat of Communism, and this may have been one of the reasons why some of the associations subscribed to a pro-European rhetoric at least at the official level. This rhetoric is already evident in the Charter mentioned above and can be traced through pamphlets and other publications (see, e.g., Kockel 2015a).

The softening of the East–West tensions in the course of the *neue Ostpolitik* ('new politics towards the East'), pursued by the West German coalition government of Social Democrats and Liberals since the late 1960s, received a mixed reception from the associations because it entailed confirmation of the post-war borders, thus implying an end to hopes for recovery of, and return to, their 'lost homelands'. Some associations remained vehemently opposed to this new politics, while others were more ambivalent. Especially the DJO, which, being a youth organisation, was already experiencing the impact of losing its *Erlebnissgeneration* – the generation who had experienced flight and expulsion – was thrown into a deep identity crisis that found expression in controversial public stunts and the subsequent discussions in their members' magazine (Kockel 2015a), leading in 1974 to the reinvention of the organisation as *djo-Deutsche Jugend in Europa*. The fall of Communism, followed by eastward expansion of the European Union, opened up opportunities for expellees and their descendants to visit Central/Eastern European *Sehnsuchtsorte* ('places of longing') and develop new affinities to them. While opportunities had existed already during the Cold War, such as volunteering with the *Völkbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge* (German War Graves Commission) that provided an outlet for summer activities of youth groups of the *Landsmannschaften* and for the DJO to explore their 'lost homelands', for the vast majority of expellees the viewing points near the Iron Curtain were as close as they could get. The ethnologist Karl Braun (2015), whose parents were expelled from the Sudetenland, gives an insightful account of such visits to the border while also reflecting on the identity problematic affecting young people whose ties with a 'lost homeland' are entirely through the memory narratives of their elders.

In the early 2000s, proposals to establish a 'centre against expulsions' deeply divided public opinion in Germany (Franzen 2008). This caused a peculiar quandary for the DJO, which since its 1974 reinvention has turned its focus deliberately towards the integration of refugees and expellees coming to Europe while maintaining emphasis on its origins in the German experience. Through

this shifting focus, the organisation has been able to retain an *Erlebnisgeneration*, although this is now no longer ethnically German, but as geographical origins and cultural backgrounds of its members have changed so have their characteristics and political outlook (Becker 2002). At the same time, the youth organisations of the various *Landsmannschaften* have been engaged in considerable soul-searching with regard to their heritage and cultural identity.

13.2 Expellee associations and the European idea: *Sudetendeutsche* and the DJO

Emphasis on historically ‘German’ territories has been crucial for the *Landsmannschaften* although the boundaries of these territories were often historically fuzzy, making them ethnic frontiers rather than discrete territories (see Kockel 2015b). With some, their ethnic association was more Austrian than German, particularly in what since the late 1800s had come to be known as *Sudetenland*. Austro-Hungarian citizens until 1918, the inhabitants of these Czech regions, were conscious that Prague had once been the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. That loose assemblage of principalities under a common emperor never developed into a nation state in the modern sense and provides the model for some conservative visions of ‘Europe’, such as that of the late Otto von Habsburg, son of the last Austro-Hungarian emperor, who was a prominent voice in the European movement. Association with this ‘pan-European’ heritage may go some way towards explaining why the Sudeten Germans have long displayed a strong affinity with the ‘European idea’ (see Kølvrå 2015), emphasising the European aspects of their political aspirations – an emphasis that comparison of portrayals of their ethnicity (e.g., Nitzsch n.d.; Schmutzer 1985) suggests has become stronger over the years. Other *Landsmannschaften*, while stressing their commitment to the Charter with its accent on a ‘European spirit’, have been considerably less emphatic.

Given the relative size of this *Landsmannschaft*, the extent of Sudeten German input to the shaping of the DJO is perhaps not surprising. From its inception, the DJO was marked by divisions within and between the *Landsmannschaften* and their youth organisations. These divisions are evident throughout the history of the organisation even today, having surfaced with varying clarity and weight at different times. For example, the members’ magazine *Der Pfeil* (‘The Arrow’) in the early 1950s gave considerable space to the ‘European idea’ and its relevance for the organisation. Ewald Pohl, the DJO’s first leader, wrote about the hope that a reunited Germany would again be able to honour its duties and tasks in a free Europe in which the ‘German East’ would also have its place in freedom and justice (see Kockel 2015a: 320). The hope expressed here correlates with the conservative vision of Europe that was widespread at the time and which can be traced, in numerous variations, to the early twentieth century and beyond (e.g., Bugge 2002; Delanty 1995; Frevert 2003; Kaelble 2001). However, in the same magazine that extols a ‘European spirit’ promoting understanding and collaboration, the columnist ‘Kauke’ praises a group of DJO

members in Hamburg for dismantling an exhibition about the post-war reconstruction of Poland because the use of Polish instead of German place names had offended the *Landmannschaften*, especially the East Prussians (Kockel 2015a; see also Lotz 2007: 98f.).

Seeking out the experience of boundaries and frontiers was a key element of practice for the DJO in those early years (Sachers n.d.: 11). The DJO organised regular *Fahrten* (group journeys)⁵ across Europe, where groups deliberately camped in border areas and ethnic frontiers, reminders of the gap between the contemporary situation and a Europe of the future (Sachers n.d.). The *Fahrten* were thus very much part of a discourse celebrating the past and future of a European 'homeland' that the DJO had a duty to help build.

The July 1952 issue of *Der Pfeil* carried a lead article signed 'D.B.' in which the role of the DJO as defenders of a European 'homeland' is emphasised. It presents a vision of a regained East once again 'German and free'. This resonates with earlier images, even preceding Nazi propaganda, of the German settlements in Eastern Europe as bulwarks against the threat emanating from the steppes of Asia, the author invoking the 'faithful Germans' as 'the vanguard of Europe' (p. 1). While the martial pathos partly reflects an older and suspect ideology, it also expressed popular fears and aspirations at the beginning of the Cold War.

In the everyday practice of the DJO during the 1950s and 1960s, major efforts were invested in *Ostkundliche Studien* – historical and cultural studies of 'the German East', with significant political emphasis. The booklets produced by authors like Hans Christ at the time would make an illuminating study for another occasion. Political activities like *Ostkunde* led many contemporaries to regard the DJO as being perilously close to the populist spirit of Nazism. The use of Germanic symbols like the *Odalsrune* reinforced this perception. The *Odalsrune*, symbolising 'home', 'heritage' and 'rootedness', had been chosen as basis of the DJO's emblem, augmented by a circle that stood for the corral of wagons of the settlers who had made their home in the East; this turned the emblem into a sun wheel signifying faith in the future; the design was completed with an arrow pointing eastward, indicating the DJO's task of re-settling the lost homeland when the time comes (Kockel 2015a: 321) – the same arrow that appears in the name of the DJO's magazine *Der Pfeil*.

At the same time, there was a different current of thought, which found expression in the 'Kiel Principles' of the DJO, issued by the 1955 *Bundesjugendtag* (General Assembly; Becker 2002: 123). These principles affirmed Herder's idea of different peoples as building blocks of humanity, and Europe, consequently, as a union of free peoples in peaceful coexistence. This current of thought underpinned the DJO's involvement in European folklore festivals and related activities, such as the establishment of EFCO, the European Folk Culture Organisation. Dance troupes associated with the DJO, such as the *Klingende Windrose* in North Rhine–Westphalia, have also performed 'traditions of the German East' at other types of popular festivals, including the *Landesgartenschauen* (state garden festivals), where their appearances have been framed as expressions of a European spirit.

On the eve of the *neue Ostpolitik*, the controversial DJO leader Ossi Böse marked the 1965 ‘Year of Human Rights’ with a speech in which he presented his vision of a world in which universal human rights provided the foundations for a ‘Europe of free peoples and ethnic groups’ in which borders would merely have ethnographic or administrative meaning (Kockel 2015a). This vision was also expressed in a DJO declaration on human rights that emphasised the creation of a better world in collaboration with, not against, neighbouring peoples. Reading between the lines, one can also detect an interpretation that might turn this rights discourse against those same neighbours by, for example, pitching the historical injustice of expulsion against the right to a home(land). However, in his address during the organisation’s twentieth anniversary celebrations in 1971, DJO leader Henning Müßigbrodt reiterated that there was no desire for a political order that Germany’s neighbours in the East would not also welcome and support (Kockel 2015a). In the same year, discussions about the DJO’s name led to a competition in which *Deutsche Jugend für Europa* (German Youth for Europe) came out as favourite (Becker 2002: 196). This debate resumed at the annual gathering in 1974, following a report on a meeting between representatives of the DJO and the federal government where the DJO’s position concerning the *neue Ostpolitik* had been discussed. The DJO board recommended acceptance of the new political reality and only narrowly survived a vote of no confidence. By the end of that gathering, a new name for the organisation – *djo-Deutsche Jugend in Europa* – had been agreed that signalled the modernisation of the DJO without relinquishing its history and fundamental goals; the *Odalsrune* with the arrow of the settlers was replaced by a compass (Becker 2002: 197). However, this transformation was not universally implemented; the *Landesverband* Baden-Württemberg, for example, retained an emblem reminiscent of the *Odalsrune* until recently, and some of the *Landsmannschaft*-aligned member organisations – notably the Silesians and East Prussians – disassociated themselves from the DJO whom they saw as no longer representing their interest in regaining their ‘lost homelands’, while the remaining ones tended to concentrate on cultural heritage preservation (Becker 2002: 208). The DJO’s transformation into an ordinary youth organisation with strong international connections particularly to Central and Eastern Europe was followed in those countries with critical interest (e.g., Kołacki 1988).

Under the umbrella of the DJO’s *Ostkunde*, the *Sudetendeutsche Jugend* produced over the years a range of materials related to Sudeten German heritage, including booklets for use in schools and youth groups that contextualised and discussed the issue of a Sudeten identity. An early version from the 1960s highlights the interethnic character of Sudeten German cultural heritage and the diversity of identities, while at the same time postulating a ‘duty to the whole’ arising from a historically evolved ethnic consciousness (Nitsch n.d.: 19). A later version contains a short essay, offering a historico-political location and goal projection for this ethnic group, that speaks of an *Ineinandergreifen* (‘interlocking’; Reichert 1985: 95) of German and Czech movements (see Pfeiffer and Weiglhofer in this volume) as signposts towards new ways of

creating Europe that facilitate a revival of Sudeten German traditions in the Sudeten regions (Reichert 1985: 96). An extension of this is the emphasis by the *Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft* on the European credentials of the ethnic group that it represents. An early political spokesperson claimed by this group was Count Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi, son of an Austro-Hungarian diplomat and member of the Bohemian nobility. His 1923 manifesto *Panuropa* postulated a unified European polity and laid the foundation for the International Paneuropean Union, which describes itself as the oldest European unification movement. Coudenhove-Kalergi was the Union's key personality, and its president until his death in 1972, when he was succeeded by Otto von Habsburg. The Union has four basic principles: liberal conservatism, Christianity, social responsibility and pro-Europeanism, which it shares with the founders of the Social Market Economy model that underpinned Germany's post-war recovery.

13.3 Commemorating displacement

Beginning with the rally in Stuttgart on 6 August 1950, there have been regular events to commemorate the expulsion and celebrate the culture and history of the 'homeland' of the various *Landsmannschaften*. A federal *Tag der Heimat* (Homeland Day), held annually on the first Sunday of September in Berlin, is the central commemoration event involving all groups. This is followed by regional events in the state capitals. The *Tag der Heimat* events regularly feature high-ranking politicians and government representatives, giving the events an official character. 'Europe' has appeared occasionally in the motto of the *Tag der Heimat* in Berlin, for example, as a place of freedom in 1978 (*Freies Deutschland, Freies Europa*), a location of belonging in 1984 (*Heimat, Vaterland, Europa*) or European unification as the outcome of overcoming perceived injustices in 2018 (*Unrechtsdenken beseitigen – Europa zusammenführen*).

Since 2015 there is a federal Remembrance Day for the Victims of Flight and Expulsion. Motivated by concerns that the memory of displacement might lose its societal relevance as the *Erlebnissgeneration* is passing away, the proponents wanted to ensure intergenerational transmission of this 'heritage' (Deutscher Bundestag 2010). The original plan of designating 5 August, the date of the 1950 Charter, seen by the proponents as a 'milestone' on the path towards European integration and a 'foundational document' of post-war Germany, caused some controversy, and as a compromise, the day is now held on 20 June in conjunction with World Refugee Day, introduced by the UN in 2001.

The *Landsmannschaften* have continued to hold their own events, with participants more than seventy years after the end of the war still numbering tens of thousands. The events follow a similar format, usually over two or three days. Key elements are: a folklore evening; an ethnic 'village' where culinary heritage is presented along with traditional crafts, music and dance; meetings of local and district associations; a High Mass celebrated by senior clergy; and a main rally addressed by senior political figures. Federal gatherings usually also involve a conference and workshop programme. Of the three largest *Landsmannschaften*, the

Ostpreußen (East Prussians) hold federal gatherings every three years in varying locations. The biennial gathering of the *Schlesier* (Silesians) since the late 1970s alternates between Nuremberg and Hanover. Unlike the *Ostpreußen*, whose mottos have made no reference to Europe, the *Schlesier* have given it profile on three occasions, linking Europe with freedom in 1981 (*‘Schlesien, Deutschland, Europa – in Freiheit’*), the future in 2001 (*‘Schlesien im Europa der Zukunft’*) and their ‘homeland’ in 2005 (*‘Heimat Schlesien in Europa’*). The *Sudetendeutsche Tag*, which takes place annually on Pentecost weekend, differs from this quite markedly. By its seventieth anniversary in 2019, ‘Europe’ will have featured explicitly in 20% of its mottos, indicating the salience of the theme in internal discourse and external self-projection of the association: Beginning in 1958 (*‘Heimat – Deutschland – Europa’*), ‘Europe’ appeared twice in the 1980s, 2000s and 2010s, and even three times in the 1970s – the decade of the *neue Ostpolitik* – and the 1990s, following the collapse of Communism.

13.4 Celebrating European heritage(s)?

The *Sudetendeutsche Tag* 2018 did not have ‘Europe’ in its actual motto, which emphasised culture and ‘homeland’ as foundations of peace (*‘Kultur und Heimat – Fundamente des Friedens’*). Held during 18–20 May 2018, it took up about half of the Augsburg Exhibition Complex, with its 8,200-seater *Schwabenhalle* as a venue for the Pontifical Mass and main rally, two large halls filled with stalls and designated areas for the various local and regional associations, a smaller hall serving as meeting place and cinema, and the conference centre. The central yard framed by these buildings was used for outdoor activities.

The programme began in the city centre with a press conference, followed by a German–Czech symposium that did thematise Europe: *‘Unsere Heimat – Kulturerbe Europas’* (Our Homeland – Europe’s Cultural Heritage). It focussed on what was described as a unique culture co-created by Czechs and Germans over a millennium, which the *Landsmannschaft* wished to highlight and advance in the context of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (*Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft* 2018b: 11). By linking the gathering into a broader discourse of European heritage, the *Landsmannschaft* set the tone for the weekend and a pointer for the main rally on Sunday morning. The first day concluded with the laying of a wreath followed by a festive evening involving the award of two out of seven cultural prizes sponsored jointly by the *Landsmannschaft* and the Free State of Bavaria.

On Saturday, the action moved to the Augsburg Exhibition Complex. The tickets for the weekend came in the form of badges with the logo of the *Sudetendeutscher Tag* and covered public transport for the three days. Participants arriving at the tram and bus terminal of the Exhibition Complex were greeted by a long row of black and red *Sudetenland* flags before passing along a zig-zag line of seven flags beginning with the EU, then the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Bavaria, the Catholic flag and finally Augsburg. Entering through the conference centre, participants were met by a Catholic newspaper stand to the

left and an information hub of the *Euregio Egrensis*, which encompasses two districts of the Czech Republic along with several districts in Bavaria and the German states of Saxony and Thuringia. A series of large display boards lined the way to the exhibition halls, showing aspects of Sudeten culture and history in a 'homeland' narrative that emphasised the role of the Sudeten Germans as 'bridge builders in Europe', and was also available as a booklet (Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft 2018a).

The official opening ceremony was held in the *Schwabenhalle* and included the award of the *Landsmannschaft's* most prestigious prize, the *Europäische Karls-Preis*,⁶ to Cardinal Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna. In the afternoon, a wide array of meetings, seminars, workshops and presentations, running over five hours in up to eight parallel sessions, took place in the conference centre, the smaller hall, and the *Schwabenhalle* foyer. Meanwhile, the stalls and the 'village' in the two larger halls drew some attention, but numbers there remained small, with a few, mostly elderly participants sitting on the benches marked for particular places or regions, waiting to meet others. Several ethnic food stalls offered pastries, cured meats and other delicacies, and there were performances and showcases of traditional crafts, music and dance, as well as a book fair. Saturday concluded with a folklore evening that started with a concert in the *Schwabenhalle* and finished with a folkdance fest at the 'village'.

Sunday's proceedings opened with religious services. The Catholic Pontifical Mass, with German and Czech priests, was celebrated in the *Schwabenhalle*, a much smaller Protestant service in the conference centre's Panorama Room. After the services, there were five hours of dialect readings in the conference centre. During the break after the services, the various flag bearers and *Trachtengruppen* (groups wearing traditional dress) gathered for the main rally in the *Schwabenhalle*. This began with a parade led by a group carrying the European flag. More than forty groups filed into the hall with their flags and banners, whose bearers congregated on the stage as the others took their allocated seats. The Paneuropa-Union with their distinctive version of the European flag, showing a red cross on a yellow disk inside the circle of twelve stars, brought up the rear. Against the backdrop of this forest of flags and banners, several speakers appeared, including the new Bavarian Prime Minister, Markus Söder, ex-officio patron of the *Landsmannschaft* since the Sudeten Germans were officially declared Bavaria's 'fourth tribe' (joining the Bavarians, Franconians and Swabians) in the mid-1950s. In the course of the rally, Söder received a certificate of honorary membership from the spokesperson of the *Landsmannschaft*, Bernd Posselt.⁷

In his address, Posselt called for the right to the 'homeland' to become the foundational law of the European legal order. He emphasised Sudeten German – what he described with a single compound term as a common *böhmischmährischschlesische* (Bohemian–Moravian–Silesian) – culture as closely intertwined with Czech culture. This unique intercultural fusion, he appealed to the governments of Bavaria, Germany and the Czech Republic, ought to have protection through registration on UNESCO's Representative List of the

Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The image of Czech and Sudeten culture as ‘closely intertwined’ contrasts sharply with the idea, dominant in the early decades of the *Landsmannschaft*, that Sudeten identity could be defined without any reference to Czech culture (Adolf Metzner, cited in Reichert 1985: 95). A greeting from Prague, delivered by leading Czech politician Jan Bartůšek, was further evidence of gradual reconciliation between Germans and Czechs; this element has become part of the proceedings since Daniel Herman, at the time the Czech minister for culture, gave a speech in German at the 2016 event during which he expressed regret over the expulsion.

Ending the speeches, the chair of the *Sudetendeutsche Jugend*, Peter Polierer, delivered a declaration of the youth organisation, entitled *Blick in die Zukunft* (‘view to the future’), that clearly was a response to tension arising from the exclusion of groups from the programme. Although *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) was not explicitly named, this was evidently an attempt to distance the event from right-wing populism. The declaration described culture and ‘homeland’, paired with decency and the will to overcome nationalisms, as fundamental for the joint construction of Europe.

The rally concluded with the anthems of Bavaria, Germany and Europe. Afterwards, the assembled groups dispersed to the other halls and various events at the conference centre. The halls were buzzing, with over 130 stalls, ranging from publishers and traditional crafts projects to political parties, tourist boards, youth organisations like the DJO and religious organisations. Meeting areas had been laid out for fourteen regions and eighty-one districts. There were many examples of initiatives for German–Czech understanding and reconciliation, such as the *Kuhländer Tanzgruppe*, a folkdance troupe founded in 1974, which since 2004 has developed a partnership with the Czech *Javorník* dance troupe, together to maintain the dance tradition of their reference region. Political organisations represented ranged from Bavaria’s ruling Christian Social Union (CSU) and the Catholic social network *Ackermann-Gemeinde* to the high-profile Pan-Europa Union and the less prominent *Seliger-Gemeinde*, a Sudeten German community of traditional social democrats; notably absent were far-right groups like the *Witiko-Bund*, which used to be influential in the *Landsmannschaft* and has recently issued legal challenges against the reconciliation course the *Landsmannschaft* has embarked on under Posselt’s leadership. However, overt absence did not mean that their positions were not represented. The decentralised structure of the *Landsmannschaft* meant that regional associations had their own presence. In the information material available at some of their stalls, as well as in interviews with stall staff and visitors, the *Witiko-Bund*’s particular emphasis on justice and atonement was fervently expressed: focus on ‘homeland’ and culture is all well and good, but without justice, it is worth nothing (e.g., interview WP3-002-SL, 20/5/18). A visiting AfD-group distributed copies of a parliamentary enquiry about ‘the human rights of the German-speaking inhabitants of the Bohemian lands’ (Deutscher Bundestag 2018). Despite a broad emphasis on reconciliation in the displays overall, the strength of grass-roots resistance to this direction

was palpable, pointing towards tensions in the identity representation of the *Landsmannschaft*.

13.5 Different ways of European heritages

'Europe' has been a salient figure of internal discourse and external self-projection for the *Landsmannschaft*, which, through its youth organisation, the *Sudetendeutsche Jugend* (SdJ), has shaped the DJO significantly. As early as the *Sudetendeutscher Tag* 1963 in Stuttgart, the SdJ performed a ceremony based on a poem invoking an 'old Europe' that 'has many hearts' and 'cannot die as long as you love it'.⁸ Overtly pro-European, that poem nowadays finds its way into the propaganda of far-right organisations, such as the *III. Weg* (Third Way), a party describing itself as 'national-revolutionary' and striving for a 'united Europe of free peoples', outside the EU. This emphasis on a 'Europe of free peoples' echoes the 1965 speech by SdJ- and DJO-leader Ossi Böse, noted earlier. Affirmation of a common 'European heritage' (Lähdesmäki 2016) does, it seems, not necessarily imply commitment to European unification via the EU-model. But emphasis on a 'Europe of nationalities' does not necessarily imply an anti-EU stance either.

References to, and performances of, 'European' heritage(s) reviewed here can be interpreted in terms of a relational/orientational identity model (Kockel 2010: 125f; see also Kockel et al., this volume). 'Home identities' are directed 'inward', defining individuals and groups for themselves, while public identities are directed 'outward', projecting these actors to a wider public. 'Autological' (A) and 'xenological' (X) identification conveys, respectively, insights into one's Self and one's Other(s). 'Performance' (P) identities are expressive, whereas 'heritage' (H) identities are referential. Performing, for example, a commitment to European heritage(s) autologically affirms one's identity for oneself while at the same time referring to a particular heritage perceived as shared with Others. The same performance xenologically involves an audience who may not share the same heritage(s) but appreciate the significance to the actor(s), while excluding all those deemed alien to the particular heritage(s) invoked. In promoting culture and identity in terms of heritage to further inclusion and cohesion, the EU aims at the socioculturally inclusive fields AH and XP. How well do the organisations and events described here fit those policy expectations, and what – if anything – can we learn from how the vanished homelands of the expellees are performed through physical spectacle and rhetoric and in more subtle representations of heritage?

Historical analysis and contemporary ethnographic observations indicate significant shifts as well as continuities. Most obvious has been a shift in the *Landsmannschaft's* autological identification, where emphasis has moved from AP, which excluded the Czechs as irrelevant for a Sudeten German self-image, towards AH: an 'interlocking' identity – performed now at various levels, including, for example, the cross-cultural theatre project Čojč (see Pfeiffer and Weiglhofer, this volume) – that actually needs (some) Czech

involvement (XP). To what extent this has been motivated on both sides by European funding mechanisms supporting co-operation across borders cannot be examined here, but one may ponder the significance of the two stalls lining the entrance to the *Sudetendeutscher Tag* 2018 – the *Euregio Egrensis* and the Catholic newspaper: both signal connections on grounds other than nationality.

The strength of place as a source and target of identity remains undiminished and, in some respects, appears to have grown despite the passage of time, albeit with different emphasis. This has become evident in the process leading to a relaunch of the SdJ as *SdJ-Jugend für Mitteleuropa* (Youth for Central Europe) in 2015, which followed a similar move by the DJO some forty years earlier and included an emphatic distancing from nationalistic tendencies. When the SdJ-JfM talks about the *Europeade* folkdance festivals as ‘a lived Europe of the nations’ (Grill 2018), it projects this idea in a different light than their 1963 ceremony. Welcoming the deletion of a controversial clause from the *Landsmannschaft’s* statutes that stipulated the ‘reclamation of the homeland’ (*Wiedergewinnung der Heimat*), the SdJ-JfM highlighted that it had already ‘reclaimed’ the ancestral Sudeten homeland in novel ways, through cultural activities, political education and personal contacts with their Czech neighbours, based on human rights, tolerance and mutual respect (Sudetendeutsche Jugend 2014). The focus has shifted from the material towards a spiritual reclamation of place, which necessarily involves those who live in these places now. Such recognition of ethnic diversity, combined with a strong sense of place, based in AH and dependent on a dynamic approach to XP, is quite unlike the parallel ethnies favoured by far-right groups espousing a ‘Europe of the nations’ rhetoric, which remains firmly within AP and relies on clear separation of Self and Other (XH). The organisation’s customary ‘declaration’ to the *Sudetendeutscher Tag*, which its speaker delivered at the Augsburg rally, sought to reaffirm that difference in approach to ethnicity and self-determination; it struggled, as similarly intended texts inevitably do, with the limitations of terminology (see Kockel 2012a, 2012b).

The DJO, being an umbrella organisation for different groups, has admitted associations with roots in regions other than those of historical Germans settlement since 1995, arousing a debate on why an organisation originating in the experience of German expellees should become involved with foreigners (Jelitto 2011: 19). The cultural and political engagement of these new groups have not only given a major impetus to the DJO but challenged notions of ‘German Youth in Europe’. Its current leader, Hetav Tek, comes from KOMCIWAN, a Kurdish youth organisation, and is also deputy chair of the federal youth organisation *Bundesjugendring*, which in the 1960s and 1970s had sought to exclude the DJO for its right-wing public image (Becker 2002). At the sixtieth anniversary celebrations of the DJO on Castle Ludwigstein in 2011, members in traditional costumes from Pommerania (formerly northeast Germany) joined with Syrian refugees in Middle Eastern folkdances.

13.6 *Heimat Europa?*

Like the DJO (Kockel 2015a: 331f.), both the *Landsmannschaft* and the SdJ have always comprised elements of a very broad spectrum of political orientations. Further research needs to address issues including the appropriation of place, beliefs and practices of belonging and patterns and processes of experiencing what some describe as a *Heimat Europa* (Kockel 2010: 173f.). What exactly did phrases like 'right to *Heimat*', which appears in the 1950 Charter, mean for actors then, and what do they mean now? How does a *Volksgruppe* (ethnic group) constitute itself beyond the loci of its longing (*Sehnsuchtsorte*)? Why were such cultural ascriptions societally relevant then, and in what ways, if at all, are they now? Navigating politically charged terminology to get to the bottom of these issues makes such inquiry exceedingly difficult in the face of a resurgent right-wing populism.

In November 2013, a workshop of the SdJ in Bad Kissingen discussed the contemporary meaning of *Volksgruppe*, asking what the label *sudetendeutsch* might signify in the third or fourth generation. One issue was the ownership of memories that make a place 'home' – whose *Heimat* is where, why and how? Individuals interviewed tend to emphasise the local rather than the regional or national (see also Nic Craith 2012); consequently, a 'homeland Europe' may be built by local interactions like the *Kuhländer/Javorník* dance collaborative, facilitating the restoration of traditions that Reichert (1985: 96) called for. 'Traditions' in place need not be limited to folk culture in the narrow sense of the term. The political tradition of the *Seliger-Gemeinde*, or the religious one of the *Ackermann-Gemeinde*, point beyond the rural bias of 'folk' imagery.

'Europe' appears in all these performances more in the convivial 'multi-cultural' version championed by the Paneuropa-Union, which resembles the loosely structured Holy Roman Empire rather than today's EU. When the *Landsmannschaft* (2015: 7) points to the special position the Bohemian Lands occupied in that supranational federation, one may wonder whether this fits more with the vision, espoused by the *Landsmannschaft* leadership, of Czech and Sudeten culture as 'closely intertwined' or with the emphasis on parallel coexistence by far-right groups, who in this context, however, see German culture as superior to the Czech. While superficially similar, the latter vision tends to be irredentist, territorial, whereas the former leans more towards a trajectorial perspective (see Kockel 2010). Developing a viable vision of Europe may require a search for tracks and traces allowing reflexive historicisation of such cultural trajectories.

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Notes

- 1 The term ‘homeland’ insufficiently captures the resonances of *Heimat*; for a detailed discussion, see Kockel (2010, 2012a, 2012b).
- 2 Common usage in Germany employs either ‘expellees’ or ‘refugees’ to designate the different experiences of Germans leaving Central and Eastern Europe after 1944; while ‘expellees’ remains more controversial, the distinction is not important for this chapter. Czech usage of ‘migration’, or of the Potsdam Agreement’s term ‘transfer’, in this context (see Pfeiffer and Weiglhofer, this volume) remains equally controversial.
- 3 These frontier regions have recently engaged in interesting explorations of cultural memory, for example, through museum exhibitions (see, e.g., Kockel 2015b).
- 4 For an early critique of this ethnological paradigm, see Weber-Kellermann (1959).
- 5 *Fahrten* were a cultural practice characteristic of the German Youth Movement in the early decades of the twentieth century, with which many of the expellee youth organisations sought to align themselves.
- 6 The prize, named after the Bohemian king and German emperor Charles IV, is awarded for services to understanding and co-operation between the peoples and countries of Central Europe.
- 7 The close relationship between the *Landsmannschaft* and the Bavarian state through its main political party, the CSU, must be noted but cannot be further explored here.
- 8 Attributed to ‘George Forestier’, who enjoyed a brief spell of fame in the early 1950s, explained by later critics in terms of the contemporary attractiveness of his entirely fictional biography, construed by the real author, Karl Emerich Krämer; the deeper significance of this cannot be explored here.

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