CRAFTING COMMUNITY:
THE RESETTLEMENT OF EXPELLEE VIOLIN MAKERS IN POSTWAR BAVARIA

by

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Abstract

At the end of the Second World War, in August 1945, the Allies met at Potsdam and passed the decision to expel millions of people of German heritage living in Eastern Europe. Among some 3 million expelled from the Sudetenland in the Czechoslovak borderlands, were the violin makers of Schönbach. After the expulsion, German integration authorities attempted to resettle the Schönbach violin makers in Mittenwald, Bavaria. Though the village of Mittenwald was famous for its violin making industry, the integration of the two communities failed and the Schönbach masters were relocated a second time. The failure was due in large part to the two communities' inability to integrate their distinct violin making cultures. The study addresses the resettlement process from the perspective of government officials, local Germans and expellees and the debates among these groups in the postwar era. It is through these interacting perspectives that one comes to understand the culture of each community, the agency of its members, and the complexity of the resettlement process on a local level. Using Mittenwald as a case study, I argue that the process of integrating two German cultures was problematic, as each community sought to maintain their own local, cultural identity rather than subscribe to a shared German national identity. The failure of the Mittenwald plan demonstrates the pertinence of the local culture of each community and the limitations of a national imaginary in general processes of forced migration and resettlement.
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To Melissa, the musical muse
At the close of the Second World War, twelve million people of German heritage crowded into railway cars and lined roads in long treks between Eastern Europe and Germany. They were victims of an official mass expulsion sanctioned by leaders of the Allied governments at the 1945 Potsdam Conference. They were the casualties of what the Allies argued would be a "humane and orderly" population transfer, an attempt to regulate the already massive flight of Germans in the face of the Red Army onslaught. With little warning, millions lost their homes, possessions and often due to the brutality of the expulsion itself, loved ones. Of the 12 million expelled, three million came from the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia, the majority of who were resettled in Bavaria. Although of German heritage, these Vetriebenen or expellees did not view their pending resettlement in Germany as a homecoming. For the majority, the immediate postwar years were characterized by poor housing conditions, a loss of social status, unemployment, and a constant backlash of local resentment.

The task of writing postwar West German history is a complex balancing act between narratives of devastation and guilt and those of reconstruction and triumph over adversity. Often, historians view the 1940s and 1950s as a time of transition away from totalitarian rule and total defeat toward a new democratic, economically prosperous beginning, focusing on denazification, demilitarization and Cold War politics on a

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3 David Rock; Stefan Wolff, eds. *Coming Home to Germany? The Integration of Ethnic Germans from Central and Eastern Europe in the Federal Republic* (Berghahn Books, 2002); Ahonen, *After the Expulsion*. 
A common inclination among historians is to privilege the *Wirtschaftswunder* or “economic miracle,” arguing that West German economic prosperity in the 1950s and 1960s proved Germany’s unique ability to overcome economic defeat and avert political and humanitarian disaster. According to many scholars, the “economic miracle” was also the basis for the nation’s triumph over the demons of right and left-wing radicalism, the strengthening of a diplomatic bond with the United States, and the “successful” integration of expellees. By privileging the economic and political triumphs of the postwar period, scholars have produced narratives that relegate expellees to mere objects of Cold War politics and national reconstruction.

Some historians have begun to revisit the immediate postwar period, however, stepping away from the practice of political and economic history and using the everyday experiences of German men and women, to deconstruct postwar narratives. Of particular note is Rainer Schulze, a scholar who has extensively critiqued the Federal Republic’s supposed “swift and successful” expellee integration, finding that relations

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between locals and newcomers were often problematic and that the cultures of expellee communities were never fully integrated into that of greater West Germany. Focusing only on the political and economic impact of expellees on receiving areas and claiming that a complete integration occurred in the postwar era, historians have created a disconnect between expellee experiences and the “collectively acknowledged past of the German nation.”

The expellee voice did not support the postwar national narrative of successful integration and reconstruction. Rather, expellee testimonies were widely used in the immediate postwar context in which scholars were enlisted by the state to address the expellee “problem.” Through the recounting of their memories, the expellees became central to the postwar tug-of-war between constructions of German guilt and victimhood. Testimonies often focused solely on the experience of the expulsion, excluding Nazi occupation and instances of collaboration, to relay a narrative of victimhood so devastating that West German citizens, the state and political expellee lobbyists employed it to assuage Allied accusations of “collective German guilt.”

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8 Rainer Schulze, ed. Zwischen Heimat und Zuhause: Deutsche Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in (West-) Deutschland 1945-2000 (Osnabrück: Secolo, 2001), Rainer Schulze, “The Newcomers from the East and the Creation of a Western German Identity,” in Philipp Ther; Ana Siljak, eds. Expulsion. Settlement, Integration, Transformation: The Consequences of Forced Migration for the Postwar History of Central and Eastern Europe (Boulder, CO, 2000), Rainer Schulze, “The Struggle of Past and Present in Individual Identities: The Case of German Refugees and Expellees from the East” In Rock; Wolff, Coming Home to Germany?

9 Schulze, “The Struggle of Past and Present in Individual Identities: The Case of German Refugees and Expellees from the East” In Rock; Wolff, Coming Home to Germany?, 41-51.

10 Theodor Schieder, Elisabeth Pfeil, Bernhard Pfister, Helmut Schelsky and Eugen Lemberg are a few of the scholars who wrote histories of the expellees in the early postwar era using oral testimony. Robert G. Moeller, War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 83. He discusses these early historians in greater detail. “ ‘Contemporary history’ as it was embodied in the documentation included no consideration of how expellees’ stories might be affected by templates of remembrance shaped by the anti-Bolshevik, racist, and anti-Semitic categories of Goebbels’s propaganda and Himmler’s fantasies, or by shared narratives crafted on the trek, in work camps, or at the meetings of regional interest groups in the Federal Republic.”

the expellees had served the nation in the immediate postwar years. With the onset of economic prosperity and political stability, however, narratives of expellee/local resentment and problems with integration did not serve to benefit a renewed sense of German national identity.

As a departure from and an interrogation of the economic prosperity model of German national identity, the following study addresses the period of resettlement from 1945 to 1949 on a local level, focusing on the experiences of a group of violin making expellees from the village of Schönbach in the Sudetenland. The first attempt to integrate the Schönbach masters with local German violin makers in the town of Mittenwald, Bavaria, failed due to tensions between the two cultures. The case affirms that the integration of expellees was not “swift and successful,” not just another accolade in the era of German reconstruction triumphs. Rather it was problematic, fraught with setbacks and dependent on local context. The Mittenwald resettlement attempt challenges the construct of a shared German national identity, by demonstrating how two communities with a shared heritage and craft industry failed to integrate due to local cultural distinctions.

The aim of my work is not to look for greater authenticity in the local, but rather to use it as a different perspective from which to view the nation. David Blackbourn and James Retallack in a recent work titled Localism, Landscape, and the Ambiguities of Place, note that while there is a need for more localism in history and a place for

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12 Harold James argues that while other historians note the non-existence of national identity in the postwar period, such was not the case. Rather, it was an unfamiliar nationalism, a “framework for an economic process that would in turn create political and cultural consciousness.” Harold James, A German Identity, 3-4. “In the 1950s and 1960s a majority of politicians in both East and West Germany believed the political legacy of the war to be so appalling that the only way of reconstructing national life lay in the successes of a buoyant and dynamic economy. The triumphs of a Wirtschaftswunder would allow Germans to forget the pain of the past.”
Alltagsgeschichte (history of everyday life), one must not be fooled into thinking that such a perspective “reveals something more ‘authentic’ or ‘real’...[as] localities and regions are mental constructs no less than nations are.”¹³ The best example of this in the German case is the Heimat (commonly translated as homeland or hometown). The term has come to signify not only one’s own specific hometown but the symbolic hometown of all Germans, and ultimately of the “authentic” German nation.¹⁴ Both Celia Applegate and Alon Confino argue that the Heimat, although initially a coping mechanism for Germans dealing with the transition to a unified nation-state, later came to represent the locality and the nation interchangeably.¹⁵

If both the local and the national are mental constructs or “imagined communities,”¹⁶ my question is which aspects of life contributed to that imaginary and which simply did not factor in? Why for many Germans did the local imaginary often supersede that of the national? To address these questions, I ascribe to Walker Connor’s argument that “to a majority of the world’s population, the meaningful world still ends with the village.”¹⁷ In other words, all nations are self-defining groups who only emphasize the concrete, tangible commonalities that will serve to solidify an existing

¹⁴ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 4. “Rescued from archaic German in the late eighteenth century, the word gathered political and emotional resonance in scattered legal reforms and popular literary invention.”
¹⁵ Alon Confino, *The Nation as Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 98, 188. “Through a process of stereotyping German regions...the Heimat idea became synonymous with the German nation.”
¹⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, New York: Verso, 1983), 6-7. “In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion...it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”
sense of “self-identity and uniqueness” distinct from outside “nonmembers.” Before the expulsion, the community of Schönbach masters wished to distinguish themselves from their Czech neighbours, emphasizing tangible, cultural factors such as their German language. After the expulsion and during the resettlement in Germany, when the community wished to retain a sense of “self-identity and uniqueness” separate from that of other Germans, they rallied around tangible cultural traditions and maintained their distinct Sudeten dialect. Both Schönbach and Mittenwald chose to retain the cultural aspects of their communities that would contribute to their existing self-identification, distinct from that of their neighbours.

In studying the cultural aspects that contributed to the local imaginary of both communities, my aim is not to deny the existence of a shared sense of German national identity among expellees and local Germans, but rather to argue that the pull of local culture was far greater, taking precedence over a shared national identity. To undertake a local history of this sort is to rely heavily on the “tool kit” of cultural history. William H. Sewell Jr. clarifies the shifting nature of the term culture and its use in historical study. For him, culture as a system of symbols and meanings in a given society (anthropological definition) cannot be divorced from culture as practice (sociological definition), as “each presupposes the other.” The study of cultural history, therefore, is

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18 Ibid., 104, 145.
21 William H. Sewell Jr., “The Concept(s) of Culture” in Beyond the Cultural Turn, 43-47.
“Culture as a system of symbols and meanings. This has been the dominant concept of culture in American
not just the study of the meaning of objects and modes of expression in a society or the way in which that functions, i.e. their way of life. Rather, it is the combination of both in a fluid, shifting power-struggle for “cultural coherence.” Drawing on Sewell, I interpret the struggle for cultural coherence occurring within and between local and expellee communities, locating culture in art objects (violins), modes of production and traditional ways of life. In the end, each community mobilized those “symbols of meaning” in a culture of practice to reach the end goal of regaining identity and community cohesion.

The Schönbach expellees provide a unique perspective from which to view both the historical phenomenon of forced migration and the process of expellee resettlement in postwar Germany. As a group of forced migrants distinguished by their specialized skill, they were a valuable asset to the future of economic reconstruction in West Germany. As well, they established cooperatives, organizations and reunions soon after their arrival in Germany. The case of the Schönbach expellees contradicts notions of forced migrants as universalized victims in perpetual states of crisis. Rather, the violin makers were agents in their own resettlement. Engaging with scholarship in the field of refugee studies, namely that of Liisa Malkki and Tasoulla Hadjiyanni, I study the resettlement process from the perspective of both government officials and forced migrants and the ways in which they interacted on a human, rather than geo-political level.

I begin with a study of the distinct pre-expulsion histories of the Schönbach and Mittenwald communities, followed by separate studies of the resettlement. First, I address the process of anthropological research since the 1960s. It was made famous above all by Clifford Geertz, who used the term ‘cultural system’ in the titles of some of his most notable essays.”

22 Ibid. 57.
23 Pertti Ahonen, After the Expulsion, 26-29.
from the perspective of government officials, followed by that of the local and expellee violin makers. The obstacles and decisions that each group faced on a daily basis underscore the distinct culture of each group and the complexity of the resettlement process on a local level. The study highlights the experiences and the agency of the historical actors who shaped the postwar era in Bavaria, emphasizing the resonance of local culture throughout the decision-making process. Understanding the implications of “local imaginaries” and culture for integration in the postwar Bavarian context, one can better assess cases of forced migration and resettlement in other contexts.
Violin Production and Village Life before the Expulsion

The villages of Schönbach and Mittenwald were part of a long Central European tradition of classical music and artisanal industries. Both had specialized in the craft of violin making for centuries, building international reputations for quality products while contributing to the respective cultures of their communities. Though located within the mountainous borderlands of two distinct nations, both villages were susceptible to the external forces of consumer market demand, modernization, market crisis and war.

Beginning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, an aristocratic class with a penchant for luxury hand-crafted goods emerged in Europe, creating a demand which prompted craftsmen to enter the instrument making trade. By the eighteenth century, entire villages of craftsmen were specializing in one craft.\textsuperscript{25} Traditionally, artisans were groomed as apprentices, working their way toward a sense of belonging signified by membership in the guild or the master ranks.\textsuperscript{26} Once they had achieved a measure of stability in the trade, the next step was to obtain a home and start a family, for family was the crux of the operation as well as the basis for the community as a whole.\textsuperscript{27} With his wife acting as his partner, caring for the home and raising the children as well as aiding in the crafting process itself (purchasing raw materials, engaging in preparatory and finishing work and commercial sales of the product), and the male children often acting as apprentices, the master's "domestic establishment of hearth and shop signaled to [his]

\textsuperscript{25} James R. Farr, \textit{Artisans in Europe 1300-1914} (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 62-64.
\textsuperscript{26} ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Steven M. Zdatny, \textit{The Politics of Survival: Artisans in Twentieth-Century France} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 124. "The premise, for exponents of artisanal apprenticeship, was that it should be a mixture of professional and moral training. Under the guidance of a master craftsman, a young man would learn to be a husband, a father, and a productive member of the community."
customers, neighbors, and fellow guildsmen that he was industrious, trustworthy, and morally sound." It was on the foundations of this stable, cooperative and industrious environment that family and community cultures were nurtured.

The cultures shaped by violin making families and their neighbours in Schönbach and Mittenwald revolved around classical music. Although present in the lives of most Central Europeans of the twentieth century, music was especially prominent in these two villages. It resonated in school curricula, in community choral groups, in churches, in local festivities and performances and most of all, in the home. Celia Applegate refers to music as a community-builder within German communities (gemeinschaftsbildende Kraft der Musik). Musical instrument making, though integral, formed just one aspect of an overall music culture in both villages.

Such discussions of traditional culture may evoke the image of an idyllic rural scene with the artisan existing as an eternal bulwark against the urban ills of modernity. In reality, though the effects may have been delayed in comparison to their urban counterparts, rural communities were also forced to confront changes wrought by modernization and war. When each village is treated in isolation, it is evident that not all German-speaking villages, although similar in many regards, fit a universal pattern.

28 Farr, Artisans in Europe 1300-1914, 222. Though women were traditionally excluded from membership in the trade, many worked in textiles or on the commercial end of the family craft. The exclusion of women was predicated on the apprenticeship cycle in which a man was originally required to travel alone for several years, a scenario that was dangerous and therefore detrimental for women who were expected to fulfill the role of child-bearers. Geoffrey Crossick, ed., The Artisan and the European Town 1500-1900 (Scolar Press, Ashgate: London, 1997), 13-15.

29 Celia Applegate notes that music was "a constant theme" in German homes, a "perfect mirror of German life." Celia Applegate, "Music in Place: Perspectives on Art Culture in Nineteenth-Century Germany," in Blackbourn; Retallack, eds., Localism, Landscape, and the Ambiguities of Place: German-Speaking Central Europe, 1860-1930, 45-46. She also notes that "the density and distribution of such music-making across German-speaking Europe contributed to the vitality of local and regional cultures. In the course of the nineteenth-century, music-making became one of the most public expressions of local pride and solidarity." 49.

30 Applegate; Potter, eds., Music and German National Identity, 21.
Though both communities appreciated music and violins in much the same way, the history of each was informed by its respective context.

As part of the *Musikwinkel* (music cluster)—a region straddling the border between Saxony (Germany) and the northwestern portion of Bohemia—Schönbach had specialized in violin making since the 1580s. When German colonists arrived in the heavily forested regions of northern Bohemia in the twelfth century, they began the process of clearing trees and building villages. Like other German settlements in the region, they adopted an industry that complemented the landscape: violin making.

Founding a guild as early as the seventeenth century, Schönbach violin making families had garnered an international reputation by the 1800s. While Schönbach garnered an international reputation for plucked instruments, neighbouring Graslitz specialized in woodwinds and brass. Rounding out the music corner were the Saxon (within contemporary German borders) villages of Klingenthal and Markneukirchen, specializing in harmonicas and plucked instruments respectively.

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33 William Sandys, *History of the Violin* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2006), 245. “Fracois Plack at Schoenback, in Bohemia, about 1738, made good violins.” Though a concentration of instrument-producing villages in the region drew the attention of international consumers, it also sparked competition between the villages. It was due to this competition in part, that craftsmen made the decision to develop local cooperatives. In 1904, local producers formed the Schönbach musical instrument maker’s *Genossenschaft* (cooperative), attaining independence from the Saxon industries and greater control over the purchase of raw materials, sales and pricing. Fuchs, *Die Standortverlagerung der Sudetendeutschen Klein-Musikinstrumenten-Industrie von Graslitz und Schönbach*. For more on the history of cooperatives in Central Europe see Torsten Lorenz, ed., *Cooperatives in Ethnic Conflicts: Eastern Europe in the 19th and early 20th Century*, (BWV- Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2006), 18. “It started as a grass roots movement in the 1840’s, when single cooperatives emerged out of local initiatives. Cooperatives later began to form associations which organized the purchase and distribution of goods, facilitated financial equalization and aggregated market power,” 25. Although Lorenz argues that cooperatives were political and nationalist in nature, the Schönbach masters seemed to be more concerned with developing the local industry and staying competitive in a regional (Saxony and the north-western Sudetenland) market.
Schönbach masters invested in the future of the craft itself by establishing a music school for young, aspiring instrument makers in 1873. In the beginning the school focused on teaching the traditional techniques of hand-crafting each violin from start to finish. With the advent of new processes in the early twentieth century, however, the curriculum shifted to incorporate skills more appropriate to the era of mass production.  

The late nineteenth century expansion of railroad systems was perhaps the first catalyst for the expansion of the Schönbach industry and its move toward mass production, as it expanded the market and accelerated the pace of product distribution. To meet the demand of the expanding market for violins, the violin masters increasingly employed apprentices to do piece work. An assembly-line style system was used, in which each apprentice was responsible for crafting one component of the violin, following a precise pre-made pattern. In addition to this system of piece work, the violin makers began incorporating machines into their workshops. Although modernizing changes were beginning to affect the village in the late nineteenth century, it was not until the 1920s that the era of mass production truly arrived in Schönbach.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, the violin makers had established an international market for their product, boasting exports to North and South America, Russia and all over the European continent. The efficiency of the production methods used, allowed the Schönbach makers to lower their prices and cater to wholesale markets such as schools and orchestras. Although the production of musical instruments ceased

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35 Fuchs, Die Standortverlagerung der Sudetendeutschen Klein-Musikinstrumenten-Industrie von Graslitz und Schönbach
during the First World War, in the years following its end, production resumed and flourished in Schönbach. The number of family-run, home-based workshops diminished, replaced by corporations of violin makers. The violin industry in the village could be described in the 1920s as a mix of traditional workshops, small factories employing around 40 workers and manufacturing firms. With the ability to adapt to modernization and market demand, and the local abundance of woodlands, the violin industry was able to sustain the village of Schönbach as its primary industry throughout the early twentieth-century.

The international reputation, the wholesale market demand and the establishment of apprenticeship schools all worked to set the village apart. According to Bruno Nettl, the Sudetens were unique in that they had the benefits of both worlds, drawing on both their German roots in addition to their interactions with Czechs, Bohemian Jews and Rom (Gypsies). They could relish in the syncretic aspects of their culture to separate themselves from their German neighbours and alternately embrace their common heritage at moments of political expediency.

With the rise of the expansionist National Socialists in Germany, a new pressure fell on the shoulders of the Sudetens to promote their German cultural heritage. Nettl points to Konrad Henlein and Gustav Becking as co-conspirators in the promotion of German folk songs in the 1930s. It took the form of songbook publications like Die


Volkslieder der Sudetendeutschen, a trend which Nettl believes marked “the decline of German culture and its music in Bohemia...abandoned its distinctiveness...for emphasis on its relationship to the German fatherland.”

Although in this way music culture became a pawn for many Sudeten German National Socialists during the war, it was just as easily appropriated as a source of positive reinforcement for creating a cohesive sense of Sudeten identity in the postwar period. It was the traumatic experience of expulsion and the difficulties of adaptation in a new land that pushed the expellees away from identification with German nationalism and refocused their attention on the cultural qualities that set them apart from native Germans.

The village of Mittenwald, in which many Schönbachers were later resettled, was situated along a main trade route between Augsburg and Venice, nestled in the scenic foothills of the Alps, attracting merchants and artisans as early as the fifteenth century. However it was not until Mathias Klotz, trained as a violin master in Füssen, returned to Mittenwald around 1685, married and set up shop, that the industry flourished. Taking advantage of the village’s proximity to forests of maple and spruce, its location on a major trade route and a lack of competition, Mathias Klotz and later his three sons Georg, Sebastian and Johann Carol, established a world-renowned center for violins in

38 Ibid., 279. A fissure had already begun to appear in the early twentieth century before the birth of Czechoslovakia or the rise of Hitler, however, when the more syncretic culture of Prague Germans became separate from that of the Sudeten Germans in the outer-lying regions. “Prague’s German culture was syncretic; it maintained itself as a major sector of cultural life by joining Jewish and Czech scholars, artists, and intellectuals, nurturing a cosmopolitan character, and taking an interest in Czech folk music. The Sudetenland had an almost entirely German-oriented art music culture and a body of vernacular and folk music that began to be nurtured separately,” 278.

39 History of Mittenwald Violin Making [accessed November 29, 2007]. According to this source, merchants were required by law to stop in Mittenwald, where the Bozener Markt was also held. Under these positive circumstances, by the end of the 17th century new trades were established in Mittenwald, such as Bortenwirkerei (the weaving of decorative ribbons and borders), Filetseidenstickerei (fancy silk embroidery) and violin making.
Mittenwald. A period of prosperity followed as the industry experienced continued
growth well into the nineteenth century.

However, much like other artisan communities, Mittenwald was not immune to
the late nineteenth century drive for mass production. With rising demand from American
and domestic markets, the retail companies of Baader and Neuner & Hornsteiner were
established in 1850, existing until the crisis of the First World War. Under the total
control of the two retailers, Mittenwalders resorted to piecework in which every step of
the process was specialized to the point where very few apprentices were able to craft a
violin from start to finish. Unlike their Schönbach counterparts, however, the
Mittenwald masters viewed the shift to mass production as a threat to the craft and to the
culture of the village. Recognizing the decline in numbers of apprentices educated in the
traditional art, King Max II of Bavaria set in motion the establishment of the Staatliche
Berufsfach und Fachschule für Geigenbau und Zupfinstrumentenmacher (State School
for Violin Making and Plucked Instruments) in 1858. The school counteracted the
process of over-specialization and mass production and soon earned an international
reputation for producing Kunstgeigenbau (violins that were considered high quality
works of art). This shift in focus toward a more traditional craft culture complemented
and contributed to a rise in tourism to the region.

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41 History of Mittenwald Violin Making http://www.matthias-klotz.de/siteseng/2-0/2-0geigenbaueng.html. The retail companies had control, in this period, over pricing and methods of production. They also owned the mills and thus supplied raw materials directly to the home workshops where piece work was carried out.

The rise in tourism was largely facilitated by the expansion of the railroad network which reached Mittenwald in 1912, sparking travel and communication between urban and rural areas. Although Mittenwald masters maintained a more traditional method of production, one could not go so far as to argue that they were antimodern. Although they rejected Taylorist methods and the incorporation of mechanical technologies in their workshops, they did benefit from the expansion of railroads and increased communication through new technology. The development of modern technologies thus contributed to the preservation and promotion of pre-modern traditions, through tourism bolstered by nostalgia for "authentic" representations of Germany.

These artisanal villages, though romanticized constructs of the tourist trade, were not immune to the realities of market crises and war.

While some artisans were resilient, many could not reconcile with the force of the Great Depression in the 1930s. It wreaked havoc on European and global markets as American demand for luxury items fell dramatically, bringing an end to many of the advances artisans had gained through increased production, marketing and commercialism. Confronted with economic hardship after World War One, few masters were able to continue working in the violin industry, as the majority resorted to agricultural work. Retailers Neuner & Hornsteiner and Baader closed shop in 1930 and

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44 Caitlin Murdock, "Constructing a Modern German Landscape: Tourism, Nature, and Industry in Saxony," in Blackbourn, Retallack, *Localism, Landscape and the Ambiguities of Place,* 197. "Thus, Saxon tourism promoters demonstrate that localism was neither a pre-modern survival nor a conservative reaction against the sweeping changes that faced European industrial societies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but rather a central and self-conscious element of modernity."

1934 respectively, adding to an already dire situation for violin makers in Mittenwald.\textsuperscript{46}

A report addressed to the Garmisch-Partenkirchen administrative district on November 23, 1933 declared the violin industry of Mittenwald “completely expired.”\textsuperscript{47} Those who did continue to make violins did so from home as a part-time, supplementary venture to agricultural work.

Understanding that the loss of the Mittenwald industry was a loss for German culture and national identity on both local and international levels, the National Socialist Reichsmusikkammer (national department of music) responded by forming Arbeitsgemeinschaften I & II (communal working groups) to continue crafting violins. The effort was in vain, however, as the onset of the Second World War derailed all hopes of maintaining a viable violin industry.\textsuperscript{48} In the initial stages of postwar reconstruction, local populations and expellees alike experienced a loss of market demand and unemployment, a situation that government officials sought to remedy.

\textsuperscript{46} History of Mittenwald Violin Making \url{http://www.matthias-klotz.de/siteseng/2-0/2-0geigenbaueng.html}
\textsuperscript{47} State School for Violin and Plucked Instrument Making, \url{http://www.itcwebdesigns.com/tour_germany/violin1.htm}
\textsuperscript{48} History of Mittenwald Violin Making \url{http://www.matthias-klotz.de/siteseng/2-0/2-0geigenbaueng.html}
The Resettlement Process: A Government Perspective

When the Allied bombings and the Russian onslaught had ceased in the spring of 1945, a mere shell of the German nation remained. Amidst the rubble and desolation, many Germans were living in the unsanitary confines of cellars and basements, searching each day for provisions. Many more had long since evacuated their urban homes for the country, isolated from the bombing campaigns. Converging steadily on this bleak landscape were the listless and homeless millions consisting of; refugees who had fled the eastern territories before and during Red Army advance, displaced persons liberated from concentration and forced labour camps, expellees.

The German expellees, a group of approximately 12 million, could be divided into two categories; Reichsdeutsche, former German citizens from the territory east of the Oder-Neisse line, and Volksdeutsche, who lived in eastern nations as minority groups. Although expellees came from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and many smaller nations of Eastern Europe, those from the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia comprised the largest group, the majority of whom were resettled in Bavaria. The choice to settle expellees in predominantly rural areas was clear, as many of the urban centres faced severe shortages and displacements of their own. Though the decision to settle these forced migrants in rural areas seems obvious, it was a decision made out of necessity

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rather than convenience. The process of actually dispersing and accommodating millions of expellees was no simple task, often requiring years of negotiation and planning.

Taking into account the massive scale of the expulsion and subsequent resettlement, the government officials played a crucial role on a local level which in turn, shaped the experience of the expellees and the future of West Germany. Although they had the power to influence the outcome of the resettlement, the object here is not to portray the government officials as the sole determinants of postwar German history. Rather, the following study presents them as subjective and often flawed administrators. Throughout the process they were; confronted with immense obstacles, forced to make quick decisions for the sake of expediency, and in the case of Mittenwald, stigmatized by failure. Even though the officials approached the initial plan to settle Mittenwald with a sense of optimism about their ability to integrate the two communities of violin makers, there were underlying cultural factors that they did not consider. Perhaps the outcome of these factors was something they could not have predicted. Whether one views the government officials in a positive or negative light, their story serves to highlight the real, day to day struggles that contributed to the complexity of the resettlement process.

Upon their arrival in West Germany, expellees were housed in camps (either established former concentration camps or makeshift holding areas such as gymnasiums or bunkers) or billeted by the local population. While for some this was a temporary solution, for many it became a way of life. Writing in the spring of 1950, Julius Issac estimated that 400,000 refugees were still living in “substandard camps” while those billeted in rural areas were contributing to overcrowding, which he argues fostered
resentment between newcomers and locals.\textsuperscript{51} Some villages were completely overwhelmed by the influx of expellees. The psychological shock and frustration that came with the swift change in demographics in many villages was countered and later exacerbated by the slow pace of reconstruction and resettlement. Local populations and expellees were often expected to co-exist in this manner for half a decade or longer. Because resettlement in the late 1940s was linked to issues of space (the reconstruction of urban centres, a lack of funds for- and Allied restrictions on industrial and residential development), the time lag was often unavoidable.\textsuperscript{52}

Housing shortages fed into the problem of unemployment, for without access to residential space in close proximity to industry, expellees had no means of obtaining or maintaining jobs suited to their skills. They faced the challenge of finding employment in an atmosphere of Allied restrictions on industry and widespread financial penury.\textsuperscript{53} That is not to say the situation was hopeless, as skilled workers such as violin makers had the option to apply for loans and bank credits. What many realized, however, was that the process of acquiring funds was fraught with obstacles, including competition with local producers. Despite laws that stipulated that refugees were to be treated like all other German citizens even in matters of employment, many experienced a clear divide.\textsuperscript{54} The process of resettlement was far more than a demographic problem of housing shortages.

\textsuperscript{51} Isaac, “Problems of Cultural Assimilation Arising from Population Transfers in Western Germany,” 28. He notes that in some Bavarian villages there were “cases of active resistance against attempts by the police to enforce billeting orders.” Harris; Wülker. “The Refugee Problem of Germany,” notes that housing was requisitioned for occupation forces as well, further exacerbating the shortage. He adds to Isaac’s statistics, noting that by 1950 in Bavaria “only 13 per cent of the expellees were living in decent and adequate quarters.” 18-19.


\textsuperscript{54} Isaac, “Problems of Cultural Assimilation Arising from Population Transfers in Western Germany,” 29.
and unemployment, however, for it was one that involved the lingering effects of wartime trauma, psychological defeat and frustrations due to the loss of one’s identity and utility. It was a delicate process that required empathetic and expedient negotiation between two cultural groups that were quickly learning to resent one another.

The responsibility for dealing with these issues fell on the shoulders of several authorities, from the U.S. Military Government to local German administrators. The structure of authority in the postwar era was shaped by the unique scenario of the war’s end in which postwar necessities and Allied caution ruled. The June 5th, 1945 Berlin Declaration cemented the governing command of the four occupation powers (USA, Soviet Union, Great Britain and France), together named the Allied Control Council.55 Once in a position of command, the occupying governments made many reactionary decisions, restricting both expellee organizations and local German political parties out of a fear of either right- or left-leaning radicalism.56 However, realizing the need for structured order and local input, they quickly reformed the system of Land governments. In the U.S. zone, minister presidents were appointed for each region; Bavaria, Württemberg-Baden and Hesse. It was the task of these appointees to handle “the inconvenience of conflict, negotiation, and consensus-building”57 in each region, while the U.S. government and their appointee General Lucius Clay maintained an overall sense of order (i.e. the smooth transition from destructive Nazi extremism to productive

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Although it is important to recognize those at the top of the chain of command, when writing a local history of expellee integration it is perhaps more important to understand the functions of the lower levels of government that dealt with people firsthand.

There were many levels working beneath the U.S. Government and the minister presidents that had a greater proximity to events on a local level. The Regierungsbezirk and the Kreis (either Landkreis or Stadtkreis) were German sub-divisions set up to administer local regions within the Land governments of Bavaria, Württemberg-Baden or Hesse.\(^5^9\) In addition, OMGUS (Office of Military Government, U.S.) chose German civilian directors to head up RGCOs (Regional Government Coordinating Offices) to report directly to General Clay on “controversial issues pending in Landerrat committees, e.g., work councils, expellees, etc.; the military governor would express his opinion and sometimes could be persuaded to revise OMGUS policy.”\(^6^0\) In this way, RGCO directors and advisors were equal to directors of Land military governments, as they acted as liaisons between Landerrat committees and the OMGUS.\(^6^1\) The operation of such a complex system of administration required a great deal of coordination on the part of advisors and staff. Much of the work on the ground was carried out by German functional officials, committees and subcommittees of social welfare and refugee management. It was the task of these administrators to coordinate the reception and distribution of expellees, to allocate labour, monitor health and welfare and distribute material goods.

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\(^{5^8}\) General Lucius D. Clay was chosen by President Roosevelt to serve as deputy military governor and command USGCC (United States Group Control Council). In October 1945, Clay transformed the USGCC into OMGUS (Office of Military Government, United States). Rogers, *Politics after Hitler: The Western Allies and the German Party System*, 5.

\(^{5^9}\) Ibid., 1-2.

\(^{6^0}\) Guradze, “The Landerrat: Landmark of German Reconstruction,” 197.

\(^{6^1}\) Ibid.
and relief packages alongside American non-profit agencies and local German church charities.\textsuperscript{62}

In reading the reports of Land minister presidents and functional officials, it is clear that much of the everyday interactions between government officials and expellees are lost. What the sources do provide, however, are the common or typical experiences of expellees in that given locality in regards to a particular issue (whether that be employment, housing or social welfare). I use the sources to understand why particular regions were chosen for particular expellee groups over others and the struggles that both the governing officials and the expellees faced during that process of resettlement.

The case of Sudeten artisans in postwar West Germany is unique in that both the receiving government and the expellees were faced with crisis and loss and yet each served to benefit from the other through the economic recovery of export industries. While the Bavarian authorities appreciated the influx of labourers, they quickly realized the added potential of artisan expellees and worked to settle them in regions where they could act as catalysts for renewal and growth.\textsuperscript{63} Early on, the U.S. War Department produced a \textit{Basic Handbook for Military Government of Germany} which stipulated the priorities of the occupation forces, including the conversion of industrial plants from military to consumer production and the resurrection of foreign trade. In order to offset the food shortages of the initial postwar period, it was imperative to produce consumer

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 206.

Bouman; Beijer; Oudegeest, \textit{The Refugee Problem in Western Germany}, 27-29. Balfour, \textit{Germany: The Tides of Power}, 110-111."the presence of a plentiful supply of labour...removed what was to prove a major hindrance to growth in other, more stable countries. Moreover the additional labour, having left its roots behind, could easily be moved to where it was needed...One estimate has put the value of this labour to West Germany at ten times the benefit derived from the Marshall Aid."
exports for sale to other nations. The authorities recognized the Schönbach violin makers as a distinct community of skilled workers that could fill an economic niche. However, the problem of settling them as a cohesive community within established German communities proved more difficult than expected.

In the early years of the resettlement in 1946 and 1947, the Regierungskommissars (government commissioners) and the Flüchtlingskommissars (refugee commissioners) of each Landkreis (rural district) began coordinating a plan of action for the resettlement of the Schönbach violin makers. The central authorities in Munich circulated a report to all government commissioners on November 13, 1946 announcing:

In the agreement between the Bavarian state ministry of economy and the land use planning authority there is a plan to build up the Sudeten-German export industry in Bavaria anew and to settle the suitable professionals for these industries in particular districts for this purpose. The establishment of these world-renowned industries lies in the interest of the construction of the Bavarian economy and was arranged by the Bavarian state ministry of the economy. For the time being...the Schönbacher violin makers are to be settled in the administrative district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen to strengthen the 100 year old production of violins in Mittenwald...An exchange of the professional forces of these industries with other governmental districts or administrative districts is to be carried out. The installation of such professional forces has to occur not all at once, but intermittently, in groups of 20 to 30 persons, to avoid buildups.... because of the lack of temporary living space in refugee camps, accommodation must be arranged, but only after a review of the legal basis for such a resettlement is established and instructions for the resettlement are given.

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The report is indicative of the early planning stages in which the government had developed a plan but had yet to investigate the suitability of the community of Mittenwald for resettlement. The initial logic behind the choice of Mittenwald was perhaps the fact that it was a center in which violin making was already an established tradition. One might have assumed that because some infrastructure and market demand already existed, the influx of more producers would only serve to benefit the industry. From an administrative perspective, it certainly would have been more cost effective to develop a pre-existing industry rather than to build a new industrial center from the ground-up.66

By 1947 the government came under increasing pressure to resettle those still living in camps, adding to the urgency with which decisions regarding resettlement were made. The representative of the state secretariat for refugees, Mr. Müller, held a series of meetings in February and March, 1947. He met with Dr. Fernegg from the economics ministry and with Schönbach violin makers living in camps in Erlangen. Afterward, Müller's recommendation was to settle the skilled expellees in Mittenwald in the district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, a region which he believed could receive up to 2000 people.67 Even though a meeting was held on May 17, 1947 at which officials "expressed clearly that the local places of the Werdenfelser land [Mittenwald] awaited only reluctantly an admission of the Schönbach experts and also rejected the allocation of land strictly for settlement purposes," the initiative to appoint Mittenwald the central point of

66 Harris; Wülker. "The Refugee Problem of Germany," 20-21. "employment opportunities can be developed more rapidly by the expansion of present industrial centers than by the creation of new industrial points."

resettlement moved forward. The central government had made up their minds as to the viability of a settlement in Mittenwald and wasted little time weighing their options, a move that provoked an equally quick response from the district expected to receive the expellees.

A mere ten days after the May 17th meeting, the head of the district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen wrote a letter to the state secretariat in Munich (Mr. Müller), arguing that unless a solution was found for the as of yet unemployed bombing campaign evacuees and other refugees already occupying the district, the violin makers would not be accommodated: “The violin makers need workrooms and accommodation which would permit the conditions necessary for trade. To guarantee such accommodation, space must be created with foresight and in a well-planned manner.”

The district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen recognized that the plan to settle Mittenwald was ill-conceived. What the letter demonstrates is that the situation on the ground required far more investigation and thought before a full settlement plan could be implemented, which for the expellees meant extended stays in camps. With each passing year, unable to engage in the industry of violin making, they experienced the loss of both a source of employment and a cultural practice that contributed to their individual and community identity.

The year 1947 was characterized by government indecision and in-fighting in the attempt to reach a viable solution for the settlement of the Schönbachers. In the end, the other government officials presiding over expellee resettlement blamed Dr. Fernegg and Mr. Müller for their “rash decision” in selecting Mittenwald as the central point for resettlement.

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68 Ibid., 10. The meeting was held in the District Office of Garmisch-Partenkirchen.
69 “Ansiedlung der sudetendeutschen Musikinstrumenten-Industrie (Schönbacher Geigenbauer) im Landkreis Garmisch-Partenkirchen.” Der Landrat des Kreises Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 27.5.1947, Landesflüchtlingsverwaltung 1660.
settlement.  

On June 13, 1947, Dr. Bukert (the state secretariat for refugees) suggested that the group already in Garmisch-Partenkirchen should remain while the larger group should be settled in the district of Erlangen. Mr Müller of course, disagreed: “Whoever does not want to settle in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, should settle somewhere else, but not in Erlangen.”  

As the in-fighting continued, the problems in Mittenwald increased. Mr. Müller’s promise of adequate living space and industrial development had not come to fruition. In addition, the local population of Mittenwald viewed the expellees as “intruders,” a threat to their craft and their cohesive community. Fears about the Schönbach violin makers’ methods of production and the volatility of the market weighed heavily on the minds of local Germans. Eventually, the government viewed the Mittenwald resettlement plan as a failure as only 75 masters were settled in the initial stages of the plan.  

On January 10, 1949, heads of both the Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Erlangen districts met with an architect, officials of the state secretariat, ministers of the economy, the land use planning authority of Bavaria and violin makers from Mittenwald and Erlangen to discuss the new settlement plan. These representatives ascertained that the district of Erlangen was ideal because of its existing instrument producing industry and its world-renowned export company for consumer products (Höfner). More important for the short term, however, was the fact that the municipalities of Baiersdorf and

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70 Hönkekopp, Denkschrift zum Wiederaufbau der Schönbacher Musikinstrumentenindustrie Schönbach memorandum, 10.
71 Ibid., 11.
72 Ibid., 11.
73 Fuchs, Die Standortverlagerung der sudetendeutschen Kleinmusikinstrumenten-Industrie von Graslitz und Schönbach, 45.
Möhrendorf in the Erlangen district had offered space to build settlements free of charge, a unanimous decision passed by the respective town councils. With the resolution to "desegregate" the Schönbach community by reuniting its members in new settlements in the Erlangen district, the government had come a long way toward reaching its goal of reviving export industry-focused communities and facilitating West Germany's economic recovery.

Though the government reached a resolution, the challenges of resettlement and integration were far from over. The demand for loans and funding and the nagging desire to regain pre-expulsion living standards remained among expellees. The artisans who wished to remain independent and rebuild their former home-based industries faced an uphill battle replete with competition from local producers for loans and no capital reserves. Recognizing the continuing struggle of the expellees after resettlement, the government enacted legislation to cement their reconstruction goals. Upon the establishment of the Federal Republic in September 1949, the government immediately set up a federal Ministry for Expellees to work in conjunction with local officials. This followed the passing of the Immediate Aid Law (Soforthilfegesetz, SHG) in August 1949, which set aside funds for expellee and refugee housing and business grants. The government proved that they were willing to follow through on the development of the economic potential of the violin makers.

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75 Ibid., 14-15, 26.
76 Bouman; Beijer; Oudegeest, The Refugee Problem in Western Germany Bouman, 27. Isaac, "Problems of Cultural Assimilation Arising from Population Transfers in Western Germany," 35.
78 Levy, "Integrating Ethnic Germans in West Germany: The Early Postwar Period," in Rock; Wolff, eds., Coming Home to Germany ?, 25.
In the immediate postwar period, the British Military Governor believed that if “the problem of economic integration can be solved, the political and psychological considerations would lose much of their importance.” After studying the structure of the government and the ways in which they dealt with expellee resettlement, the quote seems fitting. The focus and priority of the authorities throughout the process was on political stability and the resurgence of the economy. The assumption that economic appeasement would in turn mend the psychological trauma of the expulsion and the problem of cultural integration was, however, a pipe dream. Connor writes that programmatic assimilation designed by government officials is not apt to work as “[c]ultural integration cannot be assumed.” Rather, integration is dependent on the ways in which each community defines itself, on its culture. Integration must occur on a psychological as well as economic level. The story of the resettlement as told from the perspective of the expellees in the next section, reveals that for them culture often outweighed the national or economic considerations that topped the lists of government officials.

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79 Schulze, “The Struggle of Past and Present in Individual Identities: The Case of German Refugees and Expellees from the East,” in Rock; Wolff, eds. *Coming Home to Germany?*, 40.
The Resettlement Process: The Violin Makers’ Perspective

The arrival of millions of expellees in the rural districts of West Germany after 1945 was a shock to not only the systems of economic and social welfare but also to the local populations (Einheimische), igniting a reaction that unfolded on political and social levels. Rainer Schulze argues that the expellees “corrupted” an isolated world, importing a different way of life, one that local Germans viewed as a “material and philosophical” threat to their own existence. The key to integration lay therefore, not only in the allocation of food, shelter and employment, but also in the delicate balance between expellee and local identities.

The traumatic experience of the loss of one’s home, possessions and way of life set the expellees apart from the locals, who had experienced the war in an entirely different context, often undergoing hardship and loss, but retaining their homes and communities throughout the war. The expellees’ frustrations regarding the loss of professional and social status were matched by the locals’ consternation at having to share their homes and meager resources. Resentments festering inside camps, billeted homes and on job sites soon boiled over into the larger community sphere, as locals began to exclude expellees from social associations and clubs, creating a line of division between local and newcomer that in some cases lasted decades after the resettlement.

One cannot place the blame for such divisive tendencies solely on either group; however, as Sudeten German expellees were notorious for working to maintain their own distinct...

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82 Schulze, “The Struggle of Past and Present in Individual Identities: The Case of German Refugees and Expellees from the East,” in Rock; Wolff, Coming Home to Germany?, 42-43.
community through reunions, clubs, and group resettlement. In any case, both expellees and local Germans experienced the political process of resettlement on a social and cultural level, fighting to retain distinct identities.

The attempted resettlement of Schönbach violin makers in Mittenwald was a case in which the cultural clash of expellee and local provided the impetus for the plan’s failure. The identity of both Mittenwald and Schönbach violin makers was built upon the craft of violin making as a culture of practice. The finished product was also itself a symbol which held meaning for the culture of the community. Because violins from each community were distinguishable to their makers and to the global network of violin dealers and musicians, they held a great deal of representative meaning. Government officials initially viewed the violin trade as a commonality between the two communities, one that would provide incentive for a successful resettlement. The opposite was true, however, as the very practices and symbols that distinguished the two cultures, set the two communities at odds with one another throughout the process of resettlement.

By the fall of 1948 a heated debate had emerged between the local violin makers and the Schönbach makers newly settled in Mittenwald. By then, local Germans and government officials alike had come to label the Schönbach violin as a cheap export

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83 Kati Tonkin, “From ‘Sudetendeutscher’ to ‘Adlergebirgler’: Gudrun Pausewang’s Rosinkawiese Trilogy,” in Rock; Wolff, Coming Home to Germany?, 202-204. From very early on in the postwar period, Sudeten Germans were holding reunions and other events that were nostalgic and nationalistic in nature. They provided a space in which former neighbours could meet and celebrate their cultural traditions, including songs and costumes. Although initially dominated by political rhetoric, these events mellowed over time and focused on socio-cultural aspects of the group. The point was to get together and remember life before the expulsion. Bouman; Beijer; Oudegeest, The Refugee Problem in Western Germany, 3-4. He writes that the local population showed contempt for the expellee “foreigners,” giving the expellees incentive to seek strength in their segregated communities apart from the locals. They seek comfort in small groups and large organizations.

84 To the discerning eye of the violin maker or to those involved in global violin culture, violins produced in different communities can be distinguished by the woods used, the shape of the body, the tonal quality or the hue of the varnish. From such characteristics one can trace the tradition in which the violin was crafted (the Cremona, Italy tradition made famous by Stradivarius is just one), its geographic origin, and its value. Dominic Gill, ed., The Book of the Violin (Phaidon: Oxford, 1984).
product of lower quality than that produced by the Mittenwald masters. The Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Munich issued a report on January 19, 1947 arguing that the decision to settle Mittenwald was reasonable due to the village’s longstanding tradition in the industry. However, it also expressed concerns that the influx of cheap Sudeten-German violins could lower prices and threaten the sale of high-quality Mittenwald violins in the future.85 Fears of economic crisis were predicated on the experiences of the depression era market crash in which local masters were forced to take on agricultural work to supplement their incomes. In fact, because the American market for high quality, more expensive instruments had yet to rebound in the postwar era, Mittenwald masters continued to work in the fields and accept modest repair work.86 There was no way to gauge when or if the demand for their product would re-emerge. From the perspective of the Mittenwald masters, the risks of incorporating Schönbach producers in their community outweighed any potential benefits.

The fears associated with the settlement were not all based on the volatility of market demand and the risks associated with it. Of major concern was the future of the community and its culture. Because the Schönbach masters employed a more systematic method including the use of machines, they required a greater source of raw materials. In an article titled “Bei alten und neuen Meistern in Mittenwald,” published in the Süddeutsche Zeitung on December 24, 1948, the author reports that local masters complained bitterly of the Schönbach masters’ exploitation of the local supply of timber,

a resource which the Mittenwalders had taken great care to manage.\textsuperscript{87} The sustainability of the village woodlands was vital. They served not only as an economic resource in the violin trade and a feature of the local landscape marketed to tourists but also as a defining characteristic of the cultural landscape of the Mittenwald Heimat. The concerns of the community were valid and when added to problems of housing and development, presented a strong case against the government's resettlement plan.

The fears of the Mittenwald masters were, on the surface, economic in nature. However, economic aspects of community life cannot be separated from the overall culture of a group. In the case of the failed Mittenwald settlement, the economic concerns—although real and pertinent—were also corollaries of the psychological and cultural disconnect between the two communities. Walker Connor maintains that in cases of failed integration, scholars often blame the tangible economic discrepancies between two groups, when in fact economic considerations act as catalysts, reinforcing a pre-existing "ethnic consciousness."\textsuperscript{88} The debate that developed in 1948 between the Mittenwald and Schönbach masters is evidence that in cases of integration, the economic concerns of the two communities in question are often motivated by an underlying cultural tension.

Both local and expellee groups spoke with a sense of pride, each believing that their cultures were under threat and voicing their concerns to the media and the government. By referring to the Schönbach violins as cheap, inferior instruments, the Mittenwald masters insulted the very symbol at the heart of the Schönbach culture. On

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{88} Connor, Ethnonationalism, 47, 145, 151. The term "ethnic consciousness" is based on his idea of the "essence of the nation" as "a matter of self-awareness or self-consciousness," "a vivid sense of sameness or oneness of kind, which, from the perspective of the group, "sets it off from all other groups in a most vital way."
the 28th of December, 1948, just four days after the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* article was published, the recently formed Cooperative of Schönbach violin makers of Garmisch-Partenkirchen (*Produktivgenossenschaft der ehemaligen Schönbacher Musikinstrumentenerzeuger Garmisch-Partenkirchen*) issued an official response. The cooperative addressed two points; the notion that Schönbach violins were inferior to those of the Mittenwald masters, and the fear that the inclusion of Schönbach masters in the village of Mittenwald would be detrimental and potentially lethal to the traditional industry of the village.\(^89\)

The Schönbach cooperative argued that the Mittenwalders’ concerns demonstrated weakness and insecurity in the face of competition. The Mittenwald masters’ claim to superiority rested on the fact that they spent 200 hours as opposed to the Schönbacher’s 120 hours on each violin. In response, the cooperative challenged the Mittenwalders to compare two violins both made within 120-150 working hours and then allow “the real expert to deliver his fair judgment about which instrument is inferior or high-class.”\(^90\) The Schönbach cooperative confidently argued that their ability to produce a high quality violin while utilizing a more efficient method was a credit to their skill.\(^91\)

The choices that each community had made in the era of modernization, for the respective betterment of their craft, were now becoming a point of contention. While the Mittenwald masters had benefited from tourism through the preservation of traditional


\(^90\) "Erwiderung zur Denkschrift der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Mittenwalder Geigenbauer in Mittenwald." Produktivgenossenschaft der ehemaligen Schönbacher Musikinstrumentenerzeuger, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 28.12.1948, Landesflüchtlingsverwaltung 1660.

\(^91\) Ibid.
artisanal methods, Schönbachers had used the abundance of raw materials and new technologies available to them to create a burgeoning export industry. The postwar Mittenwalders were making a qualitative judgment about the Schönbach industry and cultural values, based on decisions that were made by their forebears in the context of the late nineteenth century. Because the Mittenwald masters decided to uphold the traditional method of crafting violins—for both economic and cultural reasons—in the nineteenth century, it did not by extension mean that their product was superior to that of the Schönbach masters.

The craft had remained central to the culture of both communities for centuries, regardless of divergent production methods. To value one tradition over another, therefore, seemed ludicrous to the Schönbach makers. The cooperative argued that the world’s perception of Mittenwald as the “traditional centre of violin making” should be dispelled, for the craft had similar origins in Schönbach which proved that “one cannot use the word Tradition to create a special position for oneself.” Throughout the report, the masters of the cooperative were critical of the Mittenwald masters, yet did not wish to place themselves on a higher plane. Rather, the cooperative’s comments clearly demonstrated a desire to vindicate their own work and to be recognized on an equal footing with the masters of Mittenwald.

The debate between the two communities was not merely an act of accusatory rhetoric, as it first appears, but an attempt to address the barriers presented by resettlement in Mittenwald directly. One Mittenwald master set himself apart by

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welcoming Schönbach masters into his home and workshop as early as 1946. He was an exception to the rule, however as the majority demanded that the government disperse the Schönbach violin makers beyond the area of Mittenwald. The Schönbach cooperative was of a different opinion, wishing only to return to work and ultimately, to contribute to the revival of the violin industry in Mittenwald. In fact, the cooperative’s report asserts that through the collaboration of both communities, they could revive Mittenwald’s tourist industry and expand the market demand for the region’s violins, making the need for supplementary work obsolete. The optimism of the cooperative was admirable under the circumstances, proving that for the Schönbach expellees, the craft of violin making was an enterprise crucial to the cultural identity of the community. The expellees simply wanted to return to their pre-expulsion way of life, even if that meant working alongside a resentful local population.

While both communities placed importance on maintaining their culture and sense of identity from within, they were also concerned with how they were perceived by those outside the community. For centuries, both communities built international reputations among the network of instrument makers, musicians and instrument dealers. A violin purchased in Mittenwald had a meaning distinct from that of Schönbach, harkening back

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94 "Zuzug der sudetendeutschen Geigenbauern nach Mittenwald," Mittenwalder Geigenbau Hans Nebel, Mittenwald, 28.8.1946, Landesflüchtlingsverwaltung 1660. One master wrote to Mr. Müller in 1946, acknowledging that although he was graciously billeting 15 violin masters in his home, the other Mittenwald masters rejected the idea of resettlement outright in 1945.


to their respective centuries-old family tradition.\textsuperscript{97} Knowing the weight that the community name carried, Mittenwalders were concerned that once settled, the “lesser-quality” violins of the Schönbachers would be sold under the same name as their own, tarnishing their international reputation. To preemptively squash the fears of the Mittenwald masters, the Schönbach cooperative stated explicitly in their report that they had no intention of benefiting financially from the Mittenwald name and that members of the cooperative would continue to use their own company names when selling their violins.\textsuperscript{98}

The Schönbach cooperative sought to uphold their reputation and allay any future damage the Mittenwald insults might cause internationally: “If, therefore, Mittenwald wants to adopt a high-class rating solely for its own violins, at home and abroad, this assertion is a deception of the general public and of those involved in the specialized trade, a prejudice solely held by the Mittenwald violin maker.”\textsuperscript{99} In the end, the Schönbacher cooperative saw the insults of the Mittenwald masters for idle attempts at eliminating potential competitors and alleviating the threat to the local craft and the cultural values it represented. In the final remarks of their report the cooperative notes: “We do not come as gravediggers for the Mittenwald violin making industry, but as a sponsor of violin making and the art of instrument making as a whole,” and “We will position ourselves with all means against such deliberate disqualification.”\textsuperscript{100}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{97} William Sandys, \textit{The History of the Violin, and Other Instruments Played On with the Bow from the Remotest Times to the Present} (London: J.R. Smith, 1864), 218, 245.
  \item \textsuperscript{98} “Erwiderung zur Denkschrift der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Mittenwalder Geigenbauer in Mittenwald.” Produktivgenossenschaft der ehemaligen Schönbacher Musikinstrumentenerzeuger, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 28.12.1948, Landesflüchtlingsverwaltung 1660. Usually companies used the master’s surname.
  \item \textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{100} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
The debate between expellee and local masters provides insight into the two cultures. It highlights the fact that violins were more than just an export product (whether high or low quality); they were symbols of family and village tradition, of individual and community identity:

The old violin maker [K. H.] is 84 years old. He still sits day after day in his workshop and makes violins. He is a master. Under his hands the profane wood is ennobled. His violins end up somewhere in the wide world under the hands of virtuosi that make people weep and laugh. I visited him in his current adoptive country in Mohrendorf near Erlangen [a site of resettlement]...Like a big child he smiled to himself. The work for him was his work, but a delightful experience. He told me that he has 5 children, comes from Schönbach and waits now for his own small house. In it, he says, “my life will be fulfilled.”

The craft linked the members of each family, father to son, family to community and community to global networks of violin trade. The violins represented not only local practice but the place of the local within the global context.

Although both communities built their cultural identities around the craft of violin making, when it came to resettlement and integration the differences outweighed the similarities, exacerbating existing tensions wrought by housing and supply shortages. The retention of a distinct community culture drove both the Mittenwald and Schönbach masters to debate the issues of resettlement and to ensure that their respective voices were heard by government officials. In 1949 when the government presented the plan to move the group from Mittenwald to the area surrounding Erlangen, one violin maker noted that of the 126 members of the Schönbach cooperative of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 84 expressed their support for the new resolution in writing. For many, the opportunity to

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101 Hönekopp, Denkschrift zum Wiederaufbau der Schönbacher Musikinstrumentenindustrie, 1.
102 Ibid., 15.
reunite with former neighbours and colleagues in a newly developed group settlement provided the incentive necessary to undergo another move.

Though some masters became independent, remaining in Mittenwald and working alongside local masters there, the majority waited patiently for their opportunity to leave the tense atmosphere in Mittenwald behind and unite as a community on one piece of land. Five years later, construction on a settlement for the Schönbach violin makers was completed on land near the village of Bubenreuth which lies close to Erlangen. By the early 1950s approximately 500 people had relocated to the new settlement site. The most appealing solution to the problem of integration for the Schönbach violin makers was a return to exclusivity, a move that would facilitate the renewal of their local, pre-expulsion culture.

The tensions that arose in Mittenwald in 1948 demonstrate that even with many commonalities including German heritage, shared traditions and craft industries, the process of resettling expellees in rural villages did not always result in the successful integration of two communities. Rather, local particularities and concerns regarding the maintenance of cultural traditions and global reputation often precluded a sense of national solidarity. One cannot deny that the development of expellee industries in rural areas was ultimately beneficial to the long-term reconstruction and economic prosperity of the West German nation. However, expellee communities were far more concerned with the survival of their own culture in a new context. In the case of the Schönbach violin makers, the continuation of the craft meant a continuation of life, a long-awaited return to the individual and community identity lost in the expulsion.

Conclusion

When the expellees arrived in Bavaria, the impact was overwhelming for both local Germans and newly-appointed government officials. Quickly realizing the value of the skilled violin makers of Schönbach for economic reconstruction, however, the government sought to resettle them and rebuild their industries. In the rush to realize their goals, the government did not allow for the emergence of resentment between the local and expellee violin makers on a cultural level. The disconnect between the communities contributed to the overall failure of the Mittenwald plan. The study of the ways in which government officials, locals and expellees misunderstood and misrepresented one another, emphasizes the persistent role of culture in each community and the concerns that governments and local populations must consider when addressing the integration of forced migrants.

Before the expulsion, the Schönbach violin makers considered themselves part of the Sudeten-German community, distinct from their Czech neighbours. After sharing the traumatic experience of expulsion, the community became even more exclusive, working to distinguish themselves culturally from local Germans in Bavaria. Experiences of the war and the expulsion were integral to the Schönbach community’s process of self-identification. They were Sudeten expellees of particular localities first, citizens of a West German nation second. In 1950, Sudeten expellees founded the Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft (Sudeten-German homeland society) with branches representing pre-expulsion villages. The organization came to represent both the political agency of

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104 Ahonen. *After the Expulsion*, 29-34.
expellees, and the continuation of a self-identification separate from the German national construct.

With time, the economic prosperity of West Germany (1950s-1960s) and the coming of age of a new generation within the expellee community did prompt increased self-identification with the nation. Today, many first generation expellees, however, still find it difficult to share their experience of the expulsion with local Germans. It is desirable for them to maintain an exclusive community by attending annual reunions and Landsmannschaft meetings to share memories and speak in their own dialect.105 Although the tangible hardships of resettlement have subsided, many expellees have experienced lasting psychological and emotional struggles for a sense of normalcy and belonging.

As for the Schönbach violin makers, many went on to re-establish their industries in the new communities in the Erlangen district. By the end of 1949, Bubenreuth became the central area of settlement for Schönbach violin makers. With time, factories were built in the settlement to house the industry. With the advent of Rock ‘n Roll music in late 1950s Britain and the United States, some factories shifted their focus to guitar production in order to meet market demand. As it had in the past, the community adapted their industry to withstand changes in market demand and evolutions in music, often adopting a new instrument of focus or a more commercial approach.106

There is still a great deal of research to be done on the postwar experiences of expellees and the continuation of their communities in the decades following

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105 Schulze in Rock; Wolff, Coming Home to Germany?
resettlement. As new groups of forced and voluntary migrants began to arrive in Germany in the late 1950s, local perceptions of expellees underwent a shift and the "refugee problem" of the postwar was replaced by "the foreigner problem." Refugees from the GDR and guestworkers from Turkey became "the others," a shift in perception that diminished lingering resentments toward expellee communities. Just as the Sudeten-German communities re-constructed their identities in a new context, excluding local Germans rather than Czechs, local Germans did the same, constructing an identity that first excluded expellees then migrant labourers.

The history of the interactions between Schönbach and Mittenwald violin makers is a microcosm that gestures at larger issues of local and national identity construction, issues that affect forced migration and resettlement. It is a case that reveals the pertinence of culture as an underlying factor in local, national and global decision-making processes. As historians continue to reassess postwar Germany from a cultural perspective, they will reveal new ideas about what constitutes German national identity, new understandings of local cultures living within Germany, and the cultural currents underlying economic and political change.

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107 Levy in Rock; Wolff, Coming Home to Germany? 28.
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