

Exiles on Main Street: The Centrality of Exile in Transatlantic Relations

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Abstract: This article explores the meaning of exile in political theory and its importance within our understanding of political organization and more specifically transatlantic relations. Attention for the political ramifications of the movement of people across borders is divided among the study of diasporas, forced migration, and cultural transfer, as well as exile. The article covers the definition of the term and its use in the Western political tradition, focusing on its meaning and its relevance for conceptions of political progress under modernity. By examining the use of “exile” in relation to Latin American politics, the article puts forward a contrasting critical sketch of exile in transatlantic relations through the 20th century.

Keywords: exile, diaspora, forced migration, cultural transfer, cold war, transatlantic relations

This article makes the case that the category of exile deserves more importance as a defining feature of, and contributor to, transatlantic relations.¹ Exile has a specific meaning within political science. This discipline has traditionally focused on the functioning of defined units of organization, and how to optimize that functioning. Politics is organized around what brings people together, what creates a sense of belonging and purpose within a certain setting, what enables them to recognize common interests, values, identities, and futures, and how they communicate them. Nation states have legally-grounded definitions of citizenship and what is required to obtain and keep it. Exiles are excluded from this collectivity, being deemed a threat to its existence as defined by specific political interests. The word stems from the Latin *exilium*, meaning “lodging away from one’s fatherland,” and the word entered common usage from the 14th century onwards. To be exiled is to suffer for holding a specific political stance by being banished from the homeland. Exile results from political instability and the enforcement of irreconcilable

¹ This text originated as a lecture at the symposium “Forms of Community in the Modern Era: The Mechanisms of a Construct,” University of Tübingen, June 24, 2016. The text is a revised and expanded version of the lecture.

difference, preventing compromise and accommodation. In her discussion of this field, Judith Sklar identified immigrants, expatriates, refugees, and political exiles as the key groups, with exiles being: “A special group of refugees, people expelled against their will by the governments of their countries for political reasons, their opinions, their party affiliation, or their race, class, or nationality.”²

As a result, exile has been associated with non-Western, authoritarian regimes, and the implication, from a traditional Western perspective, has been that regimes using exile are on “the wrong side of history” – they must still go through a process of mature democratization that will make exile superfluous as a political need or tool. Exile, as a political phenomenon, has been omnipresent in transatlantic relations throughout the twentieth century, yet it is generally placed alongside forced migration, diaspora, and cultural transfer as if they are all of equal interpretive significance. Yet while these other terms refer predominantly to the *movement* involved in displacement from one place to another, exile refers both to the political realities of expulsion and the imagination of alternative political futures thereafter. Exile is a political project, for both expeller and expelled. The title of this article – exiles on main street – emphasizes that exile resides at the center of modern political systems, not at the periphery. Exile therefore becomes a cipher through which the role of politically displaced persons can be more sharply defined, both from the perspective of the host nation and the homeland.

Origins and Terminology

Exiles and emigres have always played (and continue to play) a key role in designing political futures. Exile was a fundamental aspect of the Greek polis. During the period of tyrannical rule, rival elites used it as a stabilization mechanism, expelling opposing factions at will, but in turn creating cycles of instability as the expelled plotted incessantly to return. During the democratic transition that occurred at the end of the 6th century BC, the politics of exile was replaced by the practice of ostracism, “a particularly limited and lawful form of exile.” By expelling one individual per year for a limited period of time, the democrats established a moderate alternative to the random, chaotic politics of exile that had preceded it. This was a key element in the establishment of norms and rules within Greek democracy. From then on, exile became a symbol in the Western political canon

² Judith Sklar, “The Bonds of Exile,” in Judith Shklar, *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*, ed. Stanley Hoffman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 205.

for failing political systems. In the words of Sara Forsdyke, it led to “the delegitimization of non-democratic forms of rule through the theme of exile.”³

The incorporation of this norm into the Western conception of modernity is clear. A political system that uses exile as a means to neutralize opposition, or that forces members of the opposition into exile, signifies that a pluralist stability has not (yet) been achieved. The political systems that indulge in the use of exile use it to stabilize themselves, but they are necessarily unstable, unable to absorb organized dissent, and threatened by the supposed coming democratic revolution (to be triggered by or followed by the exiles’ return). In this way, the use of exile as a political tool signifies a weak system, whereas its absence points to a level of political maturity. This is not to argue that an end to exile equals an end to all political conflict. Following the agonistic pluralists such as William Connolly and Chantal Mouffe, it is accepted that conflict between different groups and identities is inevitable but potentially manageable within an emancipatory democracy. Exile is a sign that antagonisms have not been transformed into agonisms – enemies have not yet become simply adversaries, and hence exile is still an option in order to banish opponents.⁴

Strictly speaking, political exile involves the enforced expulsion from one’s native land, and entails the continuation of political opposition from abroad. Exiles occupy an undefined middle ground, somewhere between sovereignties, transcending orthodox understandings of separate national and international realms. As Yossi Shain has put it, “throughout history political exiles have challenged traditional boundaries of authority and loyalty.”⁵ But exiles are vulnerable in an international system framed by national sovereignty. They represent a threat to de facto national control by personalizing resistance. This is a demanding position, and it is hard to maintain both a clear-cut identity and cause over many years. For the political exile, the stay abroad is necessarily *temporary* (at least in name, if not in fact) before the triumphant return. This claim of temporariness is used to avoid the development of hybrid identities and allegiances that will undermine the political cause. Nevertheless, exile complicates the orthodox understandings of obligation and loyalty attached to citizenship.⁶

³ Sara Forsdyke, *Exile, Ostracism and Democracy: The Politics of Expulsion in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 3.

⁴ Chantal Mouffe, “Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism,” *Social Research*, no. 66 (1999): 745–58.

⁵ Yossi Shain, *The Frontier of Loyalty: Political Exiles in the Age of Nation States* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2005), xiv.

⁶ Shklar, “The Bonds of Exile”.

Exile, Diaspora, Forced Migration

This determination to maintain the cause separates political exiles from diasporas, who have been dispersed from their homeland but who maintain (or are required to maintain) political, economic, and social links with their homeland. Diaspora dates back to the expulsion of the Jews from Palestine in 70 BC, and so incorporates the tragedy of exile and the longing for return. But since the 1990s the word diaspora has also been in vogue as an alternative term for migrants. Diaspora lays claim to a deeper cultural meaning and significance, in contrast to the term refugee, which points more to the movement of people across borders to escape conflict or persecution.

Forced migration is another, more recent, all-encompassing description of the displacement of people escaping from persecution, conflicts, natural disasters, or environmental change and decline, either within their own country or across borders.⁷ The UNHCR has calculated that by mid-2022 there were 103 million people who could be categorized as refugees, asylum seekers, or internally displaced persons, 72 percent originating from only five countries, with Ukraine among them.⁸ The international system of states is under stress to accommodate these large movements of people, and not only in Europe.

Neither diaspora nor forced migration encompass the association of the exile with alternative political futures or the loyalty to the homeland that comes with them. What of other approaches to analyzing the meaning of exile? Cultural, film and literary studies have investigated the signs and sounds of exile for many years, using it as a motif to frame discussions on hybrid identities, allegiances, and texts.⁹ Three conclusions can be drawn from these studies. Firstly, focusing exclusively on the cultural dimension has led, in the words of Renato Camurri, to “an excessive generalization of the concept of exile,” where refugee/migrant/exile all become rolled into one. Secondly, the politics has tended to be downplayed. Based on his study of the inter-war period in Europe, Camurri considered that these representations of exile “underestimate the political aspect of the experience of cultural migration.” The political importance of exile was not always linked to the political crises that led to the rise of totalitarian regimes, somehow disengaging the exile from the struggles to overcome those crises.¹⁰

⁷ See: International Association for the Study of Forced Migration, accessed March 27, 2023, <http://iasfm.org>.

⁸ See: UNHCR's Refugee Population Statistics Database, accessed March 27, 2023, <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/statistics/>.

⁹ Robert Hauhart and Jeff Birkenstein (eds.), *European Writers in Exile* (Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018); Wendy Everett and Peter Wagstaff, *Cultures of Exile: Images of Displacement* (New York: Berghahn, 2004); Sharon Ouditt, ed., *Displaced Persons: Conditions of Exile in European Culture* (London: Routledge, 2002); Vytautas Kavolis, “Women Writers in Exile,” *World Literature Today*, no. 66 (1992): 43–6.

¹⁰ Renato Camurri, “The Exile Experience Reconsidered: A Comparative Perspective in European Cultural Migration during the Interwar Period,” *Transatlantica*, no. 1 (2014), accessed March 27, 2023, <https://transatlantica.revues.org/6920>.

Thirdly, there has been a strong tendency within the Western canon to treat the exile as romantic hero. Edward Said identified this brilliantly in his essay “Reflections on Exile.” Said noted that “Modern Western culture is in large part the work of exiles, emigres, refugees,” but it is the scale of twentieth century displacements that places it outside of previous historical phenomena: “On the twentieth century scale, exile is neither aesthetically nor humanistically comprehensible.”¹¹ This recognition of scale is another essential element in claiming primacy for the term “exile” alongside its many alternatives. Lastly, exile is often categorized as a *transnational* experience. In the words of Benjamin Tromly: “Political emigrations are inherently transnational in nature, as they serve as nodes of physical, intellectual, and cultural exchange among their country of origin, their land of exile, and sometimes third countries embroiled in their affairs.”¹² This position has been echoed by Ashwini Vasanthakamur. In referring to exile politics as “normatively rich and politically complex,” she states the following:

In short, [exiles] are instrumental actors in the countries they have fled, and in the transnational domain into which they are flung....exiles can engage in a ‘politics from below’ and ‘away’ that produces alternative sites of power and that can mitigate the several failings of an international system of states in an unequal world.¹³

Exile has traditionally been typecast as a temporary phenomenon, to be solved with the introduction of political stability through respect for difference (from antagonism to agonism) in the homeland. But its transnational status has led exile to become difficult to place, both physically and theoretically, within a state system defined by borders and sovereignties. What was originally an extreme anomaly became, due to crisis after crisis, so commonplace, that its full significance became diluted and, arguably, overlooked.

Latin American Exile vs. Transatlantic Transfer

The example of Latin America provides some insights on this. Over the last twenty years or so, political exile has been recognized as a fundamental component of Latin American politics during the past two centuries.¹⁴ As one study on Latin America has put it,

¹¹ Edward Said, “Reflections on Exile,” in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, ed. Edward Said (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173–4.

¹² Benjamin Tromly, *Cold War Exiles and the CIA: Plotting to Free Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 3.

¹³ Ashwini Vasanthakamur, *The Ethics of Exile: A Political Theory of Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 2–3.

¹⁴ Luis Roniger and James Green, “Exile and the Politics of Exclusion in Latin America,” *Latin American Perspectives* 34, no. 4 (2007): 3–6 and the subsequent articles in this special issue.

exile has been a regulatory mechanism for political systems unable to create pluralistic and inclusive models of participation; and although exile developed as an elite phenomenon in the 19th century when political participation was restricted, it became a massive trend in the 20th century as mobilizations and more inclusive participation led to authoritarian rule.¹⁵

The argument is that this kind of “institutional exclusion” from the national political and public realms is typical for Latin America, so much so that it has “played a vital part in shaping the form and styles” of politics on that continent. This replicates the orthodox interpretation inherited from the Greeks. Those polities that resort to the use of exile to stabilize a particular form of rule are contrasted with more elastic, pluralist and tolerant political communities that are able to accommodate dissidence and oppositional elites. Latin America has in this way confirmed the modern paradigm. The decline in the use of exile signifies a transition to a more stable, all-inclusive, durable, *modern* national political system. In contrast, the presence of exile signifies a brittle, fragile politics that is prone to varying forms of authoritarianism. But beyond this, it is worth returning to Said’s recognition above of how exile has shaped Western culture at large. Western democratic nations have never been simply neutral vessels, acting as temporary landing grounds for exiles who either drifted into utopian longing or remained determined to repossess their homeland. Exile politics have consistently become interwoven with the domestic politics of those host nations, taking on forms that have had an impact on the formation of worldviews and the direction of strategies. This has definitely been the case with the United States.

It is worth placing the Latin American interpretations next to the ways that exile has featured in the transatlantic region. Interestingly enough, the tone of the discussion often seems to shift from exile to transfer. Whereas exile has been traditionally interpreted as linked to a failure of political systems and an inability to absorb contesting forces, transfer is often treated as being more politically progressive, or at least leading to a certain beneficial outcome or utility. This approach can be found in much research on transatlantic social politics, which has identified multiple channels – individual, institutional, informal and formal – through which reforms, causes, protests, and best practices were transferred across the Atlantic from the 18th and 19th centuries onwards, in both directions, creating a dense transatlantic space of exchange.¹⁶ The argument is clear – without this exchange, we would not be where we are today, and we should recognize that many progressive developments that we take for granted have their origins outside our national

¹⁵ Mario Sznajder and Luis Roniger, *The Politics of Exile in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1.

¹⁶ Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Daniel Scroop and Andrew Heath (eds.), *Transatlantic Social Politics 1800-Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

contexts. Consider from this perspective the excellent project of the German Historical Institute, “Transatlantic Perspectives,” which sought to transcribe and bring into greater focus the interlocking stories of Europeans who migrated across the Atlantic in the modern era and who contributed to binding its two shores closely together. The website describes the project as follows:

Our broad definition of transnational transfer thus includes the import, export, and circulation of knowledge and practices across national and cultural boundaries. People, goods, ideas, concepts, and institutions are able to move across borders and can thus become objects or agents of transcultural exchanges and transfers, adapting them from the context of one society to that of another... We ask what crossed the Atlantic, how it changed in the process, and how the transferred material was received or what impact it made.¹⁷

This project is admirable in its all-encompassing approach, and does of course acknowledge the different causes that lay behind such transfer, referring for instance to “forced emigration to the United States” as a significant sub-category. Nevertheless, this does result in a certain watering down of the relevance of exile as a unique category of exchange – it becomes one of several forms, no longer decisive for designating the difference between forms of authoritarianism and democratic rule, or antagonism from agonism. Transfer becomes the all-encompassing term for transnational exchanges, and is generally applied from a positive perspective. A similar approach can be seen in other large-scale projects encompassing the transnational history of Europe through the centuries.¹⁸ One study of the forced migration of Jews from Germany in the 1930s goes so far as to claim it as “the most sweeping and enduring cultural transfer in modern history.”¹⁹ Another points out, referring to the intellectual consequences, that “forced migration made possible careers that could not have happened in the smaller, more restrictive university and science systems of Central Europe,” and that the networks of innovation released by these migrations would not otherwise have occurred.²⁰ These claims from the histories of

¹⁷ See: “Welcome to Transatlantic Perspectives,” accessed March 27, 2023, <https://www.transatlanticperspectives.org>.

¹⁸ Wolfgang Schmale, “A Transcultural History of Europe: Perspectives from the History of Migration,” EGO: European History Online, 2010, accessed March 27, 2023, http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/theories-and-methods/transcultural-history/wolfgang-schmale-a-transcultural-history-of-europe-perspectives-history-migration/?searchterm=transferbset_language=en.

¹⁹ Claus-Dieter Krohn, “Deutsche Wissenschafts-emigration seit 1933 und ihre Remigrationsbarrieren nach 1945,” in *Wissenschaften und Wissenschaftspolitik: Bestandsaufnahmen zu Formationen, Brüchen und Kontinuitäten im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts*, eds. Rudiger vom Bruchand and Brigitte Kaderas (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002), 437–45.

²⁰ Peter Weilemann, *Anfänge der Europäischen Atomgemeinschaft: Zur Gründungsgeschichte von EURATOM 1955–1957* (Baden Baden: Nomos, 1983), 192.

science and of ideas apply the terminology of “forced migration” and “cultural transfer,” in doing so bypassing the cataclysmic political upheavals and associated violence that led to the exile and that had ongoing effects in terms of the relationship between exile and future political developments. The use of transfer in place of exile to an extent depoliticizes the political significance and focuses on the movement rather than the expulsion and the subsequent projection of alternative futures. Once again, Said’s reference to the cultural embeddedness of exile in Western culture as an ever-present signifier for the progress to come is important. Political exile should be recognized, not as an anachronism of modern political systems, but as a justification and legitimation for particular Western strategies claiming to establish a stable political community elsewhere.

The intellectual exile of the mid-twentieth century profoundly altered the direction and dynamics of American cultural and knowledge production across all fields of activity.²¹ Recent studies have delved deeper into these relations, examining the impact on specific fields of research and cultural activity.²² Unpacking Stanley Hoffman’s seminal 1977 essay “An American Social Science: International Relations,” Felix Rösch has documented the contribution of a generation of lesser-known scholars for the construction and consolidation of IR in the United States in the mid-20th century.²³ Rösch clearly uses the term *émigré* as a synonym for exile, pointing out the common characteristics of those involved “due to their common intellectual maturation in continental European humanities as well as the experience of the Shoah and forced migration.”²⁴ Not all were based

²¹ The classic studies are W. Rex Crawford, *The Cultural Migration: The European Scholar in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953); Laura Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, *The Intellectual Migration* (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969); H. Stuart Hughes, *The Sea Change: The Migration of Social Thought, 1930–1960* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975); Lewis A. Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and Their Experience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Martin Jay, *Permanent Exiles: Essays on Intellectual Migration from Germany to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Udi Greenberg, *The Weimar Century: German Emigres and the Ideological Foundations of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

²² Mitchell G. Ash and Alfons Söllner, *Forced Migration and Scientific Change: Emigre German-Speaking Scientists and Scholars after 1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Edward Timms and Jon Hughes, *Intellectual Migration and Cultural Transformation: Refugees from National Socialism in the English-Speaking World* (Vienna: Springer, 2003); J.M. Palmier, *Weimar in Exile: the Antifascist Emigration in Europe and America* (London: Verso, 2006); Thomas Wheatland, *The Frankfurt School in Exile* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); Christian Fleck, *A Transatlantic History of the Social Sciences: Robber Barons, the Third Reich and the Invention of Empirical Social Research* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011).

²³ Stanley Hoffmann, “An American Social Science: International Relations,” *Daedalus*, no. 106 (Summer 1977): 41–60; Felix Rösch, *Émigré Scholars and the Genesis of International Relations: A European Discipline in America?* (London: Palgrave, 2014). See also: Nicolas Guillot, *The Invention of International Relations Theory: Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation and the 1954 Conference on Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

²⁴ Rösch, *Émigré Scholars*, 3.

in Germany, and not all were Jewish, but the infamous Civil Service Reconstitution Law of April 1933 contributed the most to this exodus. As a result up to 25 percent of university-level professorial posts and many other lower positions were vacated by 1936, the main beneficiaries of this exile of pure, applied, social scientific, and humanities expertise being not only the United States but also places such as Turkey.²⁵ The US became not simply a sanctuary but also a bearer of the values of open enquiry and intellectual freedom that had been crushed. For Hans Speier, a sociologist who joined the New School for Social Research in New York in 1933, it was essential for the exile to contribute to that transformation of the host nation: “the cosmopolitan intellectual exile should dedicate himself or herself to strengthening the United States, which, they implied, was the current bearer of the universalistic values cherished by scholars.”²⁶

The role of the United States in this repositioning of exile as a central factor, more than simply movement or displacement, in Western modernity is two-fold: as a refuge for exiles, and as a power that recognized the potential political utility of exiles for its political projects abroad. Democratisation campaigns have always relied on their local advocates to provide immediate legitimacy. This was exemplified by US policies during the Cold War.

Exile Politics and the Cold War Transatlantic

The United States, as a nation of immigrants, was culturally well placed to incorporate the political utility of exiles in its own foreign policy designs. It also stood for what were considered to be universal values – liberal democracy, the rule of law, the free market – that could be adopted and promoted by anyone, not just Americans. The onset of intensive conflicts with totalitarian adversaries through the twentieth century turned exiles into a valuable asset for achieving US supremacy. During WW II, the Office of Strategic Services took in around 900 scholars for its Research and Analysis department, many being European exiles (Frans Neumann, Herbert Marcuse, John Herz, to name a few of the most prominent). The OSS episode is interesting for how the expertise of the exiles eventually overcame suspicions of their possible divided loyalties in a wartime situation.²⁷

²⁵ Martin Kohlrausch and Helmuth Trischler, *Building Europe on Expertise: Innovators, Organizers, Networkers* (London: Palgrave, 2015), 188.

²⁶ Daniel Bessner, *Democracy in Exile: Hans Speier and the Rise of the Defense Intellectual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 55.

²⁷ Barry Katz, *Foreign Intelligence: Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Services, 1942–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

The onset of the Cold War in the late 1940s would give this development a further impetus. Exile organizations from Bolshevik Russia had already been entwined with US foreign relations elites after 1917 in covert plans of varying credibility to undermine the revolution.²⁸ It is this absorption of exiles by the US, socially, intellectually, and politically, and its incorporation of exile communities as an essential part of its foreign policy strategy that really gives the issue significance from the 1940s onwards.

The linkage of a wide range of exile communities with the US anti-communist crusade during the Cold War, and the way that exile became a motif to consistently justify US Cold War policies from containment to rollback, is undisputable. In the early Cold War period, Central and East European exiles took on greater significance through the national units that were incorporated into the sprawling CIA-financed Free Europe Committee. Established in 1949 ostensibly as the public fund-raising and lobbying front for Radio Free Europe, NCFE was more than simply another CIA outlet for controlling the message. Its founding document, ‘The Inauguration of Political Warfare’ penned by George Kennan in May 1948, fully understood the mobilizing power of exile politics within an immigrant nation such as the United States, both in terms of the moral argument (the mission to promote universal freedoms), and in terms of political lobbying for the anti-communist cause in Congress, during elections, and in the public sphere at large. Exiles lent the US strategy identity, legitimacy, and credibility. They also provided an additional motivation, through their lobbying and political connections, for attention to be given to their homelands. In this way, exiles were not simply useful political tools but also political actors who used their agency to influence US society. For exiled intellectuals such as Speier, the US represented a remarkable opportunity for blending “enlightened and universalistic cosmopolitanism” with power for good. For exiled politicians, the US was a source of recognition and funds for maintaining their networks – and, should things go their way, for regaining power. Symbolic annual “monuments” to profile the cause, such as Captive Nations Week, are still part of the US political calendar.²⁹

In the early Cold War, exile was portrayed as a temporary station on the way to a transformed political future where democracy and freedom would triumph. But that

²⁸ David Fogelson, *America's Secret War against Bolshevism: US Intervention in the Russian Civil War 1917–1920* (Raleigh: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

²⁹ See: Anna Mazurkiewicz, *Voices of the Silenced Peoples in the Global Cold War: The Assembly of Captive European Nations 1954–1972* (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2020); Katalin Kádár Lynn (ed.), *The Inauguration of ‘Organized Political Warfare’: The Cold War Organizations Sponsored by the National Committee for a Free Europe/Free Europe Committee* (Los Angeles: Helena History Press, 2013); Simo Mikkonen, “Exploiting the Exiles: Soviet Emigres in US Cold War Strategy,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, no. 14 (2012): 98–127; Benjamin Tromly, “The Making of a Myth: The National Labor Alliance, Russian Emigres, and Cold War Intelligence Activities,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 18, no. 1 (2016): 80–111; Bessner, *Democracy in Exile*, 67.

future needed guidance according to the US worldview. A fascinating side-history of this were the exile universities established before and after WW II. In 1933 Alvin Johnson established the University in Exile as an off-shoot of the New School for Social Research in New York, a graduate school that became the academic residency for 183 émigré intellectuals and which was supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.³⁰ Many of those at Johnson's institute went on to provide research services for the OSS during the war. This linkage between exiles, educational institutions, and intelligence continued in the Cold War in the form of "covert universities." The Free Europe Committee established the Free European University in Exile in Strasbourg in 1951 for Central and East European exiles.³¹ Very much representative of the 'Rollback' mentality of US Cold Warriors who considered Soviet control of Eastern Europe to be temporary, the University ran a curriculum that focused on European history, political philosophy, and economic development, coaching its participants for what were hoped to be future leading positions in their home countries (and many graduates did eventually re-enter their national political realms after 1989).³²

Another exile university was that of Pro Deo. Felix Morlion, a Belgian Dominican, founded the *Centre d'information et publication Pro Deo* in 1932 in Brussels, an anti-totalitarian propaganda organization that sought to make use of the latest methods of communication science. Going into exile in 1940, first to Lisbon and then – thanks to William J. Donovan and the Office of Strategic Services – to New York, Morlion's trans-European Catholic underground began providing reports on occupied Europe. In late 1944 Donovan sent Morlion to Rome to work out of the Vatican of Pope Pius XII. It was there that Morlion founded the School of Mass Communication Media, the graduates of which would form the backbone of Luigi Gedda's Catholic Action. A prominent figure in the anti-communist campaign that focused on the 1948 Italian elections, Morlion was soon on the radar of other determined anti-communist zealots such as Henry Luce and C.D. Jackson, who would go on to lead an affiliate, the American Council for the International Promotion of Democracy under God. By the early 1950s Morlion, now running the U.S.-orientated University of the Social Sciences Pro Deo in Rome, was

³⁰ Claus-Dieter Krohn, *Intellectuals in Exile: Refugee Scholars and the New School for Social Research* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993).

³¹ Giles Scott-Smith, "The Free Europe University in Strasbourg: US State-Private Networks and Academic "Rollback," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16, no. 2 (2014).

³² See: Veronika Durin-Hornyyk, "The Free Europe University in Exile, Inc. and the Collège de l'Europe libre (1951–1958)," in *The Inauguration of 'Organized Political Warfare'*, ed. Kádár Lynn (Los Angeles: Helena History Press, 2013), 439–513, and her ongoing research at <https://univexile.hypotheses.org/> (accessed 27 March 2023).

clearly implicated in the same CIA-linked circles as the Free Europe Committee.³³ Interestingly enough, both the Strasbourg and Rome institutions switched to a greater focus on Latin Americans from the late 1950s onwards. Exile universities such as these indicate exile's deliberate cultivation as part of the wider US Cold War strategy. They became sites of learning for what were presented as attainable futures, even as these futures receded further into the distance.

Specific countries have contributed noteworthy exile networks that exerted their influence for decades. The Poles form a special group in this scenario, with exiles from leftist and rightist totalitarianism and strong transatlantic connections in terms of searching for political futures. The Bilderberg meetings had many inputs but the foremost role in initially pulling it together was played by the Pole Jozef Retinger.³⁴ Czeslaw Milosz produced the seminal work on communist ideology, *The Captive Mind*, following his defection in 1951.³⁵ The Paris-based and London-based Polish emigré intelligentsia were prominent figures throughout the Cold War, in particular Jerzy Giedroyc and the journal *Kultura*, Konstanty Jelenski, Walter Laqueur and Leo Labedz, these last two running the journal *Soviet Survey* for 32 years, outlasting its original sponsor, the Congress for Cultural Freedom.³⁶ From the beginning the Congress functioned as a kind of habitus for displaced intelligentsia of both East and West, its executive secretary Michael Josselson having escaped both Soviet control of the Baltics and Nazi control of Paris, only to return as a member of the US occupying authorities of Germany.³⁷ Spanish and Portuguese dictatorships contributed their own transatlantic networks of exile that linked both Latin and North America with political and cultural designs for change in the homeland.³⁸ The presence of many Germans expelled from the Eastern territories at the end of WW II brought a significant diaspora into post-war West Germany. At the time of the founding of the Federal Republic in 1949, this community was reckoned to be about 17 percent of the population, and “for better or worse, a massive, organized system of expellee pressure

³³ See: Valerie Aubourg, “C.D. Jackson, Henry Luce, et le mouvement Pro Deo (1941–1964),” *Revue Française d’Etudes Américaines*, no. 107 (2006): 29–46.

³⁴ M.B.B. Biskupski, *War and Diplomacy in East and West: A Biography of Josef Retinger* (London: Routledge, 2017).

³⁵ Andrzej Franaszek, *Milosz: A Biography* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

³⁶ Giles Scott-Smith, “Tracking the Bear: Survey,” in *Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War: The Journals of the Congress for Cultural Freedom*, eds. G. Scott-Smith and Charlotte Lerg (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 167–84.

³⁷ On Josselson see: Sarah Miller Harris, *The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

³⁸ See: Olga Glondys, *La Guerra fría cultural y el exilio republicano español: Cuadernos del Congreso por la Libertad de la Cultura (1953–1965)* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2012); Scott Soo, *The Routes to Exile: France and the Spanish Civil War Refugees, 1939–2009* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); Sebastiaan Faber, *Exile and Cultural Hegemony: Spanish Intellectuals in Mexico 1939–1975* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002).

groups began to make itself felt,” so much so that the Allied occupying powers were seriously concerned as to the effect this would have on political stability.³⁹ They would continue to wield that influence, particularly in Bavaria, for the next several decades.

Exile has also manifested itself directly in diplomatic relations both during and after the Cold War. An examination of those who have taken refuge in another country’s diplomatic mission – a high-profile move emblematic of the threat of violence from the host regime – reveals that embassy exiles come predominantly from Latin and Central America, Africa, and Asia. However, most of these cases have been of a few days in duration, and some of the longest refuges in an embassy have actually taken place in the transatlantic region. The Hungarian cardinal Jozsef Mindszenty spent fifteen years in the US embassy in Budapest following the Soviet invasion of November 1956.⁴⁰ Between 1978–83 the so-called Siberian Seven – seven Russian Pentecostals – resided in the US embassy in Moscow demanding the right to emigrate to the United States, which was eventually granted.⁴¹ Julian Assange spent seven years as resident of the embassy of Ecuador in London, claiming refuge from charges of rape in Sweden which he viewed as a politically motivated tactic to arrange his extradition to the United States for the publication of classified material via Wikileaks. Political exile in its classic sense is not entirely absent from these examples, although they could perhaps be classed as anomalies.

This summary is definitely not meant to be exhaustive – on the contrary, it is meant to point to the scale and scope of the collective exile experience of the West, and how this has shaped both Western interpretations of its own political development and its interactions with others. Even when part of a wider strategy, exiles are disruptive elements in both domestic politics and international relations.

Conclusion

Exile has been a part of the “Western” world since the Greeks recognized its usefulness for removing disruptive forces from the polis. The Romans continued in their neighbor’s footsteps with the practice of *exilium*, and exile was taken up as part of the political land-

³⁹ H.W. Schoenberg, *Germans from the East: A Study of their Migration, Resettlement, and Subsequent Group History since 1945* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 78.

⁴⁰ Jozsef Mindszenty, *Memoirs* (New York: Macmillan, 1974).

⁴¹ John Charles Pollock, *The Siberian Seven* (Waco TX: Word Books, 1980); Timothy Chmykhalov, *Release! The Miracle of the Siberian Seven* (Basingstoke: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1984).

scape of Renaissance Italy.⁴² Since then revolutions – American, French, Russian, Cuban – have produced waves of political exiles who went on to influence the public sphere of their adopted host nations.⁴³ The failed revolutions of 1848 forced Marx first out of Germany and then out of France. Modern Russia can literally be defined by its struggle with exiles, from Alexander Herzen to Trotsky to Solzhenitsyn to Boris Berezofsky. The United States sought to utilize exiles in the Cold War as actors legitimizing its political warfare with the Soviet Union, but the agency of the exiles themselves in manipulating political agendas should not be overlooked. Wars such as Vietnam and Iraq created significant American exile communities in Canada who have affected bilateral relations. Exile has continued to play a highly publicized role in transatlantic affairs into the twenty-first century, notably through Edward Snowden’s flight from Hawaii to Hong Kong to Moscow in 2013. Snowden’s exposure of the National Security Agency’s methods for information-gathering disrupted relations with allies and questioned the legal and democratic credentials of the US itself. From a national security perspective, this is a significant twenty-first century reversal of the United States as exile refuge during the twentieth.⁴⁴ Russia under Vladimir Putin has also pursued a violent campaign against political exiles who have challenged in any form his rule, leading to high-profile assassinations and assassination attempts abroad, particularly in Britain.⁴⁵ Yet despite this brief list demonstrating their omnipresence, exiles have generally been regarded as “interfering outsiders,” “dismissed as irrelevant,” or representing “an unfortunate side effect of forced displacement that will fade away once this unfortunate predicament is cured.”⁴⁶ The place of exiles within modern transatlantic relations, shaping political discourse and influencing political presents and futures, indicates the prevalence of antagonism in the Western political tradition.

⁴² C. Shaw, *The Politics of Exile in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); F. Ricciardelli, *The Politics of Exclusion in Early Renaissance Florence* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007).

⁴³ On Cubans see: Maria de los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors: Cuban Exile Politics in the United States* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

⁴⁴ Edward Snowden, *Permanent Record* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2019); Nils Melzer, *The Trial of Julian Assange* (London: Verso, 2022).

⁴⁵ The most spectacular have been the attempt on the life of Sergei Skripal, a former KGB colonel, with the use of nerve agent Novichok in Salisbury in 2018, and the death of Alexander Litvinenko from polonium poisoning in 2006. Other mysterious exile deaths in Britain include media magnate Boris Berezovsky in 2013, and Yukos cofounder Yuri Golubev in 2007.

⁴⁶ Vasanthakumar, *Ethics of Exile*, 2.

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