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Removing Peoples

Forced Removal in the Modern World

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Coerced or Free? Considering Post-Colonial Returns

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Introduction

Forced removals were an integral feature of colonial rule. This was certainly the case in the USA, a country that developed in tandem with the eviction of Native Americans from their homelands. Autochthonous residents of French Algeria similarly found their lands labelled 'sterile' by outsiders and confiscated. These areas were parcelled out as settler village lots while the evicted Algerians became an impoverished subject proletariat. Removals on such a scale required a concerted effort involving the backing of a state power and its legal apparatus buttressed by considerable military threat. Evictions were often chaotic and violent. Incoming forces destroyed important symbolic sites and other evidence of the area's departing residents, and seized houses, lands, crops, and livestock. The evicted people were sometimes imprisoned, as in the case of the Navajo, or translocated to more distant territories designated for them, as in the case of the repeated removals of Native American tribes to the other side of an ever-migrating western frontier. They often found themselves stateless or a subject population with considerably fewer rights than the people now inhabiting their former territories. We could cite here hundreds of examples of eviction, displacement, and replacement associated with settler and other colonial conquests worldwide.

Not all mass population transfers associated with colonialism involved subject or colonized populations, however. Less obvious are the migrations of 'colonials' that followed the collapse of colonial rule. As independence movements swept the globe in the mid twentieth century, people who were affiliated with the former colonial powers fled *en masse*. These departures were principally to Europe, to such countries as the Netherlands, Great

Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, and Portugal, as well as to Japan from its spheres of influence across Asia. The migrations at issue here involved millions of people, and were sufficiently significant in scale to transform many European countries after the Second World War from sites of net population exportation to countries of immigration. Should we view these population transfers as migrations or removals? Were they free or coerced? In this essay I outline how these population transfers compare with other cases of forced removals, emphasizing departures from European settler colonies.

Pieds Noirs and Other 'Repatriates'

The elderly former settlers of French Algeria (*pieds noirs*) that I interviewed in southern France in the mid 1990s talked about their time in France as a period of exile, and themselves as *exilés*. They often felt at sea in their new land. A woman in her mid-seventies, Louise, explained to me her feelings about France: 'France is our *patrie* [fatherland, nation], but it isn't our *pays* [country]'; she told me.

The most beautiful country in the world is the one in which you are born. You see, I am not completely integrated, a part of France . . . to the extent that I don't feel *chez moi* [at home]. When I go to California, it's as if, as if . . . I were in France. . . . You see, in France, nothing reminds me of my country [*pays*]. I can go from the north to the south . . . and I don't find the . . . plains, the mountains, the . . . the same landscapes [*physages*], the same smells . . . the same colors, like *chez nous*. So, I get the feeling that I'm always *en voyage* in France. I'm floating . . .¹

Louise's country (*pays*), her homeland, is Algeria, a place she still misses intensely after leaving it in 1962. While she would certainly bristle at any challenge to her loyalty to France, she has an ambivalent relationship to her new home. Like many other *pieds noirs* I interviewed, Louise talked about her departure as forced upon her, and certainly not her choice. And like her

¹ Louise' is a pseudonym. Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted from Jan. 1995 to June 1996, followed by month-long visits in 1998, 2001, and 2004. Research methodology and findings are summarized in Andrea Smith, *Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Migrant Settlers in Algeria and France* (Bloomington, Ind., 2006).

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compatriots, she complained about the former settlers' official appellation as 'repatriates', asking how a people could be 'repatriated' to a country they had never seen. French Algeria, not France, is her *pays*.

The experience of these elderly former settlers since their departure from the colony at the end of the Algerian War has many features of a diasporic population. Their identity as *pied noir* revolves around their peculiar exodus from the colony. French Algeria is the focus for many *pied noir* social clubs and, for decades now, groups of former settlers have been reuniting across France around their former colonial home towns, high schools, or workplaces. Like reunions of other people who live in exile, conversations at these gatherings revolve around the 'homeland'. *Pied noir* clubs collect the material detritus of this lost world: not only novels and memoirs, but also colonial-era newspapers, Michelin guides, and street maps. To what degree does this continued attachment to the colony reflect the experiences of former settlers in general? Should we take seriously the *pied noir* claim to be a people living in exile, and view them as another instance of a people forcibly removed? In what follows, I will first consider the *pied noir* example in relation to other notable instances of former colonials displaced at the end of colonial rule. I then turn to the question of coercion, and ask whether or not we should consider these reverse migrations of decolonization to be yet another example of forced removal.

Migrations of Decolonization

Over several decades following the Second World War, millions of people affiliated with former colonial powers fled the newly or soon-to-be independent nations, often settling in Europe. Because of the highly divergent colonial histories and independence trajectories involved, these migrations defy easy generalization. In the most general terms, the people involved included administrators and settler families, usually citizens of the departing power who were often, but not always, former residents of the colonizing power; Europeans of other nationalities, sometimes naturalized citizens; and other outsiders who may have held reduced social or political standing in the colony, such as traders or imported

labour, who were viewed locally as affiliated with the colonial power (East African Asians are a case in point). Colonial auxiliaries who served in colonial police and military units, such as the *harkis* of French Algeria or the Hmong of Indo-China, were often evacuated as well, as were people of mixed ancestry and local elites with a strong affinity to the core cultural group, similarly at risk under the new regime.²

The unprecedented nature of these population 'refluxes',³ and the fact that statistically invisible citizens were usually involved, makes it quite difficult to gain exact figures to demonstrate the scale of these population transfers.⁴ They were not, at least initially, orchestrated by state agencies, so we can rely on their records for only a fraction of the migrations. Britain is a case in point. Clearly former officers and settled families left India, Kenya, and other colonies for Britain sometime after the Second World War, but we may never know the specifics of this migration pattern. Ceri Peach, extrapolating from the 1991 census, identifies 328,080 'whites' in Britain who had been born in the New Commonwealth (former colonial territories). He suggests that since many of these people were probably children of British-born parents, who themselves would not appear in these statistics, 'the return from former colonies is likely to have been much larger than this'.⁵

Despite statistical uncertainties, we do know that sizeable populations were involved. Working from the numbers of people recorded in the colony before independence, scholars have determined that after the Second World War, approximately 5.4 to 8.5 million people migrated to the European continent over a forty-year period; some 6.2 million Japanese departed Asian territories over the same period.⁶ Even larger numbers are involved if we

² Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (Durham, NC, 2002), 500.

³ These migrations have yielded a diverse nomenclature. Hoerder refers to them as 'reverse' migrations, while Peach calls them 'refluxes'. See Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, 499 and Ceri Peach, 'Postwar Migration to Europe: Reflux, Influx, Return', *Social Science Quarterly*, 78/2 (1997), 269–83. Here I refer to them as 'reverse migrations of decolonization'.

⁴ Andrea Smith (ed.), *Europe's Invisible Migrants* (Amsterdam, 2003), 10–13. See also Jean-Louis Miège and Colette Dubois (eds.), *L'Europe retourne: les migrations de la décolonisation* (Paris, 1994), 17–20.

⁵ Peach, 'Postwar Migration to Europe', 271.

⁶ B. Elenad, 'Europe and Migration after Decolonisation', *Journal of European Economic History*, 27 (1998), 457–70, at 468.

include post-war expellees/returnees to Germany,⁷ or the migrations that ensued following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, which included the compulsory population exchanges of 1.5 million people between Turkey and Greece mandated by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.⁸

The pace and scale of the population transfers were highly variable. Some were ongoing affairs that lasted decades, as in the case of the Italians who began leaving Libya in the 1940s, or the British departures from India, Kenya, and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, which have been ongoing since 1945, the 1950s, and the 1970s, respectively. Migrations in such instances occurred in phases, with the earliest departures composed of people with shallow ties to the colony, such as those recently appointed for service there. People leaving later were often descendants of early migrants, families with long-standing histories in the colony, people with fewer resources, and, in general, people who had more to lose by leaving. Finally, people leaving the colony at independence did not always travel to European destinations at first, such as Belgians who left central for South Africa.⁹ Attenuated departures can be associated with a comparatively less violent or intensive colonial heritage, and a less contentious release of metropolitan control. Such departures also suggest a comparatively less hostile attitude toward these human reminders of the former regime. They often followed the collapse of colonial forms characterized by few colonists and administrators, or a more indirect style of colonial rule.

In contrast, some departures were massive, sudden affairs, as in the dismantling of colonies with large settler populations, such as French Algeria, Portuguese West Africa, and the Dutch Indies. Some 300,000 migrants left the Dutch Indies between 1945 and

⁷ Peach, 'Postwar Migration to Europe', 271.

⁸ Renée Hirschon, "'Unmixing Peoples" in the Aegean Region', in ed. (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York, 2003), 3–12, at 5–6, 3. While Hirschon writes that this was 'in no sense a repatriation for either the Muslims of Greece or the Ottoman Christians', the 1.2 million 'Asia Minor Greeks' received citizenship rights upon arrival and were labelled by Greek state agencies as 'repatriates' or 'returnees', even though they called themselves 'refugees'. See Elithia Voutira, 'When Greeks Meet Other Greeks: Settlement Policy Issues in the Contemporary Greek Context', in Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean*, 145–59, at 148.

⁹ Pierre Salman, 'Les Retours en Belgique indiens par la décolonisation', in Miège and Dubois (eds.), *L'Europe retourne*, 181–212, at 198.

1963, nearly a million settlers of Algeria fled to France during the weeks leading up to and following Algerian Independence in 1962, and 800,000 *retornados* fled for Portugal between 1974 and 1976. Because of their scale, and the perception among the evacuees of a decided lack of choice, I emphasize these cases here.

Reverse Settler Migrations: Points in Common

The waning years of settler colonies were typically quite disorderly. Colonial powers worked hardest at maintaining their colonies with the largest settler population, and thus migrations from such territories usually occurred after violent and protracted wars of independence, such as the Algerian War of Independence (1954–62), the conflicts in Portuguese West Africa which started in 1961 and continued for nearly fifteen years, or the Dutch Indies conflict (1945–9). Citizenship regulations and international law often allowed the migrants only one possible destination, at least at first: the metropole. For many people, the end of the colony was not at all predicted, and the decision to leave was made at a terrible moment, during the final throes of a particularly violent sort of civil war. Leaving was often considered to be essential for survival, if not dictated outright by the departing or incoming governments. Often the migrants left behind most of their possessions, and certainly their land, homes, and social ties. This departure was often experienced as the loss of a whole way of life. During the first decades back 'home', many 'returnees' lived in a state of shock, trying to accomplish day-to-day tasks, and unable to plan their future course.

Dutch Indies

The case of the Indies Dutch illustrates many of these general patterns. When their government capitulated to the Japanese in 1942, Dutch Indies women and children were interned, and men became slave labourers.¹⁰ Two days after the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, Indonesian Independence was proclaimed,

¹⁰ Hans van Amsterfoort and Mies van Nickerk, 'Immigration as a Colonial Inheritance: Post-Colonial Immigrants in the Netherlands, 1945–2002', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 32 (2006), 323–46, at 325.

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and residents endured the violence and chaos of the war of Independence until Indonesian sovereignty at the end of 1949.¹¹ Many Dutch began leaving for the Netherlands immediately after the Second World War, long before Independence, however, to recuperate from the horrors of the war years. Between 1945 and 1949, some 45,000 moved there even while approximately 125,000 Dutch were leaving the Netherlands for the Indies to carry out their military service in defence of the colony. At Independence, military officers and administrators returned to the Netherlands as mandated by the state. Through negotiations with the new government, Europeans who had lived in Indonesia for at least six months were able to choose Indonesian nationality; approximately 14,000 heads of households (or 36,000 people), mostly Eurasians, selected this opportunity. Migrations to the Netherlands continued between 1952 and 1957, despite the Dutch government's efforts to slow this process; however, approximately 10,000 people migrated to New Guinea instead. It was only in 1957 that the remaining Dutch were granted no other options. Their belongings were confiscated, and some 50,000 Dutch were expelled, followed by the 12,000 Dutch then living in New Guinea when that territory was transferred to Indonesian sovereignty.¹² After fifteen years 'virtually the entire Dutch population left Indonesia',¹³ some of whom had been established there for generations.

Most of the migrants who arrived in the Netherlands had never been there before.¹⁴ Their fate upon arrival, according to Wim Willems, depended on the timing of their arrival, the lengths of their stay in the Indies, and whether or not they still had families in the Netherlands. The earliest to arrive faced a Netherlands that had just suffered years of German occupation, crushing unemployment, and housing and food shortages. According to Willems, people who were born and raised in the Netherlands, but who had spent their working years and the war in the Indies, were most incensed about their purported mistreatment by the

¹¹ Elisabeth Locher-Scholten, 'From Urm to Monument: Dutch Memories of World War II in the Pacific, 1945–1995', in Smith (ed.), *Europe's Invisible Migrants*, 105–28, at 107.

¹² Herman Obdeijn, 'Vers les bords de la Mer du Nord: les retours aux Pays-Bas

indians par la décolonisation', in Migge and Dubois (eds.), *L'Europe retrouvée*, 49–71, at 53–4.

¹³ van Amsterfoort and van Nickerk, 'Immigration as a Colonial Inheritance', 325.

¹⁴ Wim Willems, 'No Sheltering Sky: Migrant Identities of Dutch Nationals from Indonesia', in Smith (ed.), *Europe's Invisible Migrants*, 33–59, at 39.

government upon their return, while people born in the Indies were more eager to profit from the new opportunities that they found in their new home.¹⁵

French Algeria

It is difficult to exaggerate the chaos of the departures of the French from Algeria. The Algerian War was infamous for the violence, internecine warfare, and overall disruption it caused on both sides of the Mediterranean. France came close to civil war as a series of metropolitan governments collapsed. During the weeks leading up to the Evian accords of 18 March 1962, which marked the conclusion of the Algerian War of Independence, the French government not only did not predict mass emigration of the colony's million settlers, but it actually tried to prevent departures by limiting ferry services across the Mediterranean.¹⁶ Military officers and their families were ordered back home not long before Independence. For the vast majority of the settlers, however, leaving was only ostensibly a choice. The Evian accords established Algeria and France as two territories with distinct nationalities and citizenship. They promised the protection of the settlers, a continued respect of property and civil rights, dual nationality for three years with an option for Algerian nationality, and no expropriation of property without compensation.¹⁷ However, violence increased after the accords, in part instigated by an unconstitutional referendum on the accords held exclusively in metropolitan France,¹⁸ which enflamed the pro-colony settler guerrilla movement, the Secret Army Organization (OAS). The OAS carried out a scorched-earth campaign that fuelled reprisals from the armed Algerian forces, the National Liberation Front (FLN). As the country

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁶ French officials asked trans-Mediterranean ferry companies to reduce their weekly France-Algerian crossings to sixteen, and then to seven in March, and to three by April 1962. Approximately 68,000 settlers left Algeria between Jan. and Apr. 1962. In response to the ever increasing demand, the companies decided to intensify their crossings on 16 May and emigration increased dramatically: over 300,000 people crossed the Mediterranean from May to Aug. 1962. Jean-Jacques Jordi, *De l'exode à l'exil: rapatriés et pieds-noirs en France. L'exemple marseillais* (Paris, 1993), 66.

¹⁷ Anthony Clayson, *The Wars of French Decolonization* (London, 1994), 173.

¹⁸ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, NY, 2006), 111-19.

devolved into chaos, settler departures escalated rapidly. Because of the French state's decision to engage in a long and difficult war involving a systematic use of torture, as well as the harsh treatment of the autochthonous population, in which settlers or their ancestors either actively took part or tacitly approved for 130 years, it would have been quite difficult for most French settlers to remain. They realized this, and fled, losing nearly everything in the process.

The migrants faced further disruption upon their arrival in France because state and local officials were completely unprepared. In fact, in many parts of France, officials continued to refer to the migrants as *vacanciers*, vacationers, people taking their summer vacations in France, even though it was clear that few planned on returning to Algeria.¹⁹ The end of empire was so unprecedented that officials, the settlers, and the French public alike had not prepared for the mass flight across the Mediterranean. The fortunate few who were able to send their belongings on container ships often found their crates empty at the docks in France.

Portuguese West Africa

Departures from Portugal's African colonies were similarly precipitous and chaotic. The political decolonization of Portugal's African colonies occurred within a span of three months after the 25 April 1974 revolution as the government promised sovereignty to anti-colonial movements in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau. Portuguese troops began departing. After failed settler uprisings, most residents of European descent lost their rights. This was followed by the confiscation of European property, and mass panic. Residents and people affiliated with the colonial administration fled. Between May and July 1975, 1,000 people were leaving Angola daily.²⁰ Over 505,000 arrived in Portugal from late 1974 to early 1976, representing a 5 per cent increase in the population of that small country.²¹ These migrants were akin

¹⁹ Jean-Jacques Jordi, 1962: *l'arrivée des pieds-noirs* (Paris, 1993), 69.

²⁰ Colette Dubois, 'L'épincieux dossier des retournados', in Migez and Dubois, *L'Europe retrouvée*, 213-46, at 228.

²¹ Stephen C. Lubkemann, 'Race, Class, and Kin in the Negotiation of "Internal Strangerhood" among Portuguese Returnados, 1975-2000', in Smith (ed.), *Europe's Invisible Migrants*, 75-93, at 78.

to refugees. Thousands arrived in Portugal destitute, without identification, money, and some owning 'absolutely nothing but their clothes'.²² People often left everything behind, and children were frequently separated from the rest of their family members during the transit period.

Settler Integration back 'Home'

On the surface, these three migrations share many features in common: they were largely unplanned, mass events that followed in the wake of particularly violent colonial wars, the migrants often left behind the majority of their possessions, and they had many difficulties adapting to a foreign land, which was their purported 'home'. However, we also find some striking contrasts that stem from the length of time the settlers were established in the colony, the composition of the settler population, the generation involved, and the amount of time that has passed since their 'return'. Scholars working with objective statistical data often report a complete integration of the returnees, and often link this to the fact that the migrants were usually granted citizenship upon arrival. Ethnographers working with the communities themselves, in contrast, often report a continued sentiment of separateness from wider society.

French of Algeria: Decolonization Diaspora?

The integration of the *pieds noirs* is often heralded as a success story, for soon after their arrival, they were able to remake themselves, achieving not merely a modicum of upward mobility. According to some scholars, the second generation is invisible in contemporary France today.²³ Yet many of the people I interviewed, still members of the arriving generation, lived out the rest of their years lost, disconnected from their new 'home', a place they had been taught to revere in the colony, but which most had never seen. The shock between the France that they imagined and

²² Maria Rocha-Trindade, 'The Reparation of Portuguese from Africa', in Robin Cohen (ed.), *The Cambridge Story of World Migration* (Cambridge, 1993), 337-41, at 338.

²³ Richard Alba and Roxane Silbermann, 'Decolonisation Immigrations and the Social Origins of the Second Generation: The Case of the North Africans in France', *International Migration Review*, 36 (2002), 1169-93.

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the one they experienced was sometimes dramatic. Alienation from this new France was compounded by the fact that for more than half of the *pieds noirs*, this country was that of their nationality, but not of their ethnic origins. Over half of the French settlers of Algeria were from Spain, Italy, or Malta. Their ancestors had been naturalized as French citizens in the colony before the First World War, and thus the generation who arrived in France in 1962 were often French citizens at birth. And yet everything they learned about the metropole was second-hand; many were arriving to a 'homeland' they and their ancestors had never seen. We might refer to the *pied noir* migration as a *diaspora of decolonization*.

Indies Dutch

The Indies Dutch arrived nearly a generation ahead of the *pieds noirs* and two ahead of the *retornados*, and thus offer an important example of the legacy of a reverse decolonization migration nearly half a century after it occurred. Despite the trauma of the migration, the fact that many families had been installed in the Indies for generations, the presence among this population of large numbers of descendants of mixed unions, and the fact that the government at first had no policies devised to handle this novel situation, by most accounts their access to citizenship rights led to a rapid integration into Dutch society. Because the Indies Dutch were citizens, a policy was put into practice to absorb them into society as quickly as possible.²⁴ This involved contracting private boarding houses, setting apart 5 per cent of newly constructed homes in the social sector for repatriates, the installation of repatriate officers at employment agencies, and special schooling. These measures are credited with the successful absorption of the Indies Dutch by 1973.²⁵

Portuguese Retornados

The integration of the *retornados* is also viewed as an unmitigated success, in this case largely because of the migrants' comparatively

²⁴ van Amersfoort and van Niekerk, 'Immigration as a Colonial Inheritance', 326.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 328. Of course, generation may be key here. Amersfoort and Niekerk note that some Indies Dutch migrated on to California, and the older generation had relatively more difficulty adjusting to Dutch society (*ibid.* 328-9).

shorter stays in the colony. In contrast to France and the Netherlands, Portuguese migration to the African colonies was a declining phenomenon, with migrations to empire accelerating, not declining, in the decades after 1950. As a result, the majority of the *retornados* were born in Portugal (including an astounding 85 per cent of those aged 40 and older).²⁶ Lubkemann has concluded that race, class, and family ties in Portugal were key factors in determining individual migrants' integration experiences, with approximately one-third of the *retornados* settling in the districts in which they had been born. The *retornados* of mixed descent and others without clear family ties, on the other hand, usually moved to urban areas. Phenotype certainly played a role in shaping their reception by Portuguese society, with offspring of mixed or predominantly African ancestry finding themselves classified by fellow Portuguese as immigrants, rather than the fellow citizens that they were.²⁷ But because of their rapid integration into the workplace and their greater educational and other cultural capital than the average Portuguese upon arrival, they experienced such rapid social integration that, according to Lubkemann, there is no publicly recognized *retornado* ethnicity today.²⁸

Comparing Reverse Migrations and Forced Removals

The decolonization migrations outlined here can be distinguished from forced removals in several important ways. Whether mandated in an orchestrated fashion from above, as in the 'peacemaking' population transfers that accompanied the end of world wars, or instigated by individual actors, as in the case of maverick sheriffs in US territories, most of the removals discussed in this volume were carried out with the explicit or tacit backing of one or more states. This was certainly the case when we consider removals associated with the establishment of colonial regimes, which involved the dual force of metropolitan bureaucratic and military apparatuses. In contrast, the early reverse migrations of former settlers were spontaneous affairs that occurred, at least at first, with little or no official planning. Some governments actually tried to prevent the returns at first, as

²⁶ Lubkemann, 'Race, Class, and Kin', 79–80.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 89.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

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we have seen in the cases of the French *piéds noirs*, and the Indies Dutch.

Another noteworthy distinction between decolonization migrants and people forcibly removed from their homes is the social and political status the former enjoyed after leaving the colony. In contrast to the indigenous peoples they or their ancestors had helped displace several decades before, and in contrast to many other examples of forced removals discussed in this volume, decolonization migrants were usually offered some kind of preferential treatment at their final destination, which was construed, at least by representatives of dominant institutions, as their 'rightful home'. On many levels, they had a privileged migration experience, one that was considerably more favourable than even that of labour or economic migrants, as a result of their preferential educational opportunities, remittances, hiring policies, loans, and housing opportunities, as well as the intangible but real psychological boost they received knowing that at least some portion of the metropole felt that they belonged. State officials often tried to foster this view among the general public, arguing that their integration was a national moral duty. In this sense, they resemble the arrival because of their purported membership in the nation-state. However, not all decolonization migrants were afforded such favourable treatment, as we shall see. When we consider the question of race, we find that colonial-era racial ideologies played a pivotal role in determining the balance of agency and coercion faced by the reverse migrants of decolonization.

Race and the Post-Colonial

Until now I have avoided the issue of racial difference and instead emphasized the returns of diverse peoples unproblematically conflated as 'repatriates'. However, these reverse migration streams were comprised of highly diverse populations. As I have detailed, class, occupation, mobility, and access to liquid resources often shaped the degree of agency experienced by colonials contemplating departure. But race and related notions of national identity played decisive roles in this process as well. For even while newly independent nations were emerging and

challenging colonial-era mindsets, colonial-era social categories and racial hierarchies persisted in the metropole and would help dictate how the migrants from the former colonies would be treated back in Europe. Options granted to Dutch citizens varied according to race or degree of Dutchness, as we have seen. At Indonesian Independence in 1949, not all Dutch citizens were granted permission to go to the Netherlands; at first, those of mixed European and Indonesian descent were encouraged to remain in the new Indonesian republic.²⁹ Some Indies Dutch opted to do so and chose Indonesian citizenship, but after experiencing discrimination, many decided to leave. Yet the mixed-descent among them were encouraged to move on to New Guinea, not Holland.³⁰ It was only in 1955 that the Dutch government allowed them to enter the Netherlands.

Ethnic Dutch, on the other hand, were not only granted preferential treatment in the Netherlands, but could choose additional destinations as well. Many migrated to the USA (some 30,000 by 1962) or Australia (9,000).³¹ Again, race was their principal advantage. Willems discusses in detail the negotiations required before the USA would allow Indies Dutch into the country under the Refugee Relief Act following the bursting of dykes in the Netherlands. Even once Sukarno evicted the remaining Indies Dutch in 1957, the USA would allow only 10 per cent of the refugees admitted to be 'half-caste'.³²

A similar sorting of peoples occurred in Britain in the early decades of the decline of empire. The June 1948 British Nationality Act offered all residents of the British Empire and Commonwealth the status of British subjects with equal rights and privileges, an act which Kathleen Paul describes as a 'last stand against encroaching colonial independence and imperial disintegration'.³³ However, underlying this general policy were different categories of Britishness. Paul compares the treatment of four different populations, the residents of the United Kingdom who

²⁹ Willems, 'No Sheltering Sky', 35.

³⁰ In fact, Dutch government officials rationalized their continued presence in New Guinea as resulting from their need for a place for Eurasians who wanted to leave the Republic of Indonesia. See R. F. Holland, *European Decolonization 1918-1967: An Introduction* (New York, 1985), 92.

³¹ Willems, 'No Sheltering Sky', 46, 36.

³² *Ibid.*, 46.

³³ Kathleen Paul, 'Communities of Britishness: Migration in the Last Gasp of Empire', in Stuart Ward (ed.), *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester, 2001), 180-99, at 183.

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were encouraged to migrate to the Dominions, continental European refugees brought to Britain to work, Irish citizens, and residents of the former colonies. Underlying factors helped determine which of these peoples would be encouraged to migrate and where. As Paul notes, 'the treatment received by each group... clearly reveals that the policy-making elite believed that each group could be categorized according to a hierarchical understanding of the world's population, an understanding based on racialized conception of humanity'.³⁴ While white skin was a prerequisite for imperial migration, it also emerged as one of the unstated preferences for state-sponsored migration to Australia, New Zealand, South Rhodesia, and Canada. European aliens in Britain, moreover, were not described as foreign but as European, and their assimilation into British society was fostered by extensive public relations campaigns.³⁵ Approximately 50,000 to 60,000 Irish nationals were granted the privileges of British subjecthood without that official status. However, when a small group of black British subjects from the West Indies tried to arrive in 1948, an uproar ensued despite the fact that such a migration was well within their rights.³⁶ Not only were they not welcomed, but non-white migrants were not offered the preferential treatment described above. As arrivals from former colonial territories accelerated, British officials generated new entry restrictions that were implicitly or explicitly about race. These regulations culminated in the 1971 Immigration Act, which reclassified former British subjects into 'patrial' and 'nonpatrial' categories, giving rights of entry to an overwhelmingly white population.³⁷

French Algerians encountered a similar sorting of peoples according to colonial-era ideologies at Algerian Independence. In the face of the threat of nationalist movements, there was a generous shift in France's relationship to its colonies that was analogous to the 1948 British Nationality Act. The colonies were renamed 'Overseas France', the French empire became the 'French Union', and French Union citizenship was extended to all French citizens and colonial subjects.³⁸ While in theory this included Algerian Muslims, a series of measures was established for this population that eventually led to the creation of a category of 'français musulmans d'Algérie' (Muslim French citizens

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 184.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 186.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 196.

³⁸ Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 40.

from Algeria).³⁹ The unexpected exodus of the settlers at the end of the Algerian War put a damper on France's liberal stance, and by April 1962 the government began to prevent the entry of Muslim French citizens from Algeria.⁴⁰ This had terrible consequences for Muslim auxiliaries in particular, sometimes glossed as the *harkis*, who were singled out for refused entry in a Top Secret note emanating from de Gaulle's office in late May 1962.⁴¹ Unable to leave, thousands of *harkis* were killed in Algeria at the war's end. Approximately 40,000 *harkis* and their families managed to reach the metropole, however, where they were not only not granted the subventions and other benefits offered the *pièds noirs*, but where they were housed in makeshift camps in remote rural areas isolated from wider French society. The legacy of this fiasco lingers on, with the second generation continuing to mobilize for compensation and recognition.⁴² Although colonial categories may have been banished in the newly independent states, they held firm in the metropole in the aftermath of colonialism, helping to shape the migration and integration experiences of 'post'-colonial migrants.

As we have seen in the case of the *harkis*, the race factor was especially apparent in the treatment by metropolitan governments of colonial auxiliaries. In their comparative analysis of post-colonial immigrants to the Netherlands, van Amersfoort and van Niekerk find striking contrasts in the trajectories of Dutch auxiliaries. The Royal Dutch Indian Army (KNIL) of the Dutch East Indies included many local soldiers, recruited especially from the 'absolutely loyal to the Dutch Crown'.⁴³ However, this purported loyalty would cause problems upon Independence. Soldiers of the KNIL were allowed to choose where they would be discharged. When ex-KNIL soldiers proclaimed an independent state of South Moluccans, many retiring soldiers wanted to be discharged there. This led to considerable resistance from the Indonesian

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government, and finally the veterans were sent to the Netherlands. Because this move was viewed as a temporary one, they were not granted citizenship status and the government did not work to facilitate their integration. Instead, a separate agency was developed to monitor their situation. Like the *harkis*, the 'Moluccan' auxiliaries and their families were housed in camps in remote or rural areas. Segregation, not integration, was fostered as the migrants attended separate schools and experienced restricted access to the labour market. Although by the late 1960s it was clear that the Moluccans would probably never be able to return 'home' safely and were thus in the Netherlands forever, 80 per cent still did not have Dutch citizenship in 1968.⁴⁴ This situation reached public attention with terrorist attacks in 1970, 1975, and 1977 after which time the government made a concerted effort to assist them. Most now have citizenship rights, and scholars find the experiences of the second generation are much improved.⁴⁵

In his work on Puerto Rico, Grosfuguel questions the 'myth of decolonization' and the related assumption that 'modernity is somehow a more advanced stage disconnected from colonialism and coloniality'.⁴⁶ Considering the treatment of Puerto Ricans in the contemporary USA, he argues that 'racial/colonial ideologies' have not been eradicated from metropolitan centres, 'which remain in grave need of a sociocultural decolonization'.⁴⁷ Instead, we are living in a world in which 'global coloniality' is the dominant form of core-periphery relationships. This coloniality is in part the result of lasting power relationships stemming from the colonial era. As Grosfuguel writes, 'the entanglement of a global division of labor of core-periphery relationships and a global racial/ethnic hierarchy of Western and non-Western people . . . was not significantly transformed with the end of colonialism and the formation of nation-states in the periphery'.⁴⁸

The differential treatment of the populations affiliated with colonial powers illustrates the persistence of colonial-era ideologies. Racial and ethnic hierarchies forged in colonial times circulated

³⁹ *Ibid.* 49.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 230.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² See Christine Font, 'De Nemours à Largenière, une solidarité: le retour des officiers de la DBFM', in Jean-Jacques Jorfi and Emile Terminié (eds.), *Marsaille et le choc des décolonisations: Les rapatriements, 1954-1964* (Aix-en-Provence, 1996), 92-102, at 96-7; Mohand Hamoumou, 'L'Histoire des harkis et Français musulmans: la fin d'un saubou?', in Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora (eds.), *La Guerre d'Algérie, 1954-2004: la fin de l'année* (Paris, 2004).

⁴³ *Ibid.* 329.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 331.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 332-3.

⁴⁶ Ramon Grosfuguel, *Colonial Subjects: Puerto Ricans in a Global Perspective* (Berkeley, 2003), 7.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 2.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 6.

between core and colony and were inscribed in both colonial and metropolitan law. They persisted in the metropole even after decolonization, as the differential treatment of migrants from the former colonies demonstrates. In fact, in both Britain and France, we find that policies became more restrictive, more 'colonial-esque' as the colonial era faded into the distance. It is for this reason that members of the colonizing powers circulated so easily around the globe: thousands of Belgians left the Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi for South Africa,⁴⁹ and 'white' British subjects moved freely within the former British Empire: from India to Kenya to Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, as well as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. Ongoing settler colonies such as the USA and Canada attracted many *piéds noirs* dissatisfied with life in France, while Algerian *harkis* faced an uncertain future housed in camps set apart from French society.

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Can we classify the population transfers associated with the decolonization of settler and other colonies as forced removals? As might be expected, the highly diverse reverse migrations of decolonization varied in the degree of coercion involved. In Dirk Hoerder's typology, migrations may be voluntary, coerced, or forced, with the latter two categories characterized by 'particular pronounced unequal power relationships'. In his view, migrations are free 'only within both the macrolevel constraints in the society of origin and the legal limitations of receiving countries, and given the ability to defray the "opportunity cost" of the move'. Coerced migrations offer less choice upon departure, 'but permit some decision-making upon arrival'.⁵⁰ Here Hoerder cites the example of refugees who are sometimes able to decide where to ultimately settle. Forced migrations, in his view, involve little to no migrant agency;⁵¹ an example is the transatlantic migrations of enslaved Africans.

Because they involved such a wide array of peoples and circumstances, we can find all three categories—free, coerced,

⁴⁹ There were 8,000 Belgians in South Africa in 1965, and 14,000 by 1974. Saliman, 'Les Retours', 198.

⁵⁰ Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, 15.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

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and forced—among the reverse migrations of decolonization, with race playing a pivotal role in determining for any given individual the balance between coercion and agency. Some short-term (white) residents such as merchants simply moved when they decided that their time in the colony was coming to an end, either travelling to a new colonial setting, or returning home with few lasting consequences. People with multi-generational ties to the colony had less choice, as we have seen, but some could still choose when to depart and/or their final destination, depending on their available resources, geo-political circumstances, depending their phenotype. White settlers thus fall more into Hoerder's 'coerced' category because of this ability to engage in some level of decision-making, if not regarding whether or when to leave, then at least where to go. Colonial administrators and members of the military, on the other hand, faced additional restrictions, and many were ordered home by official directive. While we might categorize these returns as 'forced' removals, it should be pointed out that this situation was not unusual for people in such a career. It was not unlike the restricted options faced by their counterparts in the metropole, or their own situation before decolonization commenced. However, the people considered phenotypically distinct or racially linked to the former colonial subject populations, such as the mixed Indies Dutch or colonial auxiliaries, were given little to no choice. They were either relegated to the newly independent state despite any risks they would incur there, or, if evacuated, often found themselves in a legal no man's land, such as the Moluccan auxiliaries. While former settlers such as Louise may have encountered a dramatic loss of agency at decolonization, and may today consider their departures as forced and certainly not their choice, they enjoyed far more freedom of movement in the aftermath of colonialism than most of the other 'colonials' composing this highly diverse migration stream.

Conclusion

The end of European imperialism brought with it a radical reshaping of politics and peoples, and included important mass population transfers. Despite the subjective experience by many

of the migrants of a decided lack of agency, however, we cannot categorize reverse migrations of decolonization en bloc as forced removals. These movements were highly diverse in terms of the types of colonies involved, their timing, pacing, scale, and the degree of violence involved. They defy facile generalization. Yet there is one striking commonality that can be found across the cases considered here: colonials in the colony had strikingly different fates at decolonization depending on phenotype. Regardless of their citizenship status, occupation, or former position in the colony, the degree of agency afforded individuals was usually related to their placement in the colonial-era racial hierarchies that continued to shape their treatment in the metropole well after the demise of colonial rule.