

Institution: University of Nottingham
Unit of Assessment: 30
Title of case study: Preserving and Presenting the experiences of East European refugees after 1945 to contribute to deeper public understanding of (historical and contemporary) displacement, migration and asylum
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>An exhibition stimulated reflection on and provided new knowledge and perspectives on migration – historical and contemporary – for audiences in Nottingham and Glasgow. Linked teacher resources enhanced the capacity of local teachers to deliver challenging content on cross-curricula themes such as displacement, migration and asylum. Physical material and cultural capital (individual and group memory as embodied in audio-visual oral histories) which would otherwise have disappeared have been preserved and transformed into educational material for a local Ukrainian community organisation, adding to its resource base and capacity. A national Polish diasporic community organisation has benefitted from access to research and advice to enhance its capacity to engage new audiences with its work and histories.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The key research on which this case study is based was undertaken between October 2004 and March 2009 within the AHRC-funded research project ‘Population Displacement, State Practice and Social Experience in the USSR and Eastern Europe, 1930-1956’ by a team comprising staff from the University of Manchester and University of Nottingham. Professor P. Gatrell (Manchester) was PI. Dr Nick Baron (Nottingham, since January 2004) was the Co-I. Other Nottingham members of the team were Dr. Tomas Balkelis (Postdoctoral Research Fellow in History, 2005-2007) and Dr. Siobhan Peeling (PhD student in History, 2005-2010; Postdoctoral Research Fellow, 2011-2013; Honorary Research Fellow, 2013; Postdoctoral Research Fellow, 2013). This section examines the particular role of Baron and Balkelis in this research project, mindful of their role within a tightly-integrated wider team. Peeling’s research is discussed as part of the pathway to impact in section 4.</p> <p>Baron’s empirical research focussed on the wartime deportations and post-war repatriation of Ukrainian displaced persons (DPs) and the process of their ‘filtration’ by the Soviet authorities before and after resettlement [3.1]. He also developed a conceptual framework for the project as a whole, which directed attention towards the historical ‘nexus’ of population displacement, state power and social identities and emphasised the status of the refugee or migrant as an historical agent rather than merely a passive subject [3.2]. This approach, informed by anthropological and geographical studies and critical social theory, served also to highlight the dualism of ‘sedentarism’ and ‘itinerancy’ within dominant present-day discourse concerning migration, asylum and refugees that structures official understandings and actions, shapes media representations and underpins popular perceptions. In related research, Baron examined Soviet border-making, drawing attention to the inter-relations among boundaries, territory, political space and conceptions of place which crucially define state practices and social experiences of (dis)placement [3.3].</p> <p>Balkelis’ work at Nottingham within the project examined Soviet state deportations of Lithuanians in 1939-1940, Nazi occupation policies in Lithuania during wartime, and the post-war experiences of Lithuanian DPs in refugee camps and in exile [3.4, 3.5].</p>
<p>3. References to the research</p> <p>1. Baron, ‘Remaking Soviet Society: the Filtration of Returnees from Nazi Germany, 1944-1949’ in Peter Gatrell, Nick (eds), <i>Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in Soviet Eastern Europe, 1945-1950</i> (London: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 89-116. ISBN 978-0-230-57601-8. (Submitted to REF2)</p> <p>2. Baron, (with P. Gatrell) ‘Violent Peacetime: Reconceptualising Displacement and Resettlement in the Soviet-East European Borderlands after the Second World War’, in Gatrell, Baron (eds),</p>

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Warlands, pp. 255-68. (Submitted to REF2)

3. Baron, 'La Révolution et ses limites. Conscience de la frontière soviétique et dynamique du développement régional, 1918-1928', in Sophie Coeuré, Sabine Dullin (eds), *Frontières du communisme. Mythologies et réalités de la division de l'Europe, de la révolution d'Octobre au mur de Berlin* (Paris, La Découverte, 2007), pp. 87-104. ISBN 978-2-707-15321-0 (Available on request)

4. Balkelis, 'War, State, Ethnic Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in Lithuania, 1939-1940', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 2007, pp. 461-477. doi:10.1017/S0960777307004122.

5. Balkelis, 'Living in the DP Camp: Lithuanian War Refugees in the West, 1944-1954', in Gatrell, Baron (eds), *Warlands*, 2009, pp. 25-47. (Available on request)

Evidence of the quality of the research

Item 3.4 is a peer-reviewed journal

The Project and its outputs have been extensively cited in scholarly literature (e.g. Mark Mazower, 'Reconstruction: The Historiographical Issues', *Past and Present* (2011), Supplement 6, p. 22.) and have done much to stimulate and shape a growing body of scholarship on displacement, resettlement and related issues (e.g. Steinert, 2007; Shephard, 2009; Manley, 2009; Holian, 2011; Mazower, Reinisch and Feldman, 2011; Reinisch, 2011).

Selected reviews of *Warlands* and of Baron's work within the edited collection:

'This excellent volume [...] covers an important aspect of postwar history in the 'warlands' of Eastern Europe and should find a broad readership among specialists. I learnt a lot and found several essays thought-provoking and inspiring.[...] Nick Baron starts [the second part] with a skilfully written and highly informative overview of the filtration of the more than five million returnees from Germany.' Olaf Mertelsmann, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 62 (9): 1587-88.

'the contributions [...] represent fine additions to scholarship on the topic [...] Baron's engaging contribution [...] delivers a clear example of the sorts of analytical benefits to be gained by applying the editors' chosen methodology [...] an impressive contribution to a growing body of scholarship on resettlement.' Stephen Scala, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 46 (4): 945-47.

4. Details of the impact

Exhibiting primary resources to deepen public understanding about historical and contemporary population displacement, migration and asylum

A touring exhibition (a collaboration between the universities of Nottingham and Manchester) on the experiences of European refugees in the aftermath of the Second World War titled 'When the War Was Over: European Refugees after 1945' deepened public understanding of population displacement, migration, asylum, resettlement and community relations, which have resonance in contemporary Britain and further afield in terms of contemporary cultural and community cohesion.

Baron drew on research he and Balkelis had undertaken as part of his involvement in the 2004-2009 Nottingham/Manchester AHRC research project (specifically reference 3.1) to work with colleague Siobhan Peeling (a postgraduate member of the AHRC project team) to write historical texts for the exhibition panels, posters and a brochure (also available through the project website [5.1]) Photographs, scanned images of documents and artefacts, oral history material and film collected by Baron, Balkelis and Peeling during their involvement in the AHRC project were also used in the exhibition. The exhibition was hosted by Nottingham Castle Museum & Gallery (16 August to 23 September 2012, venue footfall for the period was 24,313), the Centre for Advanced Studies, University of Nottingham (October 2012; May-June 2013), and at the University of Glasgow Memorial Chapel (February 2013).

Comments from visitors to the Nottingham exhibition (attracted partly in response to local media coverage – including a 20 August 2012 appearance on BBC Nottingham prime-time ‘Breakfast Show’ (audience figures for this show average 15,714 per day, peaking at the time of Baron and Peeling’s interview) [5.2]) include: ‘As one of the ex-DPs, this exhibition prods (sic) me to think about the fate of refugees caught up in the conflict of this present day’; ‘What role did the DP story play in the development of the UN Refugee Convention and Human Rights?’; ‘Interesting to see how mass-migration and the way it is managed is not a very recent phenomenon’; ‘Gives us a very different perspective onto the origins of multi-cultural Britain than that familiar from the media. Well done!’; ‘This exhibition raises interesting questions about the relationship between history and the present: have things ‘improved’ or ‘deteriorated’? Are the crude ways in which DPs, many of whom had suffered such horrible fates, were then ...separated from their families etc. worse than the much more ‘humane’ but totally subtract, bureaucratic procedures of today? Both?’ ‘I didn’t know how long the DP camps lasted – or their origins – very interesting’; ‘Fantastic, I had no idea of the number of ordinary people turned into refugees by the war’; ‘I had not realised about post-1945 importance of DP in the UK’; ‘I had no idea how *many* people were affected’ (5.3). Feedback from the Glasgow exhibition includes the following comment from the German Honorary Consul: ‘This is such a valuable exhibition giving a little insight into the tragedy of the war and all its consequences: both on a grand almost incomprehensible scale, and for the individuals and families, the sadness, the longing...’. He continues that the exhibition gives a ‘perspective on this issue in modern times.’ An Estonian DP now living in Scotland, commented on the exhibition’s historical accuracy and the validating effect of seeing his own history presented accurately and publicly. (5.4) These comments attest to the success of the exhibition in **stimulating reflection on and providing new knowledge and perspectives on migration – historical and contemporary.**

Enhancing the capacity of teachers to teach controversial or sensitive subjects

An innovative mixed media resource pack (5.5) for use in UK secondary schools was co-developed by the project team at Nottingham and Manchester. It **provided new knowledge, resources and approaches for teachers which have already begun to inform and enrich their approach to the delivery of aspects of the history and citizenship curricula.**

The pack included documentary, visual and audio-visual sources including those drawn directly from Baron’s and Balkelis’ research (3.1-3.5), as well as background and analytical texts written by Baron and Peeling on the basis of this research. It drew on earlier research undertaken by Baron, Balkelis and Peeling (including Peeling, S. “Out Of Place” In The Postwar City: Practices, Experiences And Representations Of Displacement During The Resettlement Of Leningrad At The End Of The Blockade’, PhD thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham, September 2010) at Nottingham on post-1945 East European population displacement and resettlement. The pack was launched at a one-day workshop at the University of Nottingham, 24 November 2012, attended by 30 trainee and newly-qualified teachers as well as experienced educators, including one Head Teacher and the Nottinghamshire County Council Education Improvement Advisor.

Attendees thought the pack: was useful to them in their professional capacity; gave them a better understanding and knowledge of the modern history of displaced persons and of contemporary issues related to refugees, asylum and immigration; gave them a better understanding and knowledge of the challenges, problems and opportunities associated with teaching about difficult, controversial or divisive histories and contemporary issues’. All agreed that the resource pack would be useful in the classroom, and 80 per cent that it would improve how they teach refugee history. A senior English teacher who attended the workshop stated: “The resource pack will give me the ideal OFSTED lesson”. Another respondent commented that the resource materials ‘will extend, enhance and facilitate my classroom practice and promote my students’ learning and skills development.’ (5.6)

Follow-up enquiries into early use of the resource pack in the classroom revealed that where it had been used it was valued as a teaching-aid for higher-level independent learning: ‘On a recent inset day we were asked to look at why so few students reached level 8 and beyond in our subject. We identified the problem as being that they need to do some kind of independent original research project. I am going to use the package to do this. Students will follow a person’s story through evidence and will have the knowledge that this is totally original historical work. I think this is the greatest resource I have seen for this’, and, ‘These resources have an immediate use in the

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classroom and will fit in nicely with a Unit of Work I am currently writing.', 'It has been very useful in Citizenship lessons - resources [sic] have helped show the concept of the refugee in a European context which can then be linked to more recent world wide [sic] events especially in a multi-cultural school. (5.7) These comments on the role of the resource in classroom practice demonstrate the **early-stage impact of the resource as a tool for deepening understanding of the key issues, and in stimulating higher-achieving pupils to extend their understanding.**

Contributing to the preservation of physical material and cultural capital

Valuable historical oral testimony that provides insight into the lives of the Ukrainian community in the UK has been **preserved through its digitisation**, and its value as an educational resource enhanced through the provision of specialist support, training and facilities, and the addition of visual and textual material from Baron's own research on Ukrainian DPs (3.1)

The Nottingham Castle exhibition stimulated considerable interest among regional and national community organisations in the underpinning research, leading to a member of the local Ukrainian community establishing contact with Baron and work beginning (with Baron and the IS team at the University) to digitise the oral history video recordings. Once digitised, the testimonies were transformed into new educational resources (one 45-minute long subtitled documentary film; and one 7 hour unedited compilation of all the interviews) for use by Ukrainian community organisations in Nottingham and elsewhere in the UK and abroad. The training in the communication of historical knowledge and understanding (specifically via film production technologies and techniques) added significant new capacity to the organisation.(5.8)

Supporting a national Polish diasporic community to engage new audiences with its work and histories

Community support and professional development work undertaken by Peeling with Polish diasporic history organisation *Kresy-Siberia* **provided expertise, skills support and resources that have improved the organisation's knowledge base and in future will help with their public engagement work.** Responding to an approach by the UK Director of the organisation, Peeling drew on historical knowledge (3.1-3.5) and research skills developed during the AHRC project to offer research guidance to underpin the planning of a gallery aimed at engaging new audiences with *Kresy-Siberia's* work and resources. Her contribution provided 'very useful and much deeper research guidance about where to find materials and what was available in some UK archives which could be incorporated into, or used as a basis for, a full gallery' (5.9). Peeling worked in London alongside community researchers to identify relevant sources in libraries and archives, advising on the use of archives, training them in a range of analytical and interpretative methodologies, and thereby adding capacity to the organisation's skills and research base.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. www.nottingham.ac.uk/postwar-refugees/
2. Collated media material
3. Collated feedback from the Nottingham exhibition
4. Collated feedback from the Glasgow exhibition
5. Resource pack
6. Feedback from original teacher questionnaire
7. Feedback from follow-up teacher questionnaire
8. Ukrainian community historian
9. Director, *Kresy-Siberia*