The Perils of Potsdam:
American Quaker Relief Workers
and the Post-World War II Expulsions of Germans

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April 24, 2015
ABSTRACT

Between the final months of World War II and the end of the 1940s, about 13 million ethnic Germans fled and were expelled from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Although the expulsions had already begun, at the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945, the Big Three sanctioned further “population transfers” of Germans from Eastern Europe, provided they were carried out in an “orderly and humane manner.” Helping to aid the expellees’ integration into Germany were relief workers of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). These American Quaker relief workers were strong critics of the expulsions, not only because they were not, in fact, “orderly and humane”—the American government agreed on that point by the end of 1947—but because, according to the AFSC workers, of the dangerous ethnic nationalist tendencies behind them. As both critics of the United States and, through their role in America’s postwar reconstruction of Europe, agents of its global reach, the Quaker relief workers developed a critique of nationalism that was deeply imbedded in the American expansionist imagination and a vision of a world structured by international organizations and reconciled by transnational encounters. Relying on research in Quaker archives in the Philadelphia area, this thesis shows that for AFSC relief workers, the word “Potsdam”—by which they meant the United States’ sanctioning of the expulsions at the Potsdam Conference—encapsulated both this critique and this vision.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The seed of this thesis was planted in one of Professor Linda Gerstein’s lectures two years ago, when I first learned of the expulsions of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe. I continued to tackle the subject through coursework in the classes of Professor Andrew Friedman and Professor Alex Kitroeff, as well as during my time in Berlin, where I had the opportunity to visit Cecilienhof, the palace that housed the Potsdam Conference. By the time I got started with the project itself this year, then, much of the groundwork had already been laid.

Along the way was a team of very smart and very thoughtful people giving me smart and thoughtful feedback. Professor Friedman, and my fellow students in his thesis seminar, pushed me deep into the textures of the documents from the Quaker archives. Professor Gerstein, with her unrivaled breadth of knowledge—and her just as impressive reading list—pulled me back out. I had, in addition, the benefit of an unofficial third reader: my friend Neilay Shah, former Haverford College Writing Center peer tutor extraordinaire. To all of them I am grateful.

Thanks, too, to the librarians and archivists who guided me through an always growing maze of primary and secondary materials, especially Haverford’s Ann Upton, Margaret Schaus, and Rob Haley, and Don Davis, archivist at the American Friends Service Committee, who put up with me for the thirty hours or so I spent poring over documents in the basement of the Friends Center in Philadelphia.

Finally, and of course, thanks to my family.
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INTRODUCTION

When American Quakers told this story, they began with Potsdam.

Harry Truman, Josef Stalin, and Winston Churchill had planned to divvy up Germany and set the postwar order with a conference in Berlin, the capital of the Reich, but the Allies had leveled the city to such a degree that no suitable location could be found that could safely and comfortably hold the Big Three and their large staffs in the summer of 1945. They settled on Berlin’s comparatively intact suburb of Potsdam, more amenable to their logistical needs and still sufficiently laden with symbolism of German hubris and defeat. Potsdam had been the traditional residence of the Hohenzollern ruling family of Prussia and the German Empire, and the last palace they built was Cecilienhof, a Tudor-style mansion for Crown Prince Wilhelm constructed between 1914 and 1917. The royal family was only able to live there briefly; they lost the palace after the Kaiser’s abdication in 1918. It was at Cecilienhof from July 17 through August 2, 1945 that Truman, Stalin, and Churchill—replaced July 26 by his victorious opponent in the U.K. elections, Clement Attlee—met to decide Europe’s future.

Among the decisions agreed upon at Potsdam were three major resolutions that quite literally shaped Germany’s place in Central Europe. First, the Allied leaders decided to split up Germany into four occupation zones—one each for the Soviet Union, the United States, Great Britain, and France—with the city of Berlin as a special case, itself divided into four zones. But this was not the same Germany as had existed in 1938, before its territorial aggression under Adolf Hitler. It was decided at Potsdam to compensate for Russian gains in eastern Poland by moving the Polish-German border 150 miles to the west, to a line formed by the Oder and Neisse Rivers.¹ Finally, the Allies sanctioned the “transfers” of German populations from Poland

¹ Because the war in Europe was mainly fought—and won—on the Eastern Front, Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt accepted Stalin’s gains into eastern Poland at the Yalta Conference in February 1945.
(including the territories newly “recovered” from Germany), Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, provided they were done in an “orderly and humane manner.” The Potsdam Agreement did not only define a rump-German nationhood; by sanctioning the expulsions, it also endorsed the principle of “population transfer” in the name of creating ethnically homogeneous Eastern and Central European nation-states.²

Actually, the mass movement of Germans from the East had begun months before the Potsdam Conference. Between October 1944 and January 1945, 3.5 million Germans fled from East Prussia, Pomerania, and the Neumark in anticipation of the Red Army’s advance.³ Then, in the spring of 1945, the new governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia, which were still reestablishing themselves, began to expel ethnic Germans; these pre-Potsdam “transfers” are now known as the “wild expulsions.” By the time of the Potsdam Conference, the job was half done; by 1950, 13 million ethnic Germans had fled or been expelled from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Between 500,000 and 1,500,000 had died, mostly “through ill-treatment, starvation…hypothermia, malnutrition, and other effects of their ordeal.”⁴

While the Allied victors were, according to the Potsdam Agreement, supposed to oversee and organize the expulsions to keep them “orderly and humane,” the expellees’ “reception and integration were regarded as internal German matters”—a job for which German regional

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² This is of course not to say that every state—or even any state—was in reality fully homogenous: Czechoslovakia, of course, was a binational state, and every state continued to have ethnic minorities. But, as Tony Judt puts it, “the outcome was a Europe of nation states more ethnically homogeneous than ever before.” Tony Judt, Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945 (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 27.
authorities (even under the supervision of the Allies) were not prepared.\(^5\) Eight million expellees ended up in the Western Zones, where I situate my study, making up “20 percent of the nascent Federal Republic” (FRG), which was founded in 1949.\(^6\) Many expellees lived in refugee camps, where conditions were often desperate, into the 1950s. Still, the integration of ethnic German expellees in the Western Zones is “generally regarded as one of the great success stories of Germany’s postwar history.”\(^7\) To the extent that that is true, it is largely a result of the FRG’s reaffirmation of *jus sanguinis*, citizenship by blood or descent, after the war. *Jus sanguinis* was first codified into the imperial citizenship law (*Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz*) in 1913 for the very purpose of “keeping ties to the German diaspora in Eastern Europe” and elsewhere.\(^8\)

From the outset, Allied and German authorities decided that, whether they came from the former German territories “lost” to Poland or were Yugoslavian Germans who had never set foot in Germany (in any of its forms), “expellees were to be treated not as a distinct minority but as citizens with equal rights.”\(^9\) The automatic citizenship of the expellees was enshrined in the 1949 Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), the initially provisional but still-active constitution of the Federal Republic.\(^10\) In a way that did not happen with later waves of immigrants into Germany from Southern Europe and Turkey, the expellees very quickly became part of the FRG polity.

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Easing some of the burden on the German and occupation authorities, and later those of the FRG, were nongovernmental relief organizations, such as the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the leading Quaker group in the U.S., whose agents organized drives for goods, met with American military personnel, and aided expellees in refugee camps. AFSC agents registered their unceasing outrage at the expulsions throughout the expulsion years. On a practical level, they were frustrated that the Allied governments and international bodies, such as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)—where many postwar relief workers who would join the AFSC were employed during the war years—and later the International Refugee Organization (IRO), left the problem to German officials by explicitly excluding Germans from aid and from the aid-receiving category of “displaced persons.”

Yet even criticism of the Allies’ initial refusal to deal with the expellee problem was framed in terms of broader, ideological outrage: they should be responsible, the Quakers often argued, because they had sanctioned the expulsions. Moreover, according to many Quakers, the expulsions themselves affirmed a dangerous nationalist ideology that had no place in the postwar world.

The American Quakers had a long tradition of envisioning alternate, internationalist utopias. In 1681, as a “holy experiment” in peaceful government, the British Quaker William Penn founded Pennsylvania Colony, which he hoped would provide a model for Europe. Twelve years later, he laid out his political vision in his *Essay toward the Present and Future Peace of Europe by the Establishment of an European Diet, Parliament or Estates*. The AFSC’s involvement “in the internationalist and anti-intervention campaigns of the thirties,” and further

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11 Douglas, *Orderly and Humane*, 240; Judt, *Postwar*, 28-9. “The constitution of the IRO stipulated that the…ethnic German expellees from East-Central Europe who flooded the occupation zones of Germany at the end of the war were not entitled to international care. As a result, displaced persons and expellees formed two distinct categories of refugees simultaneously living on German soil, with rare points of contacts between them,” Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 44.
internationalist invocations I will discuss in my thesis, thus had deep roots. But so did the organization’s sense of being American. The American Friends Service Committee was founded in Philadelphia in April 1917 “to give young Friends of draft age an opportunity to serve their country in ways not requiring violence.” As such, the AFSC’s stance was from its inception both a rejection of American state violence and a commitment to “service” to that state.

By the end of World War II, when the AFSC was at its moment of greatest international renown—it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947—this type of service was as crucial to the pursuit of American expansion as military service. The AFSC’s goals had come to coincide with the American strategy to rebuild postwar Europe. Yet the Quakers remained often-staunch critics of U.S. policy, including the policy of sanctioning the expulsions of ethnic Germans. To critique the expulsions was to critique the very fundamentals of the Western conception of nation-state that had governed the previous century of political thought and had, with Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, become the chief posture of American foreign policy. As they voiced those critiques, while moving through a Germany that was a crucible of transnational engagement even as it was divided among the Allied victors, these American Quaker relief workers began to articulate a vision of internationalism that renounced the nation-state while at the same time was deeply embedded in the postwar, expansionist, American imagination.

My work relies on previous scholarship that generally falls within two main fields: the first provides a history of the expulsions; the second contextualizes the AFSC’s role in postwar  

Europe. Generally, when historians talk about the “expulsions” of Germans from Eastern Europe after World War II, they actually include the flight that preceded both the “wild expulsions” and the later forced movement sanctioned at Potsdam. In a study of the experience of flight and expulsion, this conflation could gloss over the varied experiences of German refugees from Eastern Europe. For my purposes, however, such slippery language actually reveals much about the German refugees the AFSC encountered. To begin with, the distinction between “flight” and “expulsion” is far more complicated than it may at first seem. Fleeing from the Red Army was often not a voluntary act in any meaningful sense; Stalin had told the Polish Communists to “create such conditions for the Germans that they will want to escape themselves,” and indeed many did.  

As the Red Army moved in, the Wehrmacht ordered the evacuation of Germans from the eastern reaches of the Reich.  

In his spectacular study of post-World War II Europe, the British historian Tony Judt observes that “[t]he Germans of eastern Europe would probably have fled west in any case.” I would argue the contrary: the near totality with which the expulsions were carried out—they were nearly complete by the end of 1947—meant that those who fled before they could be expelled would have likely soon been expelled anyway. Finally, although the AFSC made an effort to distinguish between categories of Eastern European German refugees, Quaker relief workers on the ground were often unconcerned with whether they were dealing with refugees who fled before September 1945 or the later expellees who were forced to leave at gunpoint: to AFSC workers, they were all victims of Potsdam.

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17 Judt, Postwar, 25.  
18 Both expellees and those who fled were refugees, but, when used in conjunction with “expellees,” “refugees” often meant ethnic Germans who fled from the East.
In the first decades of scholarship on the expulsions, the primary debate was over whether they were orderly, humane, and justified. The earliest studies tended to argue that they were, with two important examples coming in 1962 from the Russian Jewish scholar Joseph B. Schechtman and 1964 from Radomir Luza, a Czech lawyer who had fought in the anti-Nazi resistance during the war. A major challenge to that consensus came from the Cuban-American lawyer Alfred M. de Zayas in his 1977 Nemesis at Potsdam: The Anglo-Americans and the Expulsion of Germans, which documents—often with inflated numbers and rhetoric—the inhumanity of the expulsions. Crucially for my purposes, however, de Zayas works under the same basic assumption that states with large minority populations were not sustainable: his Wilsonian solution was that borders should have been drawn to maximize homogeneity within.

Despite the weaknesses of de Zayas’ scholarship, it marks a shift in the historiography of the expulsions. That they were not, as Schechtman puts it, “ethically neutral” was soon taken for granted—especially after the advent of the term “ethnic cleansing” in the 1990s and the realization that the expulsions belong to that category. De Zayas matters, too, in that he turned his attention to the Western powers that made the expulsions possible. That trend carried through to two recent works: the American historian R.M. Douglas’s 2012 Orderly and Humane, which relies heavily on the archives of American and British governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and the British historian Matthew Frank’s 2007 study of the expulsions in British

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Actually, Czech leaders used the phrase “ethnic cleansing” in the postwar moment, in their articulation of the expulsion project. Mark Kramer, “Introduction,” in Ther and Siljak, Redrawing Nations, 1.
public opinion. No scholar has done an American counterpart to Frank’s work, but this thesis will provide a piece of that picture. Moreover, while critiques of the “inhumanity” of the expulsions by contemporary observers are well documented in many of these texts, no scholar has sought to investigate the ideological underpinnings of the critiques, as I will do in my thesis.

Douglas and Frank both depict 1947 as a turning point, when the British and the American government officials turned against the principle of expulsion en masse. Before then, the governments and even their critics had supported the idea of “population transfer,” but governments and critics alike voiced strong opposition to the disorderly, inhumane manner in which the expulsions of Germans were carried out in practice. We see something very different in the Quaker Archives where I have conducted my research: the American Friends Service Committee Archives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Haverford College Special Collections; and Swarthmore College Friends Historical Library, the latter two in the suburbs of Philadelphia. American Quakers broke with this consensus. They were appalled by the conditions of expellees, but they were, from the outset, appalled, too, by the nationalist principles behind the expulsions.

The period I am looking at, 1945-1950, was a crucial one for the American Friends Service Committee. In 1947, the group was launched to worldwide recognition by being honored with the Nobel Peace Prize. The only scholarly account of the AFSC in this period is by H. Larry Ingle, who argues that the prize, the recognition that came with it, and the beginnings of the Cold War led to a shift in the organization: it became simultaneously more political—“recast…as just one more pressure group within the secular political community”—and less radical, “accept[ing] most of the presuppositions about the United States and its role in the world that the nation’s

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The AFSC, of course, was just one of many organizations aiding the millions of European refugees after the war. A rich body of literature suggests the viability of reading the postwar moment through the lens of refugees and, especially in the case of Sharif Gemie et al., relief workers, although these works tend to focus on displaced persons (DPs)—a category from which, as I have mentioned, German expellees were explicitly excluded. Furthermore, Gemie et al. show that, as people who have lost their states and who move between states, refugees call into question notions of the nation-state as a stable, unchanging entity.

For my purposes, however, the most useful framework for understanding the AFSC’s involvement in postwar Germany comes from the historian Akira Iriye. In his 1999 “A Century of NGOs,” Iriye argues that as much as America’s rise to hegemony was a product of military, economic, and cultural forces, the worldwide spread of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) “provide[s] one supreme example of why this century may be called an American Century.”

The postwar era was a moment of two interrelated processes: the explosion of NGOs and the rise of American hegemony in Western Europe and much of the world. Iriye explicitly connects the AFSC to America’s imagination of its own rise in the first half of the “American Century.” Quoting a political scientist writing in 1918, he observes, “She may well have had in mind the American Friends Service Committee…when she noted, ‘The old-fashioned hero went out to conquer his enemy; the modern hero goes out to disarm his enemy through creating a mutual

25 See especially Cohen, In War’s Wake; Sharif Gemie et al., Outcast Europe: Refugees and Relief Workers in an Era of Total War 1936-48 (New York: Continuum, 2012).
26 Akira Iriye, “A Century of NGOs,” Diplomatic History 23 (1999), 423. The phrase “American Century,” of course, refers to the 1941 Henry Luce essay that called for preparations for “winning the peace,” which became a catchall for American hegemonic aspirations of the 1940s.
27 Elsewhere, Iriye describes the AFSC as “more ‘a national organization having international activity’ than an international nongovernmental organization,” one which “worked closely with Quaker societies throughout the world.” Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 26. Most important of those other Quaker groups was the AFSC’s British counterpart, the Friends Service Council, with whom it shared the Nobel Prize.
That role became even more important for the United States after World War II, and the AFSC, I will suggest, remained uniquely suited to fill it.

My thesis will interpose itself within and between these two fields. It will begin to fill in the gaps on American opinion on the expulsions, but for the purpose of understanding the AFSC relief workers as critics and agents of America in the post-World War II moment. It will investigate how conceptions of nationalism and internationalism inflected those critiques and, in

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28 Iriye, “Century of NGOs,” 426. Iriye’s interest in the AFSC likely came out of his time at Haverford College, from which he graduated in 1957.
fact, made them possible. At this moment (postwar), in this place (Germany), with this group (the AFSC), “nationalism” and “internationalism” have meaning specific enough to be investigated concretely. At the same time, they allow a broader reading: by seeing these fields in conjunction with one another, I will argue that, in its reflections on the German expellees, the “voice” of the American Quaker archives reflects a crucial, complex piece of the postwar American imagination, one that questioned the role of the United States, and the role of nationalism, in the postwar world—with questions that, for American Quaker relief workers, were wrapped into the almost shorthand term of “Potsdam.”
CHAPTER 1
“REPORTS ON CONDITIONS”:
THE AFSC ENCOUNTERS EXPELLEES

The AFSC learned early on of the misery of the German expellees. Americans with Sudeten-German relatives and friends started sending letters to the Committee in the summer of 1945.29 An American soldier with two Sudeten-German sisters who had “been expelled from their homes in the Sudetenland without notice and their property and belongings confiscated” was referred to the AFSC by the War and State Departments after reaching out to several government bodies. He writes:

The elder sister and her family, after having been held by the Czechs for forced labor, started off for Austria and were last heard of somewhere adrift in Germany. The younger sister, then seven months pregnant, after twice being evacuated, was allowed to live for two weeks in the attic of her former home…The [American] Embassy advised the family to contact the Displaced Persons Authority in Czechoslovakia for removal to the American Zone in Germany, but they were unable to reach this authority.

Another man had three sons: two were in the Wehrmacht; the third, a U.S. citizen, was a research analyst in the Office of Strategic Services, the precursor to the CIA. He worried for his Sudeten-German parents, whom he “believe[d]…to be democratic in their outlook and not in sympathy with the Nazi principles.” An American professor forwarded a letter from his former University of Pennsylvania colleague, Dr. Fritz Urban, who claimed to have been a fervent anti-Nazi but was now being punished with all the rest. Urban writes: “It is one of the freaks of destiny that the victory of the Allies, for which we prayed and worked in our humble way, should bring so much misery to us.” At the time, the AFSC had no personnel in Germany, but the desperate pleas brought the issue very much to its attention.

Around the same time, the AFSC also received disturbing reports from other Quaker groups that did have boots on the ground, such as the Friends’ Ambulance Unit (FAU), a British

Quaker relief organization. “A Friends’ Ambulance Unit relief team entered Berlin on August 14th,” 1945. 30 On August 23, one FAU member wrote: “There is no doubt that an appalling slaughter is going on. … correspondents describe the scenes on the railway station as being like Belsen all over again … carts taking the dead from the platform and so on. I have never seen a hard-boiled pressman so near to tears…” On September 1, 1945—the day the Big Three signed the Potsdam Agreement—another sent a long and detailed report. Most expellees, he writes, “have only what they can carry on their packs and in bundles.” For some the “evacuation was orderly and humane,” he explains, already reflecting the language of Potsdam, but “[m]ore often they had to get out at ten minutes’ notice…The children suffered badly and there are reports of thousands being separated from their families. Many sick and old people had to be left behind. There are reports too of robbing and looting of refugees: few remaining possessions by soldiers on the way.” As Germans from the East entered Berlin, they were “pouring into a city which is already struggling on the most meagre rations…”

And pour in they did. “The expulsions started towards the end of June,” the FAU writer continues. “During July it is estimated that over half a million refugees passed through Berlin, most of them arriving by train….During the first half of August a further quarter of a million refugees passed through, and the flood continues.” Those weary travelers could only stay in Berlin one night, however, in spite of the massive system of refugee camps in Berlin—there were 48, which could “hold some 30,000 people,” all under German authority, “since the whole problem of these refugees [was] at present a German responsibility.” During the 24 hours in a Berlin transit camp, each refugee was supposed to receive “a bed and bedding,” “100 grammes of break and a ¾-litre of soup,” and “[m]edical examination and delousing,” although all of this

30 “Report on Berlin,” August-September 1945, Germany Reports/Letters Conditions (2) 1945, American Friends Service Committee Archives, Philadelphia, PA.
varied from camp to camp—often, there were simply not enough resources to go around. The FAU member writes that those with particularly severe ailments (those “physically incapable of moving on,” as another FAU report puts it) were “allowed to stay in the camp or [were] transferred to a separate hospital camp, which of course gradually fill[ed] up. In one camp we were told that 30% of the arrivals were unable to move off after 24 hours.”

For the rest, the next day meant squeezing back into a train. “Somewhere, perhaps 200 kilometres west of Berlin, the trainload is dumped on a disorganized and overcrowded town and where they go from there and what they do is largely unknown. The refugee problem is made much more difficult by this virtual absence of information and communication.” The FAU report then depicts the graphic suffering of individuals: an old woman with swollen legs; orphans who could not remember their parents; a five-year-old girl with “the spindly legs, the swollen abdomen and the drawn yellow face”: “all the starvation pictures we had seen came to life.” Still worse, however, was the mental anguish of the expellees. “[T]he complete absence of any future aim in life is often much worse for the refugee than his present privations. He carries on without hope.” The FAU member ended with a warning: “Only immediate and planned action by the Allies can avert tragedy on the greatest scale which will poison international relations for many years to come.”

Without access into Germany, however, it was unclear how the AFSC relieve any of this suffering. At the November 5 meeting, the AFSC Foreign Service Executive Committee expressed uncertainty about whether it would be “allowed to undertake a program in Germany” at all. 31 Two weeks later, however, the War Department invited the Committee to send representatives on a fact-finding mission “[t]o find out what are the needs in Germany and what

31 Minutes of the Foreign Service Executive Committee, November 5, 1945, Foreign Service Executive Committee 1945, AFSC Archives.
voluntary groups could do to help.”

Thus the Committee’s first direct contact with the expellees—and with postwar Germany in general—came when the AFSC’s Gilbert White and James Read traveled there in January 1946. They went with representatives of the International Rescue and Relief Committee, the Congregational Christian Service Committee, the World Council of Churches, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and the War Relief Committee, all under the umbrella of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service (ACVA).

In its report, written in Berlin on January 30, 1946, the ACVA commission detailed the condition of the expellees. The report emphasizes the magnitude of the problem, with the estimate at the time of “five to ten million Germans being expelled.” (Presumably, this also includes those who fled.) Although the report came from Berlin, there was a focus on the American Occupation Zone, in the south of Germany, of which Berlin was not a part. “In the American Zone alone, as many as two and a half million of these refugees may have to be cared for.” According to the report, far from stabilizing Europe, the expulsions threaten its recovery. “[The expellees] will not only present a gigantic social problem,” it predicts, “but also an obstacle to the moral recovery of the German people,” since they added so much pressure to communities already facing shortages in shelter, food, and other supplies. In contrast to the stabilizing effect “population transfer” was supposed to have, the massive dislocation of people would destabilize Central Europe’s largest state.

The ACVA report describes the human suffering of the expellees. They are overwhelmingly “women, children, and old men,” it notes, as many would do in the years to

32 Minutes of the Foreign Service Executive Committee, November 19, 1945, Foreign Service Executive Committee 1945, AFSC Archives.
33 The ACVA was the precursor to CARE, which I discuss in Chapter 3.
come; the young men had been killed in the war, remained in POW camps, or were being sent to forced labor camps in the Soviet Union. “Many of the children are orphans,” the report continues. “These people arrive at the border cities tired, hungry, with little or no luggage, undernourished, ill-clad, many of them sick.” The system for receiving and sheltering the refugees was running far less smoothly than what the FAU member had reported, already bleakly, the previous summer:

We have seen them spending the night in air-raid shelters of railroad stations, packed together with hardly enough room to sit down, with no care for the sick, no facilities to wash and often without food. They are shunted from one ruined city to another, sometimes for weeks, until they find relatives or friends, or are put in temporary quarters, or assigned to a room in a country village. We have seen them settled in barracks and in air-raid bunkers, six to ten in one small room. We have seen two hundred squeezed together in one large room of an abandoned department store, with each family trying vainly to maintain a little privacy. Many of these had been living under such conditions since last July.

Like that of the FAU, this ACVA report, too, turns to some concrete cases of misery and resilience, such as the mothers who “had to keep their children in bed until they could fashion shoes for them out of cardboard and string.” It concludes with a dim prognosis, even if governmental and nongovernmental organizations do all they can: “Private and public relief working together, can do no more than assist at the places of, and in the moments of greatest distress.” From the beginning, there was deep skepticism about the possibility of finding solutions to the expellee problem—no matter what the combination of national agencies and international organizations that got involved would be.

In May 1946, Willis Weatherford, the AFSC’s Commissioner for Europe, made another trip. He visited Berlin, made his way to Nuremberg to “spen[d] the afternoon at the War Trials,” and “continued to Munich”—which was in the American Zone—where [he] visited several
refugee camps.” Weatherford’s report, a letter to AFSC Foreign Service Secretary Julia Branson, explains why the expellees were “Germany’s biggest human problem” through exclusive focus on the mechanics of receiving the refugees. It generally took expellees ten days to get to “their final destination,” the camps that would be their homes for the foreseeable future. Those from Czechoslovakia spent two days of “desinfection [sic] and registration” in a camp in the Bavarian city of Fürth; Polish expellees went through Hof, Bavaria. Then they were sent to a “central receiving camp” for more medical treatment and so officials could check their “employability status.” Few of the refugees were “employables”—most were “children, old, sick and disabled”—but almost all of those who could be put to work ended up in the “22 small camps” in Munich:

Those who are employable are sent, along with their families, to Munich itself. The others are sent to various villages scattered over the area. … This policy means that the few employables available are kept in cities and do not get into the land. Munich officials explain the policy by saying Munich factories need workers. Villages complain that all the incoming Volksdeutsche [ethnic Germans] are just a burden on the community, which is true.

Weatherford’s report anticipates some of the challenges the AFSC would face and the goals the Committee would pursue. He notes that the “high percentage” of Germans from the East—they would soon make up one-fifth of the population—made for a “situation [that] would be most difficult in a healthy aconomy [sic], but it is an impossible load to saddle on a crippled economy which cannot revive as long as the Potsdam Agreement remains in effect.” Weatherford, in other words, suggests here, as the AFSC would do many times, that Potsdam was the sole root of the problem and must somehow be undone. From early on, concerns about the logistical difficulties or the human suffering of the expellees were translated into political opposition to the Potsdam Agreement.

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35 Willis Weatherford to Julia Branson, June 1, 1946, Country German Reports to Philadelphia 1946, AFSC Archives.
Weatherford also realized that the rural concentration of expellees made it a problem largely out of reach of the neighborhood centers, the city-based operations out of which the AFSC would run the majority of its relief and rehabilitation work. When General Lucius Clay’s Military Government and the U.S. State Department began allowing increasing numbers of non-governmental relief workers into Germany, the AFSC established many such centers throughout the western occupation zones, aligning with Clay’s infatuation with them: “In Germany,” James Read writes, “because of General Clay’s interest in Centers, it looked as if we could do almost anything if we called it a Center. We tried to talk about work with expellees, Nazi internees – and got nowhere. Apparently, however, we could do all these things if we did them around a Center.”36 And, to be sure, the AFSC did run some expellee relief from out of the centers. “All of our Centers, AFSC and FSC, in Germany have some kind of program for Refugees. The Neighborhood Centers either include Refugees in their Center Programs or give help to a nearby Barrack or both.”37 But the expellee problem was secondary to larger food and supply distribution and moral recovery projects.

The most sustained direct contact the AFSC had with expellees was in the camps in the region of Oldenburg, in Lower Saxony, part of the British Zone until, beginning in 1947, the American and British Zones became increasingly integrated into one “Bizone.”38 In early 1947, the AFSC sent Francis Dart to Oldenburg. Dart was a Detroit physicist who decided he should, in his wife’s paraphrasing Society of Friends founder George Fox’s peace testimony, “live in the Life and Power that takes away the occasion for wars” and signed on for two years in the

36 Minutes of the Foreign Service Executive Committee, June 7, 1948, AFSC Minutes 1948 Foreign Service Executive Committee, AFSC Archives.
37 “The Program of the AFSC for German Refugees in Western Germany,” n.d., Country Germany 1949 Refugees, AFSC Archives.
38 For a German-language study of refugees and expellees in western Lower Saxony, see Bernhard Parisius, Viele suchten sich ihre neue Heimat selbst: Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene im westlichen Niedersachsen (Aurich: Ostfriesische Landschaft, 2004).
AFSC. In Oldenburg, he joined an international “Quaker team” made up of English and German Friends. By June, Dart had “been asked to act as leader of the Oldenburg team,” as well as “refugee officer in Oldenburg for CCG (Control Commission for Germany).”

In a letter to AFSC Foreign Service Secretary Julia Branson, Dart explains the situation of the refugees in Oldenburg, as well as the role the “Quaker team” was playing there. He, too, describes their conditions graphically: “Looking over the week, it seems to me that I have seen enough misery and suffering and hopelessness to last a lifetime. The pitiful children in the cold without shoes, their bodies skinny and bent and shivering; the old people who are alone and without anything …” He writes repeatedly of the questions they bring to him:

Over and over again I hear it, “When can we return”, “Will we go back to the homeland soon?”, “We can stand it now, for soon we’ll go back, won’t we”. [sic] I think I dread meeting this hopeless hope almost more than I do the crowding and dirt and misery of the camps.

Expellees avoided the uncomfortable fact that the expulsions were in large part the consequence of the Nazi policies many of them supported, and they refused, or were unable, to comprehend the permanence of their relocation into the new Germany—to understand that they could not, in fact, go home again.

Most of the day-to-day affairs, according to Dart, were in “liaison work”: he and his colleagues would “try to work with German officials, giving them encouragement and

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42 Expellees generally saw themselves as innocent victims, although there were many who “viewed their expulsion as biblical punishment for Nazi Germany’s wrongdoings.” The German word for the expulsion is *Vertreibung*, and “the roots of the word are biblical and derive from the ‘expulsion from paradise,’” Philipp Ther, *The Integration of Expellees in Germany and Poland after World War II: A Historical Reassessment,* *Slavic Review* 55, no. 4 (Winter, 1996), 781f11.
friendship”; “intercede with [Allied and German] officials” on behalf of refugees”; and “try to break material ‘bottlenecks’ that delay recovery,” which often meant coordinating with other organizations. (He notes that they “distribute from the British Red Cross pool of clothing, shoes, food and some medical supplies”; in another letter, he mentions “distributing the little trickle of supplies we receive from England and America.”43) He certainly saw a spiritual aspect to the job as well; he was in the business of moral rehabilitation. “When people ask me what we are doing here in Oldenburg, I usually answer that we are working with the refugees from the East….How can I say, so that they will understand, that we are trying to take a whole people by the hand and say to them, ‘Have courage. Together with God, we can have hope.’” The Quakers ran programming for the refugees: a Quaker-style meeting, a “discussion group[,]…quite a number of other young people’s groups, women’s groups, etc.” What they needed, however, was a “material supply program”—things such as deworming drugs were necessary but impossible to come by—as well as more personnel, especially those who, by being “technically well-trained” and having “spiritual motivation,” could take on leadership roles.

Soon, however, a new idea for serving the Oldenburg camps started coming together. The biggest problem now was the same one Willis Weatherford had noted in 1946: central bases of operations worked in cities but made little sense in the rural areas, like Oldenburg, where expellees would continue to be the most needy even into the early 1950s. The idea of a Mobile Unit—sometimes called a Mobile Neighborhood Center or a “community center on wheels,” as if to please General Clay—began to take form.44 It was a rather simple idea: a three-person team and a truck that would serve ten of the worst-off camps in Oldenburg. Dart, Betty Barton, who was the AFSC’s British Zone representative, and Enid Barkas, a British Quaker who had been

43 Dart, Journals and Letters, 133.
44 “Report from the All Germany Conference in Garmisch, Germany,” November 1948, Country Germany 1948 Conferences, AFSC Archives.
“These children at Camp Helle have no toys of their own and eagerly look forward to this Quaker worker’s weekly arrival at their camp with his marionette.” Photo by the North American Newspaper Alliance, 1949. In Camp Oldenburg for refugees (ISO), AFSC Archives.
working in Oldenburg with the Friends Relief Service (FRS, one of Britain’s Quaker relief organizations) since long before Dart’s arrival, had to push the idea to the Philadelphia office for months before it came together by early 1949.

A job description for the replacement of one of the team members illustrates the long list of tasks the Mobile Unit was expected to do: “reception, sorting, allocation, distribution and reporting of supplies,” transport and maintenance, “[i]nterpretation of Quaker work, ideals, motives, etc.,” “organizing and supervising projects for making clothing, repairing shoes, etc.,” “organizing groups of all ages for recreation, education, etc.,” “fostering of Home Industries or self-help groups if possible,” “helping to set up Common Rooms, laundries, etc.,” “dealing with group or individual needs and problems of all sorts – information, direction, advice, etc.”

Another important duty was being a liaison to a wide range of stakeholders: German officials at the local and Land (i.e., federated state) levels, British officials, AFSC officials, and “interested groups of all kinds.” Team members had to speak German and have “[e]motional maturity,” “[o]pen-mindedness,” “a sense of humor,” and “the capacity to be content in a fairly isolated situation.”

The Oldenburg Mobile Unit was active into the early 1950s, when finding permanent shelter for and integrating expellees was still not complete. For AFSC workers who encountered the expellees—at Oldenburg or elsewhere—the problem of the expulsions went beyond the human suffering or even the political consequences that I have outlined in this chapter. For many American Quakers, the expulsions, sanctioned by the U.S. at Potsdam, called into question the role of America, and the role of nationalism, in the postwar world.

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CHAPTER 2
ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

The apparatus of American power in postwar Europe consisted of bodies in motion: the hundreds of thousands of American men and women who crossed the Atlantic by boat and, increasingly, by air after World War II. In Germany alone there were still 125,000 active American troops in 1947. That figure hit its nadir in 1950, when 100,000 service members were stationed in Germany—a sharp decline from the 2.7 million in 1945, to be sure, but still a massive presence—before Cold War tensions and NATO obligations brought the American military swarming back in. But while servicemen were pouring out of Europe, others were pouring in: men and women who were just as much what historian Christina Klein calls “the agents of America’s political, economic, and military expansion.”

The historian Foster Rhea Dulles describes the scene:

As a consequence of the political situation which found the United States playing a major role in European recovery from the war, and then helping to bolster continental defenses against possible communist aggression, hundreds of thousands of United States citizens were in Europe on government assignment. The military forces stationed there, employees of government agencies, the dependents of both the troops and of civilian personnel (supplemented by representatives of American business firms and other temporary expatriates), made up a shifting population of nearly a million, obviously many times larger than ever before in peacetime.

That “supplement[ary]” population of neither civilian nor military officials was itself a diverse group, one that the liberal journalist William Harlan Hale later called “an additional, private

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46 “It was in 1955 that for the first time more American travelers crossed the Atlantic by plane than by ship; in another five years, three-fourths of all those visiting Europe and the Mediterranea went by air rather than by sea.” Foster Rhea Dulles, Americans Abroad (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), 175. Dulles was himself a cousin of the Langley and Pentagon Dulleses.
48 Klein, Cold War Orientalism, 105.
49 Dulles, Americans Abroad, 170.
army—a sort of voluntary Third Force.”\textsuperscript{50} It was made up of tourists, of whom there were upwards of 200,000 in Europe by 1948, as well as students, business representatives, missionaries, and charity workers—including those of the AFSC, which had a staff that “in 1947 numbered 597 scattered across the world.”\textsuperscript{51}

While joining this “Third Force” may indeed have been voluntary, it was equally instrumental to the consolidation of American power in postwar Europe as the U.S. military was. And membership in it contributed mightily to what Hale beamingly described in 1959 as the “many-sided penetration of the world” America had achieved to an extent that “[n]either imperial Rome nor Britain in all their glory ever dreamed of.”\textsuperscript{52} That “penetration” took many forms. Foremost among them was the influx of the American dollar. “The Truman administration recognized the value of this flow of dollars” from American tourists, Klein writes, “and the Economic Cooperation Administration—the bureaucratic arm of the Marshall plan—actively encouraged travel to Europe as a means of further infusing U.S. dollars into war-shattered economies.”\textsuperscript{53} American money, whether it was funneled through the bureaucracy or came from the taxpayers directly, would be crucial in Europe’s reconstruction. But dollars were not all the U.S. sought to “infuse” into American-occupied Europe.

Through denazification programs, the establishment of academic exchanges—like the Fulbright program, which was started in 1946—and, most extensively, the exportation of cultural products, the U.S. would ship democracy, too, into postwar Germany. Reinhold Wagenleitner, an Austrian cultural historian of the Americanization (or “Coca-Colonization”) of postwar Europe, writes, “U.S. experts believed that fascist behavior patterns and autocratic attitudes, which had


\textsuperscript{51} Klein, \textit{Cold War Orientalism}, 104; Ingle, “American Friends Service Committee, 29.

\textsuperscript{52} Hale, “Millions of Ambassadors.”

\textsuperscript{53} Klein, \textit{Cold War Orientalism}, 107.
been diagnosed as a result of fascist brainwashing, could be eliminated only by democratic decontamination”—“only” with “sufficient doses of the American way.” A major concern for the occupiers was instilling the proper values in the minds of the occupied. In his correspondence with the AFSC, a German-born official in the Information Control Division of the U.S. military government notes that phrases like “projecting America” were so ubiquitous that they had become “glib”: “When asked what it is they want to project, they are prone to wander into generalities and phrases, such as ‘American Democracy,’ ‘the American way of life,’ ‘the good Things [sic] of America and how our people live,’” he writes. “This is not enough.” But his solution is simply to give substance to those hollow phrases, turning them from slogans into reality:

We must educate Germans up to their responsibilities. So far we have condemned but we have not shown them the way to a sounder future and have not held out much hope….There is no time to lose, we must regain our ground and, above all, every one of us must take an effort to keep alive at home a sense of America’s world-wide and world-historic responsibility.

In other words, the role of “projecting America,” no matter how glib the phrase, was something for every American, soldier and civilian alike, to take part in.

The nature of international engagement meant that the AFSC had to actively coordinate with the U.S. government. In the first place, the Quakers could not set up relief programs without the approval of American officials. AFSC leadership corresponded with Secretary of State James Byrnes and repeatedly wrote and met with General Clay. To be sure, the AFSC

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55 Ewald Schnitzer to friends, December 7, 1945, Germany Reports/Letters Conditions (2) 1945, AFSC Archives.

56 Minutes of the Foreign Service Executive Committee, November 5, 1945, AFSC Minutes 1945 Foreign Service Executive Committee, AFSC Archives.

57 Minutes of the Executive Committee, November 4, 1946, and Minutes of the Executive Committee, December 2, 1946, AFSC Minutes 1946 Foreign Service Executive Committee, AFSC Archives.
expressed considerable frustration with actions of the U.S. government. Starting at least as early as October 1945, the Quakers unremittingly pleaded for the government “to do the over-all job” of German relief, even as they pushed for access into Germany and greater leeway with their programming. But the fact that they were granted an audience, and sometimes even sought out by military and civilian officials, suggests a largely collaborative relationship; indeed, the AFSC saw itself from the start as playing a “supplementary” role to national (and international, as I will discuss in later chapters) government relief programs. Highlighting the alignment of postwar interests between the government and the AFSC was the career path of James Read. Read, along with Gilbert White, had led the AFSC’s first postwar fact-finding mission into Germany and thereafter headed the AFSC’s Foreign Service Section. In 1949, Read accepted a State Department job, as the Director of Education and Cultural Relations in the Office of the High Commissioner of Germany. The State Department’s chief pedagogical concern, of course, was teaching democracy.

This was certainly how many lower-level Quakers, too, saw their role—even when they were scathingly critical of the actions of the United States. Francis Dart spent 1947 leading a team of relief workers in Oldenburg. In a letter to a Boy Scouts of America official, Dart describes the desperate condition of the expellee camps. “Well, this is the way we are teaching Democracy. Yes, Bill, I said we. I wonder how many scouters, concerned as they are about citizenship and honesty, really know that all this was done after the war in our name, and that it is being carried out with our consent and support?” That “we” (Americans) should be “teaching

58 Minutes of the Foreign Service Executive Committee, October 22, 1945, AFSC Minutes 1945 Foreign Service Executive Committee, AFSC Archives.
59 Minutes of the AFSC Foreign Service Section Directors’ Meeting, December 12, 1949, AFSC Minutes 1949 Foreign Service Section Area Directors’ Meeting, AFSC Archives. Afterwards, as I will discuss in Chapter 4, Read took a position with the United Nations.
60 Dart, Journals and Letters, 132-5.
Democracy” is self-evident to Dart, and so, even in his critique, he reflects a common, patriotic notion of America’s emerging role in the world. Many Quakers on the ground, like Dart, believed that it was America’s job to be “teaching democracy” to the Germans and to the world. They just thought America had been doing it wrong.

On August 17, 1948, Dan Wilson, a California Quaker who worked as an AFSC fundraiser, was in the last week of a two-month European trip. Betty Barton, the AFSC’s representative in the British Occupation Zone of Germany, picked him up in her car, a Volkswagen she called “Patricia,” which had, in the previous five months, accumulated 17,500 kilometers zigzagging between the ruined cities of Central Europe. They drove from Frankfurt to Cologne, she acting as his reluctant guide of the British Zone. “Gradually I got over my resentment at having to show another visiting fireman around the zone and began to like the guy,” she writes. “So when we pulled into Cologne about nine-thirty I even relented on my no touring ultimatum and suggested detouring a few blocks to see the Cathedral.” Cologne’s Cathedral, a magnificent Gothic church, was hit fourteen times by Allied bombers. The year of Barton and Wilson’s visit, Wilson notes, was “the 700th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone,” and while the inside of the church remained in ruins, the exterior had been largely rebuilt for the celebrations of the anniversary. The image that Wilson saw filled with him wonder: “What a fantastic sight to see that beautiful structure rising above silhouetted ruins,” he

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61 Barton’s account comes from a typed collection of her journal, Betty Barton, Chronicles from a Quaker Quill, unpublished manuscript, 85-8, Country – Germany 1948: Individuals, Barton, Betty (Later White) 1948 “Chronicle,” AFSC Archives.
raves in a letter to his wife.\textsuperscript{63}

It was the ruins, however, that lingered on his mind. As the letter goes on, he mournfully, angrily recounts the destruction wrought by American military technology:

In the heavily populated Ruhrland half the living accommodations had been destroyed. Much of it had been bombarded for weeks by the Americans at the end of the war, because there was no official person left to surrender to Patton’s demonic attack. Such was the nature of unconditional surrender.

To Wilson, the wartime policy of the United States is not merely deadly—it was “demonic.” His outrage continues in his memoirs, compiled fifty years later.\textsuperscript{64} His account, an almost feverishly emotional entry, illustrates how those troubled by U.S. policy often embedded their outrage into a larger critique of America’s claims of moral superiority, and how American relief workers had to navigate a complicated relationship with American power.

Wilson tells of a long, late-night conversation with Betty Barton. They “talked shudderingly about the diabolical treatment of Jews in the Nazi labor camps we’d heard so much about; about death camps Auschwitz, Dachau, Belsen and Buchenwald”; about the “gruesome remnants of the gas chambers and ovens” that they had “seen “[f]rom outside the barbed wire fence”; and about “10,000 [who] lay dead,” and the “600…dying each day.” But then the conversation took a turn: “On the other horrifying hand,” Wilson writes, the Allies had their own

\textsuperscript{63} Dan Wilson, \textit{Relief, Rehabilitation and Hope: A.F.S.C. Work in Germany and Austria: From Dan Wilson’s Memoirs, 1947-1950,} unpublished manuscript, 81, Quaker Rare Books Collection, Special Collections, Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA.

\textsuperscript{64} While the overall manuscript is called a “memoir,” it consists of letters and journal entries, as well as commentary written at a later, unknown date. It is not clear when the section I will look at here was written—making it impossible to know how much of his writing is an artifact of another time—but it appears to be a subsequent commentary based on contemporary notes. One typed manuscript was given to the Quaker Collection at Haverford College in 1995; the second copy was to be left with Wilson’s family. The excerpt I examine here is Wilson, \textit{Relief, Rehabilitation and Hope,} 87-9. Signs that he wrote later include his imagery of what would come to be known as the “Holocaust,” for which Americans in the 1940s had limited visual vocabulary.

Barton, for her part, says nothing of this conversation in her account of Wilson’s visit. Her personal papers say little about the German expellees. Yet the issue was hugely important to her. The following year, she authored a pamphlet for the AFSC on the subject: Betty Barton, \textit{The Problem of 12 Million German Refugees in Today’s Germany} (Philadelphia: American Friends Service Committee, 1949). For more on this pamphlet, see the following chapter.
atrocities to account for. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he writes, “had raised grave doubts about the assumption generally made that the Allies were in a higher state of moral development than the Nazis.” The massive secrecy that went into the creation of nuclear weaponry called into question the notion of democracy. The war in general belied the U.S. and Britain’s claims to upholding Christian values. One by one, Wilson chips away at the Allies’ claims to moral, political, and religious superiority.

The forced transfer of Germans is the last atrocity Wilson brings up, and he does so in his bluntest, briefest paragraph, just one sentence long: “In the name of the Four Freedoms, bringing the Nazis to unconditional surrender had cost the unconditional reshuffling of millions of persons, like cattle in freight cars, as political pawns by Truman, Churchill and Stalin at Potsdam [sic].” His point is not softened by the kind of phrases he uses elsewhere—“we agreed,” “Betty spoke”—that suggest opinion, even firm opinion. He does not utilize the rhetorical questions, ubiquitous in the rest of the document, that similarly evince some equivocation. Here, Wilson is at his most direct. His sentence on the expellees is much more similar to the blunt, tragic tone with which he discusses the “heaps” of dead Jews than the probing, searching tone the discussion of other Allied offenses takes. He does not give an opinion on the philosophy behind the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter, nor does he engage with what alternatives to unconditional surrender might have been. Instead, he simply states cause and effect: “unconditional surrender” brought about “unconditional reshuffling of millions of persons.”

At the same time, he continues the technique of linking Allied actions to Nazi policies, as he does implicitly and explicitly throughout the document. The conversation as recounted by Wilson is structured around such an association: they spoke first of Nazi atrocities, but then
delve into those that “on the other horrifying hand” were committed by the Allies. By “obliterating German cities and their populations…[t]he Allies had resorted to using Hitler’s mass extermination of millions of citizens, in the name of stopping one mad man.” In discussing the expellees, he does something subtler. They were transported, he writes, “like cattle in freight cars,” an image that echoes the imagery of and accordingly taps into the outrage at “the diabolical treatment of the Jews” that he and Barton had “heard so much about.”

As he closes the account, Wilson moves from imagery of atrocity—albeit perhaps alluding to Christianity, with words like “diabolical” and “demonic”—to explicit Christian spiritualism. “By supporting the war, had the Christian Church really upheld the belief in the supremacy of the Spirit of Love?” he asks. Wilson continues:

Undoubtedly that would have to be a major question for the World Assembly of Churches to face. We talked about the meaning of the myths of crucifixion and resurrection for our modern world. And so our mutual grasping for straws of meaning to live by, continued on and on.

By dawn a meeting of spirits so remarkable had happened to us, that we left it undiscussed while driving on to Amsterdam. We were that awed over sharing a night of talking out, in affect [sic] confessing the hopeless guilt building up inside, and praying for humanity to be forgiven.

Although Wilson calls the crucifixion and resurrection “myths,” this is a religious, existential conclusion that seems to explain the incessant probing of the account: Wilson interprets the conversation as a “mutual grasping for straws,” a process of working through their “hopeless guilt.” This may be intended as a written prayer, but it reads as an attempt to prove the author’s own morality, above all to the author himself.

Through the conversation with Barton and especially through committing it to paper, Wilson is inaugurating himself into the role of the dissenter. He critiques America’s claims of moral superiority by positioning himself and Barton in their own position of moral and religious status; he both challenges the discourse of American superiority and remains firmly within its
logic and vocabulary. This duality, in turn, brings to the fore Wilson’s precarious moral position as an American volunteer serving in postwar Germany: he is a critic of one manifestation of America’s projection of power into Europe during the war and an agent of the sprawling nongovernmental and governmental apparatus that projected that power after the war was over. His is an alternative service, but a service all the same. And while he perhaps sees himself as counteracting U.S. wartime policy, he understands that his service lines up with America’s postwar program. He draws a connection between his own suggestions for relief and the Marshall Plan. “It seems to me that for the first time in American history,” he writes, “we’d come up with a constructive foreign policy.”\(^6\) Wilson had finally found an American foreign policy for which he would not be a dissenter; indeed, as an American relief worker in postwar Europe, he was an active participant in the American postwar project of rebuilding Europe.

But he remained haunted by Potsdam.\(^6\) Just as American Quaker relief workers predicted the effects of the expulsions would linger in Central Europe, destabilizing it for many years to come, so, too, do figures like Wilson appear destabilized by what they refer to, simply, as Potsdam. Wilson is far from alone in using the Potsdam Agreement as his entry point into dissent. Again and again in the Quaker archive, the expulsions demand an American response because of America’s sanctioning role at Potsdam. One document, a summary of the German refugee problem that combines narrative and notational style, makes this connection with almost comical succinctness: “Responsibility (a). Humanitarian (b). Potsdam Agreement.”\(^6\) The principal issue the Quakers had with Potsdam, however, was not that it was an American or an Allied decision. The problem of Potsdam was, as I will show in the next chapter, the problem of nationalism.

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6 Wilson, *Relief, Rehabilitation and Hope*, 28.
66 Thanks to Neilay Shah for this phrase.
CHAPTER 3
CRITIQUING NATIONALISM, CRITIQUING POTSDAM

As a twenty-year-old Harvard philosophy student in 1943, Henry Martyn Noel decided, like millions of Americans, that he could not merely be a spectator in the war effort. Instead of serving in the military, however, he joined American NGOs working abroad.\(^6\) During the war, he drove ambulances in North Africa, India, and Italy with the American Field Service (AFS), founded in the First World War to “[send] American volunteers as ambulance drivers to service on the front,” an organization with a similar historical timeline as the AFSC, with which it sometimes worked closely.\(^6\) When the war was over, Noel signed on with an American relief organization working on France’s rehabilitation, American Relief to France. However, in Paris on June 24, 1947, Noel “formally and openly renounce[d], completely, permanently, and without any reservation, [his] United States of America citizenship,” and declared that he owed his allegiance to no nation at all.\(^7\)

Ten weeks later, on October 6, after crossing the German-French border on foot and illegally (or, to use his words, on “an informal basis”), Noel made his way to an American Friends Service Committee’s center in Frankfurt, one of the many AFSC neighborhood centers scattered throughout the western occupation zones that functioned as bases of operations; this one doubled as a settlement house.\(^7\) At the Frankfurt center, Noel picked up a CARE package his mother had purchased for him. Founded in 1945, CARE (first “Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe,” then “Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere”) offered

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\(^7\) Bob Good to Wes Huss, October 7, 1947, Country Germany 1947, AFSC Archives.
American individuals, organizations, and companies the opportunity to do their part in feeding Europe. Each ten-dollar CARE package promised to provide the recipient ten full meals.\(^\text{72}\)

Before leaving the center for Kassel, where he intended to “work and live on the German level,” Noel left something with the AFSC Frankfurt staff: a copy of his renunciation of citizenship.\(^\text{73}\)

The renunciation is foremost a legal document, beginning, “I, Henry Martyn Noel, Junior, do hereby declare that I am of sound mind and body, and in full possession of all my rational faculties; That all statements of fact given in this document are true to the best of my knowledge and recollection…”\(^\text{74}\) Not until the sixth, penultimate article does Noel give his full declaration of principle. He presents his decision to renounce his citizenship in both personal and historical terms. “My present action,” he writes, “as embodied in this document, is the only one consistent with my conception of historical necessity, and with the profound dictates of my conscience.” The times demand such action, he argues. For Noel, World War II did not put a damper on nationalism; instead, it continued its apocalyptic ascent:

> We witness, in these times, the climax of nations: the spectacle of separate national political entities, each thinking to realize its own private national salvation, each desperate to maintain or enlarge its national power and prestige, each imagining itself struggling for its own well-being and betterment, while, in reality, every one harbours – and cannot put in abeyance – the same basic struggle.

Noel makes it clear that his critique is not of the United States in particular, or any of the “policies and actions, past, contemporary, or projected of [its] government.” Instead, he sees nationalism itself as an unceasingly destructive force; the only way to halt it is to abandon nationhood altogether. “Citizenship in a nation, being the tacit acceptance and approval of this situation, or else ignorance of these facts, has become, for me, intolerable, and incompatible with


\(^{73}\) Bob Good to Wes Huss, October 7, 1947, Country Germany 1947, AFSC Archives.

my personal convictions,” he proclaims. “I can no longer honestly remain a citizen of the United States of America, or of any nation.”

Over the next year Noel’s story, and those of others who renounced their citizenship, would be reported widely—and interpreted in a variety of ways—in the mainstream media. The novelist Paul Gallico, of *Poseidon Adventure* fame, saw Noel as joining the side of “the Central European ape-folk.” He sarcastically refers to Noel’s engagement in the “noble work of rebuilding the German nation” as though that were strictly the project of “occasional youthful U.S. citizens with bleeding hearts” and not U.S. foreign policy.75 The *Montreal Gazette* calls Noel’s renunciation a “tragedy of his youth,” a result of his “impatience,” and “a gesture bound to be in vain.”76 The *Milwaukee Journal* describes Noel as a “rich youth,” but also as a “pure,” “true idealist.”77 Other publications, however, including *Time* magazine and *Spiegel*, report Noel’s story without a hint of condescension.78 A report in the “Human Side” column of the *Daytona Beach Morning Journal* even seems to present Noel’s story with admiration.79

Bob Good, the AFSC’s man in Frankfurt, took a similar tone when he passed along to his Philadelphia colleague the renunciation with the ten-dollar check for Noel’s CARE package. Good, who was born the year after Noel and came from a similarly fortunate background, had founded the Frankfurt center earlier that year with his wife, Nancy, at an early stage in what was

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77 “Rich Youth,” *Milwaukee Journal*.
to be an illustrious career. A Haverford College graduate, he would continue his studies, earning a divinity degree and a Ph.D. in international relations at Yale, leading him to positions in foreign policy research at universities and in the State Department, followed by the first U.S. ambassadorship to Zambia, before he finally served as president of Denison University. Bob Good was not a radical figure. But when Henry Noel walked into Good’s AFSC center in Frankfurt on October 6, 1947, Good found his former countryman’s story compelling enough to pass it on, along with the renunciation document itself, when he could have simply sent the ten-dollar check. He, too, reports Noel’s story without condescension. There is even a sense of fondness for the act Noel took “in accordance with the deepest dictates of his conscience.” As even the Montreal Gazette article noted, Noel had “chosen the ideal moment” for his renunciation: Anti-nationalism had become widespread at the time, including among the agents of the AFSC.

For American Quaker relief workers, Potsdam was the signal of a dangerously resilient nationalism in Europe and the world. The Allies’ authorization of “population transfer” was the result of years of lobbying, especially from Czechoslovak president-in-exile Edvard Benes, but also from their own conception of what nation-states should look like. The expelling countries argued, and the Allies agreed, that their fragile states could not sustain themselves with large German minority populations. It was not only Germans who were “transferred” en masse after the war. Ukrainians were also expelled from Poland to the Soviet Union; Poles, likewise, were

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81 Although we might imagine him writing the last line of the note slightly smugly: “The cheque was sent his mother.”
forcibly deported in the U.S.S.R. Czechoslovakia expelled Hungarians as well as Germans.\textsuperscript{82} Forced migration was the basic fact of postwar East-Central Europe, as it had been in the war years; it was a thread of continuity left intact between the wartime and postwar eras, an indication that, for many civilians, “the war in Europe did not finish in 1945.”\textsuperscript{83} But the ethnic Germans, with 13 million fleeing or expelled, were forcibly “transferred” in the highest numbers.

The scale of German expulsion had three main causes. First, the shift in the German-Polish border left many millions of Germans behind enemy lines, so to speak. Second, hostility toward German populations was especially strong due to the brutality of Nazi occupation, the collaboration of many local Germans in that occupation, and the very real “Fifth Column” activity of many ethnic Germans, especially in the Sudetenland, leading up to the war. Behind these recent events, there was, too, a much longer history of national entanglement. The Polish-German border had never neatly divided Polish and German populations.\textsuperscript{84} The situation was even more complex in the lands of the formerly multinational Hapsburg Empire.\textsuperscript{85} The “transfers” authorized at Potsdam were just the latest attempt to engineer East and Central European states whose populations mapped precisely onto their borders—as the American historian T. David Curp puts it, “to cut through the Gordian knot of [Europe’s] entangling ethnographic and political frontiers.”\textsuperscript{86} Massive, deadly reshuffling of people was the price of the


\textsuperscript{83} Tony Judt, \textit{Postwar}, 35. See also Snyder, \textit{Bloodlands}.

\textsuperscript{84} See T. David Curp, \textit{A Clean Sweep: The Politics of Ethnic Cleansing in Western Poland, 1945-1960} (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006); Thum, \textit{Uprooted}.


\textsuperscript{86} Curp, \textit{A Clean Sweep}, 13. On the Polish-German frontier, see Thum, \textit{Uprooted}.
ticket to nation-state stability. For the AFSC relief workers, it revealed the absurdity of the nation-state as a goal in the first place.

More commonly, however, forced migration set the stage for a resilient ethnic nationalism in Europe. The project of German expulsion worked to galvanize the Poles in jingoistic unity against the Germans (while also leaving them susceptible to Communist domination). A similar phenomenon occurred in Czechoslovakia. In Germany, meanwhile, the need to integrate millions of ethnic German refugees justified the continuation of a definition of citizenship based on descent and ethnicity. By granting automatic citizenship to the post-World War II expellees, the Basic Law of the FRG reaffirmed the legal linkage between the state and Germans of the East. This and other legislation smoothed over the differences between groups of expellees. Some, like those of East Prussia, had been citizens and residents of Germany until their land was “recovered” by Poland. Others, like the Sudeten Germans had, “[e]xcept for the period from 1938 to 1945 when the Sudetenland became an integral part of the Reich,…resided outside the borders of Germany.” In the legal framework of the new German state, it made no difference; they were all German. Further legislation, enacted in 1953 and 1955, reiterated that ethnic Germans could receive automatic citizenship upon application, regardless of where they were born. The ethnic “idiom of nationhood,” to use a phrase from the American sociologist Rogers Brubaker, remained in place. Such is, according to Curp, the natural result of ethnic cleansing. “Instead of being a ‘clean sweep,’” he writes, “ethnic cleansing is a nationally revolutionary force *par excellence* that reinforces the national foundations of ethnic conflicts it

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appears to destroy.⁹¹ He is speaking of Poland in particular, but the expulsions of the Germans reinforced the ethnic nationalism of the expelling countries, of Germany, and, the Quakers argued, of the Allied nations who sanctioned them.

The AFSC Quakers were not really concerned about German nationalism or Polish nationalism; just “nationalism” in general. At least, that is how they responded to Potsdam. “While the tool which expelled so many people from their homeland can be called the Potsdam Agreement, needless to say the old nationality hatreds of hundreds of years were simply allo [sic] to foment with some degree of international sanction,” a pair of AFSC agents write in the preface to a 31-page report on a Bavarian expellee camp.⁹² “Nationalism begets nationalism,” Betty Barton observes in an AFSC booklet on the expulsions that was widely circulated within and outside of the organization. She sees the dangerous nationalism of the expulsions as a direct result of the dangerous nationalism of the Nazis. “The concept of the transfer of population minorities did not originate at the Potsdam Conference…. [I]t was an accepted National Socialist practice. That it has boomeranged upon the Germans is the natural aftermath of the practical every-day application of Nazi political and nationalistic tenets during their decade of power.”⁹³ Forced “population transfer” was not a Nazi innovation, as the post-World War I Turkish-Greek “exchange,” to name just one example, makes clear.⁹⁴ But its use by the Nazis “boomeranged” onto ethnic Germans in very concrete ways. As the German political scientist Stefan Wolff explains, “the decision about who was to be expelled from Poland was…based on a Polish

⁹¹ Curp, A Clean Sweep, 195.
⁹³ Barton, The Problem of 12 Million German Refugees, 14.
⁹⁴ And that “forced transfer” was approved by the League of Nations.
equivalent to the so-called *Volksliste* of the Nazis, which had determined the degree of
Germanness of ethnic Germans in Central and Eastern Europe.”

The Quakers’ clearest and most passionate link between Potsdam, the expulsions, and
nationalism, comes in the form of a “minute” that the AFSC was to present to the United
Nations. This document is especially illuminating because it was written literally by committee,
with considerable debate, input, and rewriting from high-level AFSC officers; it was in essence
an official AFSC statement. At an August 1946 meeting of the AFSC’s Foreign Service
Executive Committee, the former “director of Quaker Work in Germany,” Jack Hollister,
“reported briefly…the situation of the ‘expellees,’ the hardships wrought by the Potsdam
Agreement, and the need for international reconciliation.” The German Sub-Committee
recommended and the Executive Committee approved “that a minute be prepared…for
presentation to the United Nations expressing our deep concern over the human suffering caused
by the Potsdam Agreement.” The resulting document does not seem to survive in its original
form, and it was never presented to the U.N. At the September 9 meeting, the Executive
Committee expressed its displeasure with the minute. The committee “thought that it was too
specific in its stress on the sufferings of German minority groups alone, and requested that it be
rewritten to embody the broader concern for all people adversely affected by the Potsdam
Agreement.” Judging from the shoehorned mentions of other national groups, the “Minute on
Minority Populations”—referred to in meetings as the “Minute on Potsdam”—that survives
seems to be a revised version.

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96 John S. Hollister, “Facts about Germany,” June 1948, Germany 1948 Reports on Conditions (Miscellaneous),
AFSC Archives; Minutes of the Foreign Service Executive Committee, August 19, 1946, 1946 Germany
Subcommittee, AFSC Archives.
97 Minutes of the Foreign Service Executive Committee, September 9, 1946, 1946 Germany Subcommittee, AFSC
Archives.
The statement begins with a religious plea. “The Society of Friends wishes to express strong religious objection to the expulsion of minority populations from their homelands,” it states—thus claiming to speak not just for the AFSC but for all Quakers. As it continues, it gives the impression that the AFSC’s problem was less with the expulsions themselves than with America’s authorization of it. “The Potsdam Agreement to which United States subscribed started the expulsion of over six million persons of German extraction from Europe into Germany.” In fact, the expulsions began well before the Allies sanctioned them (and the westward movement of ethnic Germans even earlier). Then, despite the minute being addressed to the United Nations, it appears to treat the people of the United States as its audience:

The American public should be informed that two basic evils are supported in their name:

1. The transfer of minority groups is an acceptance of the very theory of blood and race unification against which a costly war has just been fought.
2. A dangerous precedent is involved in sanctioning expulsion, for the boundary changes now being written into peace treaties could result in similar minority expulsions of millions of…others.

Finally, however, the minute returns to its initial audience, the U.N. “Peace is not secured by intensifying pride in nationalism and by stressing incompatibility of diverse cultures. Therefore, we urge that the section of the Potsdam Agreement which authorizes the expulsion of minority populations be renounced by the United Nations.” The AFSC thus rebukes in the strongest terms the forced “transfers” and the nationalism the “transfers” validate and encourage. But, like Noel, the Committee makes a concerted effort not to single out any specific nation’s “nationalism,” but rather the system of nationalism more broadly.

The minute is, overall, a prescient reading of Potsdam’s significance. The following years would indeed see many other massive expulsions, and not only in Europe. The 1947 partition of India and Pakistan resulted in a forced migration of 12 million people. The formation of the State of Israel the following year reshaped the demographics of the Middle East, with the flight and
expulsion of millions of Arabs from Israel and Jews from Arab states. The ethnic nation-state continued to be the ultimate pursuit. That the statement was designed for a United Nations audience is no accident. As I will show in the next chapter, the UN was but one of many channels through which alternatives to the dangerous nationalism the AFSC railed against could be articulated. At the same time, however, the minute may have been intended for the UN, but it is directed even more at the “American public.” As much as the AFSC sought to use the UN as a resource, it remained difficult for the Committee to uncover modes of address—and ways of thinking—that looked beyond the nation-state.
On May 31, 1949, the AFSC’s European commissioner Lou Schneider addressed the organization’s Foreign Service Executive Committee. Schneider, who was in his mid-thirties and had become a Quaker four years prior, reported that the ethnic German refugees and expellees presented “the greatest problem of need in Europe today.” That American relief workers like Schneider saw the expellees as the “greatest problem” in 1949 Europe disturbs the conventional narrative that ethnic Germans were fully integrated into Germany by the end of the decade. Yet it is not the most remarkable part of Schneider’s report.

Immediately before bringing the expellees to the attention of the Committee, he made a much more unusual announcement. According to the meeting minute, AFSC workers in Paris had asked Schneider to pass along the idea of dropping “American” from the Committee’s name, since “‘American’ emphasizes difference between nations rather than unity, which is contrary to the fundamental direction of thinking among Friends.” AFSC workers abroad had been skirting the issue by calling themselves the “Quaker Service.” The AFSC, of course, never did change its name, but the fact that such a change was up for consideration shows the extent to which American Quaker relief workers were seeking to look beyond nationality as they interacted with governments, relief agencies, and refugees on a global stage. Still, imagining alternatives for the future proved much more difficult than critiquing the past and present.

The AFSC experienced the postwar moment as “international” in three major, overlapping ways. First, there was the role the AFSC played, discussed in previous sections, in America’s projection of power onto Europe and the world; second, there was the Committee’s

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interaction with various governments, nongovernmental organizations, and bodies like the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which pooled resources from many countries (but was primarily financed by the U.S.); and, finally, there was the newly formed supranational organization, the United Nations. The American Quaker relief workers were constantly suggesting ways, some very general, some quite specific, to better aid refugees and expellees. In their calls for improvement, they invoked what they saw as the responsibilities of private relief agencies, national government bodies, and international organizations. We can read their recommendations as more than just practical ideas for improving aid, for the Quakers were also invoking their understanding of how people, states, and international organizations should interact on a global scale.

In the five years after World War II, the AFSC diverted its calls for responsibility over the expellees away from the Allies and, increasingly, to the UN. To be sure, even as early as 1946, as I showed in the previous chapter, the AFSC sought to bring the problem of the expulsions to the attention of the UN. At the time, the move was new for the Committee. As Willis Weatherford noted then, “Such participation in questions of government, diplomatic, or economic policy has not been the role of the AFSC, but encouragement has come from outside that a statement of our position would bear considerable weight and possible fruit.”99 We cannot know from whom that “outside encouragement came,” but a precedent for turning to the UN was set: AFSC executives would call for increased UN involvement with German refugees and expellees again and again.

However, the Quakers were often skeptical of international bodies’ ability to deal with refugees, and for good reason: the official policy of UNRRA and the International Refugee Organization, which inherited the former’s duties in 1946, was to ignore German refugees. The

99 Minutes of the Germany Sub-Committee, August 14, 1946, 1946 Germany Subcommitee, AFSC Archives.
Quakers’ tension between hopes for and pessimism about international bodies’ potential comes through most clearly in a report from a 1949 conference of AFSC workers in Germany. The report notes gloomily, “With Russia being a member of UN it is unlikely that refugees will be taken care of by the UN. There will be no international organization looking after their care and maintenance.” Yet the conference continues by “recommending that UN [sic] should be pressed for international recognition and responsibility for the German refugees and the DPs [displaced persons] as parts of the same problem.” That the AFSC could make such a recommendation just a moment after declaring the uselessness of the UN for this problem gives a sense of the American Quaker relief workers’ fraught view of international organizations at a moment when those organizations had a growing role in world affairs.

Many AFSC relief workers had close personal ties to such organizations. It was common to work with UNRRA during and in the immediate aftermath of the war, when the AFSC did not have a presence in Germany, and then to switch over to the AFSC. The AFSC’s Refugee Advisor Marnie Bruce had taken this track; so had Betty Barton. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration itself had changed during Barton’s tenure. When she “crossed the Rhine on Easter Day 1945,” UNRRA was an instrument of the Allies: “United Nations” referred to the Allied nations. “We were in uniform and associated with the conquerors,” Barton recalled in 1948. Within the year, however, UNRRA was folded into a “United Nations” that claimed to be a global authority. In the enormity of its vision, the UN was quite a different beast than UNRRA: it was a supranational, not just international organization. But there were important continuities between UNRRA and the UN.

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100 Minutes of the DP Unit Conference, August 26-7, 1949, Country – Germany 1949 Displaced Persons Programs Conferences – D.P. Unite, AFSC Archives.
102 Barton, Chronicles, 3.
For one thing, the member states of both organizations were largely the same: the 44 signatories of UNRRA make up a list nearly identical to that of the original 51 members of the UN. More crucially, UNRRA was seen at the time by participants and observers as something truly groundbreaking: relief workers called it “a magnificent unprecedented feat” and “a great experiment…the first international body to do something concrete and constructive, an attempt at an international civil service.” As Jessica Reinisch writes in her history of UNRRA, “Supporters and critics alike concurred that UNRRA was a novel experiment in international collaboration,” but it was also an organization clearly created in America’s image, and funded above all by the United States.

The United Nations, too, was “mainly an American idea,” as Stanley Meisner writes in his history of the UN. In both organizations, the great powers would be in command, and the United States would provide much of the financial backing. The idea of the United Nations was accepted enthusiastically in the United States; the Senate confirmed U.S. entry into the UN by a vote of 89-2. This enthusiasm for the UN was, in large part, a response to the United States’ absence from the League of Nations and the failure of the latter: with the U.S. now involved heavily, there would finally be an organization that could handle the world’s problems. But the perceived success of UNRRA also played a role in showing Americans that international

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103 Iceland was a member of UNRRA but not, originally, of the UN; Argentina, Brazil, Denmark, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey were not members of UNRRA but were original members of the UN; Ukraine and Belarus signed independently as part of a compromise that gave the U.S.S.R. three UN votes.
105 Reinisch, “Internationalism in Relief,” 259.
106 Cohen, In War’s Wake, 9.
107 Stanley Meisler, United Nations: A History (New York: Grove Press, 2011), 19. Meanwhile, the world—or, at least, 50 countries—came to San Francisco: “1,726 delegates and their assistants, a secretariat of 1,058 international civil servants, 2,636 newspaper and radio reporters and a support staff of almost 4,500, including telephone and telegraph operators and volunteers from the Boy Scouts and Red Cross,” 16.
organizations could be an effective force for good.\textsuperscript{108} For AFSC workers involved with expellees, however—even though many had been employed by UNRRA—the Administration’s refusal to aid Germans, based on nationality alone, called into question international organizations’ claims to neutrality and potential for overcoming the limitations of the nation-state.\textsuperscript{109}

Still, from the United Nations’ inception on, the AFSC made a concerted effort to form a close working relationship with the supranational body. The Committee quickly set up a “Quaker House” in an apartment down the street from the UN’s New York headquarters. Clarence Pickett, the longtime executive secretary of the AFSC, describes Quaker House as a space where “a family might live and represent the Committee in its concern to cultivate every opportunity to further international understanding.”\textsuperscript{110} Starting in 1948, Elmore Jackson, who had been Pickett’s second-in-command at the AFSC, became the director of the Committee’s Quaker Program at the United Nations and the occupant, with his wife and two daughters, of Quaker House.\textsuperscript{111} He would run the UN program until 1961. Jackson inserted himself constantly in UN affairs.\textsuperscript{112} If the General Assembly of the UN was “the town meeting of the world,” as Jackson once described it, the Quaker House was the AFSC’s global neighborhood center.\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{108} Gemie et al., \textit{Outcast Europe}, 140-1.
\textsuperscript{109} UNRRA was in fact plagued from its inception by criticisms of its “Anglo-Saxon” character.
\textsuperscript{110} Clarence E. Pickett, \textit{For More than Bread} (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), 406.
\textsuperscript{111} The prior person in that position was Philip Jessup, who left it to become “Ambassador-at-Large for President Truman in 1949 and later served as a judge at the International Court of Justice in the Hague.” Sydney D. Bailey, \textit{Peace is a Process} (London: Quaker Home Service & Woodbrooke College, 1993), 103.
\textsuperscript{112} The only exception was during a brief period in the early 1950s when he assisted the UN’s mediator between India and Pakistan (another new country forged by massive, forced movements of people).
\textsuperscript{113} From 1951-3, he also lectured in International Relations at Haverford College. CV of Elmore Jackson, Biographical Information, Curriculum Vitae, Elmore Jackson Papers (RG 5/202), Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA.
There were also Quakers, and alumni of the AFSC, in the UN itself.\footnote{"Quite a large number of Friends and Attenders and former workers with AFSC or Friends Relief Service or the Friends [sic] Ambulance Unit are now in the Secretariat here or in one of the specialized agencies of the U.N.," “Quaker Interest in the United Nations,” November 24, 1952, Professional Files, Quaker United Nations Program (QUNP), 1949-1986, Jackson papers.} The highest-ranking of these was James Read, who, fresh off his stint in the State Department, became the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees. The AFSC sought to capitalize on their connections with Read and Jackson: At a 1948 “Special Conference on AFSC Concern about Expellees and Refugees in Germany” in Philadelphia, AFSC members discussed the possibility of the UN taking responsibility for the expellee situation:

In all our thinking and negotiation on this problem, it is necessary to keep in mind that ideally the solutions should be worked through an international commission set up by the UN or another international group. This may not be possible and other approaches should be made. All the information we have should be called to the attention of the proper UN officials. (Elmore Jackson, Jim Read to do this?)\footnote{“Summary of Discussion, Special Conference on AFSC Concern about Refugees and Expellees,” n.d., Country Germany 1948 Refugees, AFSC Archives. James Read was not yet at his UN post, but he appears already to have had sway with the organization.}

The AFSC continued to be skeptical of what the UN could and would do for German refugees and expellees. Having a cadre with the United Nations did raise the American Quaker relief workers’ hopes for UN action. But Manhattan offices did not afford them the same intimate sense of bettering the world that neighborhood centers and expellee camps did.

As the conference minute suggests, AFSC workers continued to pursue “other approaches”—approaches that put Quaker relief agents in direct contact with people from around the world at sites across the globe. As I have shown in the previous chapters, the AFSC’s work in Germany was often done in conjunction with the work of other nongovernmental organizations: British Quaker groups (FRS, FAU), German Quaker groups, and various branches of the Red Cross. The AFSC’s first trip into Germany, by Gilbert White and James Read, was, after all, taken with representatives from five other organizations, American and international. On top of
these interactions, of course, was the contact relief workers had with refugees themselves. For many in the Committee, world peace would only come when everyone had the same opportunity for personal engagement that they did.\textsuperscript{116}

Many American Quakers worked tirelessly for a global political structure that would bring greater peace to the world. On the whole, however, the AFSC never approached the possibilities for international governance with the fervor and moral clarity that it brought to its critiques of Potsdam. The American Quaker relief workers again and again came to the conclusion that a nationalism that justified the forced movement of 13 million people was a force that must be fought vigorously in the postwar world. For many Quakers, international structures like UNRRA and the UN seemed to be opportunities to reign in the worst excesses of the nation-state. But they did not, on their own, allow for the kinds of transnational engagement that AFSC workers experienced when, traveling eastward, they converged with expellees, traveling westward, in postwar Germany.

\textsuperscript{116} Toward that end, the AFSC organized volunteer work camps, where young people from around the world would toil together through the summer, and student centers, intended for “the reconciliation of misunderstandings and tensions between DP and German students.” Minutes of the Germany Sub-Committee, November 23, 1949, AFSC Minutes 1949 Germany Subcommittee, AFSC Archives. The logic here is similar to that behind U.S. government-supported student exchanges.
CONCLUSION

Today, the Cecilienhof Palace in Potsdam is a museum. Visitors make their way through the garden, into the great, velvet-covered hall where the meetings took place, and finally into a small exit room where quotations line the walls. One comes from James Byrnes, Harry Truman’s secretary of state, a major architect of the Potsdam Agreement: “The agreements did make the conference a success but the violation of those agreements has turned success into failure.”

For American Quaker relief workers, however, the problem was not that implementation of the Potsdam Agreement went off track; the problem was Potsdam itself. By 1947, American officials, too, had come to recognize that massive “population transfer” could never be “orderly and humane.” The change came, in part, from the desperate conditions of the expellees themselves. More broadly, however, it was made possible by the emerging Cold War bipolarity of the world. Americans were able to reimagine the expulsions as strictly a communist enterprise. An April 7, 1949, New York Times article carried the subheading, “Millions Expelled by Satellite States Unable to Find Work,” even though the expelling states were not all satellites when the expulsions actually happened. The article does not mention the Potsdam Agreement or the American role in sanctioning the expulsions.

Another shift in global thinking led government officials to think differently about “population transfer”: the emergence of minority rights, refugee rights, and human rights. It was, in fact, the United Nations—a supranational organization made up of constituent nation-states—that allowed for this rethinking toward subnational and transnational communities as legitimate political units. “Population transfer” does make sense in the cold logic of nation-state

119 Frank, Expelling the Germans, 277; Cohen, In War’s Wake, 11.
stability. It becomes very different, however, when the people being “transferred” are seen as political entities of their own. In today’s parlance, it is “ethnic cleansing.”

Potsdam lingered on the AFSC psyche—at least, for as long as the nature of relief work allowed. By the time AFSC workers established themselves in Germany in 1946 and 1947, they were already needed at the next crisis. For all the difficulties expellees faced, and all the predictions American Quakers made of their destabilizing effect, the new West German government actually did do a remarkable job of integrating expellees into the polity and society. Oldenburg still had its issues, but new, more immediate crises emerged in Israel and India and China and Korea. The postwar moment faded and there were new problems to solve. It is only in the Quaker archives that the mentality forged in Germany, and forged by Potsdam, remains.

Betty Barton drove across occupied Germany in a Volkswagen called Patricia. Dan Wilson marveled at the Cologne Cathedral, with its glorious façade and bombed-out interior. And, again and again, Francis Dart heard expellees—who did not or would not allow themselves to know the answer—ask him when they would be allowed to return to their homeland. All of these moments left the American Quakers who experienced them with the impression that the world was failing to move beyond the ideologies that had wrought so much destruction—failing to move beyond Potsdam.
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