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THE CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION OF RUSSIAN-GERMANS
FROM RUSSIA AND KAZAKHSTAN TO GERMANY:
A CASE STUDY IN MIGRATION GEOGRAPHY

by

Jacquelin K. Tylzynski

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
Department of Geography

Western Michigan University
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June 1998

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Jacquelin K. Tylzynski

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FROM RUSSIA AND KAZAKHSTAN TO GERMANY:
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Jacquelin K. Tylzynski, M.A.

Western Michigan University, 1998

Since the collapse of communism in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union in the late 1980's/early 1990's over two million ethnic Germans have migrated to Germany (predominantly from Russia and Kazakhstan). Ethnic Germans are descendants of Germans who migrated to Central Europe and to Russia centuries ago who are returning to their historic roots since they have been allowed to leave. The reason ethnic Germans are migrating to Germany stems from a strange law written into West Germany's post-World War II constitution (in 1949) that promised ethnic Germans and their descendants the "right to return" to Germany; however, the majority of them were kept from emigrating until the Soviet Union collapsed. The ethnic German issue has become highly controversial in Germany. Straddled with the problems of Reunification, many Germans now feel the "right to return" for ethnic Germans is no longer practical.

This thesis analyzes the available literature and uses a variety of statistics, cartographic techniques and specially collected data to show the political, economic and social impact on Germany, and to some extent on Russia and Kazakhstan, caused by this migration.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest problems for the German government, and one of the most controversial issues in the country since Reunification, is the immigration of ethnic Germans (*Aussiedler*) arriving in Germany from Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. Ethnic Germans are descendants of German farmers and craftspeople who migrated to Central Europe and to Russia centuries ago who are returning to their historic roots since they have been allowed to leave. Since 1988, over two million ethnic Germans have migrated to Germany (predominantly from the former Soviet Union) and hundreds of thousands more are on the way (Info-Dienst 1996). The migration of ethnic Germans is observed in Western Europe as part of the East-West migration trend occurring since the collapse of communism in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union in the late 1980's and early 1990's, but simultaneously, this specific migration is unique because it is considered solely a "late consequence of World War II (Münz and Ulrich 1995, 8; Dietz 1994, 13)."

The reason the migration of ethnic Germans is considered a "late consequence of World War II" stems from a strange law included in West Germany's post-war constitution in 1949. Following World War II, under the auspice of the three West German occupation forces (the United States, Great Britain and France), a board of governors was chosen from each West German state to author a new constitution for

the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Formally promulgated on May 23, 1949, the “Basic Law” (*Grundgesetz*) as the constitution was to be named, included a provision entitled Article 116 (Kappler 1993, 4). The sole purpose of Article 116 was to extend the right to German citizenship to all persons who “between January 30, 1933 and May 8, 1945, were deprived of their citizenship on political, racial or religious grounds, and to their descendants.” “Such persons”, the Basic Law says, “may be granted German citizenship anew upon application (Focus On...1995, 1-2).” (Article 116 has been exercised primarily by ethnic Germans from Central Europe and the former Soviet Union but the law also enables other persons to return to Germany, such as German Jews forced to leave in 1933.)

Another law entitled the “Federal Expellee Law” (*Bundesvertriebenengesetz*), enacted in 1953, legally defines who is eligible for citizenship as an ethnic German. The Federal Expellee Law categorizes ethnic Germans arriving in Germany under Article 116 as belonging to one of two main groups. The first group is ethnic Germans and their descendants migrating from territory in Central Europe that was lost by Germany during World War II such as in certain parts of modern-day Poland (Figure 1). This group is considered to be of German “nationality” (*Staatsangehörige*) because they did not willingly give up their German citizenship (die Situation der Deutschen...1996). In the final days of World War II and immediately following the war millions of Germans, or German-speaking people, whose ancestors migrated to Central Europe as early as the twelfth century either fled or were expelled from their homelands, including East Prussia, Pomerania, East



Figure 1. German Territory and German Settlements in Central Europe – 1937.

Source: Die Geteilte Heimat 1994; deZayas 1994; Stumpp 1962

Brandenburg, Silesia, Bohemia, Bessarabia (Moldova), Romania and Yugoslavia (deZayas 1994; Info-Dienst 1996). “Partly as a result of the Potsdam Conference of July-August 1945 and partly out of revenge for the atrocities committed by the Nazis during World War II, around 13 million Germans were driven from their 700-year-old homelands (deZayas 1994, 15).” Another two million perished during the

expulsion process, many of whom were murdered by Soviet soldiers and pro-Soviet militias in Central Europe (deZayas 1994, 15).

When the expulsions officially ended in 1950 there were still around two million Germans, or German-speaking people, living in Central Europe. Some refused to leave their homes that had been in their families for centuries and thought they could ride out the storm of hostilities taking place against Germans. Others, especially physicians, veterinarians, chemists, skilled farmers and others with vocational skills were not forced to leave their homes, but those who chose to stay, or were kept from leaving for one reason or another, were forcefully relocated within their countries in Central Europe where they were persecuted and discriminated against for decades after the war because of their German ethnicity (deZayas 1994). Consequently, the authors of West Germany's post-War constitution extended them the right to citizenship under Article 116, and kept the law in place, to ensure that if more expulsions were to occur, ethnic Germans still living in Central Europe would have a place to go. From the 1950's to the late 1980's some managed to flee to West Germany, but the Cold War prevented most of them from leaving (Focus On... 1995, 1).

The second group of ethnic Germans entitled to citizenship under Article 116, and the topic of this thesis, is Russian-Germans. Unlike ethnic Germans arriving in Germany from Central Europe, Russian-Germans are not considered to be of German "nationality (die Situation der Deutschen... 1996)." Russian-Germans, defined by German law as being only of German "ethnicity" (*Volkzugehörige*), willingly gave up

their German citizenship centuries ago when their ancestors migrated to Russia.¹ Yet, Article 116 of Germany's constitution also extends the right to citizenship to this group of people. This immediately raises several questions. First, who are these people and why did their ancestors give up their German citizenship to live in Russia? Secondly, why would Germany grant the right to citizenship in 1949 to people whose ancestors left Germany centuries ago? Further, if Germany's constitution promised them the right to citizenship in 1949, why is the immigration of Russian-Germans causing so much controversy in the country today? Finally, how many Russian-Germans still live in the former Soviet Union and what is the new Russian government's policy regarding its ethnic German population?

Statement of Purpose and Research Objectives

The contemporary migration of Russian-Germans is one of the most important movements of people in the current decade, posing many challenges to the German and Russian governments and to millions of Russian-Germans themselves. The research presented in this thesis analyzes the available literature and uses a variety of statistics, cartographic techniques, and specially collected data which were not available before to English-speaking readers to show how a peculiar law written in West Germany in 1949 triggered the mass migration of this obscure ethnic minority since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and to show the political, economic, and social impact on Germany, and to some extent on Russia, caused by this migration.

This thesis will analyze the recent migratory movement of Russian-Germans

to Germany as an example of an international “migration stream” with certain attributes as initially identified by E. G. Ravenstein in his Laws of Migration (1885, 1889).² The migration of Russian-Germans will also be analyzed within the well-known theoretical framework defined by Everett Lee in A Theory of Migration (1966). Lee argues that all migrations have certain characteristics such as “push and pull factors”, “intervening obstacles”, and “personal choices” that can influence migration (Lee 1966, 49-50; Lewis 1982, 100-102).³

Thus, focusing on “migration streams”, “push-pull factors”, etc. this thesis will: (a) Trace the historical background of Russian-Germans from 1763 to the end of the Soviet era; (b) discuss “push factors” contributing to the migration of Russian-Germans to Germany beginning in the late 1980’s; (c) compare the number of ethnic Germans who have migrated to Germany since 1989/90 and their countries of origin with the migration stream and countries of origin prior to the collapse of communism in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union; (d) discuss factors “pulling” Russian-Germans to Germany; (e) discuss recent amendments to Germany’s constitution as a result of this migration; (f) discuss the surge in xenophobia and violence against “foreigners” in Germany as a result of the population dynamics occurring in Germany following Reunification; (g) discuss the 1989 Soviet census and explain its inaccuracies regarding the undercount of Russian-Germans; (h) look at the possibilities and difficulties of integration of ethnic Germans in Germany; and (i) discuss the affects of an experimental arrangement made between the Russian and German governments in the early 1990’s in an effort to keep Russian-Germans in the

former Soviet Union.

Justification of Research

The migration of Russian-Germans is important for several reasons. First, the new Germany is emerging as a strong and powerful nation and will probably become the leader in the European Union (deZayas 1994). It is important, therefore, that we have an understanding of the German people, their geography, their social problems, and their history. Secondly, the migration of Russian-Germans is significant because it means the loss of millions of people for the former Soviet Union. The migration of Russian-Germans is also important because it has given the German and Russian governments (former adversaries) the opportunity to work together in trying to find solutions to the Russian-German migratory problem.

Further, Germany needs to be recognized for its humanitarian effort and concern for millions of Russian-Germans. The German government, which has often been accused of being nationalistic for granting Russian-Germans the right to German citizenship, insists it does not encourage the immigrants to come to Germany but the right to citizenship under Article 116 stimulated the migration none-the-less. In this writer's opinion, however, it is not so much because of German nationalism that the country opened its doors to Russian-German immigrants by way of Article 116. Rather, it is because the German government, for reasons that will be shown in subsequent chapters, feels obligated, perhaps out of guilt, to assist Russian-Germans who want to leave the former Soviet Union.

Finally, it can be expected that the migration of Russian-Germans to Germany will continue for several more years causing further political and economic impact both in Germany and in the immigrants' countries of origin in the former Soviet Union. Analysis of this movement should make a contribution to the field of migration geography.

Study Approach and Organization

This thesis is composed of six chapters. The Introductory Chapter provides an overview of the topic and lists the research objectives. Chapter II traces the historical background of Russian-Germans to the end of the Soviet era.

Chapter III discusses the critical events that led to the collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union and Central Europe that stimulated the exodus of ethnic Germans to Germany. Chapter III also discusses "pull factors" regarding the migration of ethnic Germans to Germany, and analyzes census data to compare the number of ethnic Germans and their countries of origin arriving in Germany since the late 1980's with the number of ethnic Germans and countries of origin prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Chapter III also discusses the inaccuracies of the 1989 Soviet census concerning the number of Russian-Germans in the Soviet Union, the shift in public opinion in Germany toward the immigrants, and discusses subsequent amendments to Article 116 in an effort to slow the migration.

Chapter IV describes the immigration process and the role of Germany's state and local governments in assisting ethnic German immigrants. Chapter IV also discusses integration possibilities and difficulties and addresses issues such as

settlement patterns, employment potential, the language barrier, and cultural differences of ethnic Germans.

Chapter V looks at the concept of a “divided homeland” for Russian-Germans (*die Geteilte Heimat* 1994). This chapter also evaluates the 1996 estimate by the German government of the number of Russian-Germans still in the former Soviet Union and compares the results to the 1989 Soviet census. Chapter VI, the concluding chapter, provides a summary and conclusion of the research findings.

Data Collection Strategy

Census data obtained from the German government at both the federal and state levels were used in the analyses to characterize the migratory movement and demographic factors of Russian-Germans. Legal documents and other government publications pertaining strictly to ethnic Germans have also been cited throughout Chapters II through V, as well as written correspondences, short-wave radio broadcast commentaries, and United Nations reports on current migration trends in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Many books and periodical articles in both German and English were also used in the analyses.

¹ Some Central European ethnic Germans are also defined as being of German “ethnicity” rather than of German “nationality.” Included in this group are German-speaking people whose ancestors settled in certain regions of Central Europe, such as in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, that were once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire prior to World War I.

² Ravenstein (1885, 1889) actually used the phrase “migration current” but this has been substituted with the phrase “migration stream” in modern literature (Lee 1966). Ravenstein concluded that “migration streams” occur “along well defined routes toward highly specific destinations”, partly because of the flow of positive information about the destination from those who have already settled there. The flow of positive information about the destination serves to “recruit” new migrants at the “place of origin (Lee 1966; 54-55).”

³“The role of “push-pull” factors, as initially defined by Herberle (1938) is to try to identify and measure the negative (push) and positive (pull) factors of both the receiving country and the country of origin of the immigrant (Lee 1966, 49; Akerman 1978, 289). When, for example, positive factors for migration to a certain area are perceived by the potential migrant as outweighing the negative factors, and/or the negative factors for staying in the country of origin outweigh the positive factors, the person may decide to migrate. However, Lee, among others, argued that Herberle’s theory is “an oversimplification of the realities of life” and that there are also “intervening obstacles”, such as legal restrictions, cost, etc. that might prevent the potential migrant from leaving. In addition to “intervening obstacles” there might also be “personal factors” preventing a person from migrating such as old-age, illness, etc (Lee 1966, 50; Lewis 1982, 101).

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF RUSSIAN-GERMANS (1763– 1987)

New Beginnings

The history of Russian-Germans began when, at the invitation of Catherine the Great in 1763, thousands of Germans left their homeland for a new and, what was hoped, better life in Russia. Catherine, a German princess who became Empress of Russia (1762-1796) when her husband, Peter III, was dethroned and later murdered, wanted to develop the frontier in southern Russia. She also wanted to introduce western technology in Russia; a country which at the time was still in a primitive state compared with those in Western Europe. She particularly admired Germany's skilled agriculturalists and craftsmen and thought they would be a good influence on the Russian peasant class (Long 1988).

Catherine was not the first of the Russian aristocracy who thought Germans would be good for Russia. Some Germans migrated to the Baltics as early as the twelfth century. Many became wealthy landowners and merchants. They remained in the minority but they influenced the Baltics both in culture and in law (Giesinger 1993). In the sixteenth century the Baltics were invaded by Poland, Sweden, and later by Russia. Peter the Great (1689-1725) realized that in order for his country to become a European nation it was necessary to have a commercial link with the West.

He needed the Baltic States, located on the Baltic Sea, for transportation to the West so he declared war on the Swedes and invaded the Baltic provinces. The war lasted 21 years but finally in 1721 Peter prevailed, and as early as 1703, apparently convinced Russia would win the war, had proceeded to build the new Russian capital, St. Petersburg, at the mouth of the Neva River. Baltic Germans managed to keep control of their positions in government and social status after the war because Peter admired them and needed their help to modernize Russia (Giesinger 1993). Many Baltic Germans assimilated into Russian society and became part of the nobility (deZayas 1994). Ivan the Terrible (1522-1584), like his successors, had also been convinced that Russians could learn from the Germans and invited some Germans to Moscow although they were kept in enclaves, segregated from the general population, because the Russians were suspicious of their German guests (Giesinger 1993).

The majority of the German settlers did not begin migrating to Russia however until 1763 when Catherine issued a manifesto and sent agents all over Western Europe, but primarily to Germany, to entice people to resettle in Russia. They were promised free tracts of fertile land rich in minerals and easily accessible to trade routes. Merchants, craftsmen and professionals were told there would be many opportunities for them as well. People were also told they would be able to settle anywhere there was empty land, be given interest-free loans for ten years, that no customs duties would be levied on property brought into Russia, and they were promised freedom of religion, freedom from military service, and freedom to leave Russia anytime they wanted (Giesinger 1993; Long 1988).

Catherine's offer was hard to refuse. Germany had recently been involved in a series of wars and the country was left in a shambles. Their lands had been "trampled on" by German and foreign armies (Giesinger 1993, 11). Their sons had been sent off to fight in wars they did not understand, manufacturing and trade had been cut off because of the war, they suffered religious persecution, and struggled to pay the high taxes imposed on them by feudal landlords. Many took advantage of Catherine's manifesto. From 1764-1767 seven thousand German families, or approximately 25,000-27,000 people made the difficult journey to Russia to what they thought was going to be a "virgin paradise (Giesinger 1993, 11)."

The Trans-Volga Steppe

What the settlers found was not a paradise, but a wild frontier. The Trans-Volga steppe, located in southern Russia, was a buffer zone between Russia and the nomadic Kalmyk and Kirghiz tribes (Mongols) that roamed the region (Figure 2). For years the steppe had been used as a place to send undesirables; backward peasant villages dotted the landscape (Giesinger 1993).

The climate was a harsh continental climate similar to that found in America's prairie states with daily and seasonal temperature extremes. The region was subject to blizzards in the winter and severe droughts that could sometimes last for years. Although agents had promised that houses would be ready upon the settlers' arrival, they found there were no houses waiting for them or any lumber with which to build. There were shortages of just about every other essential promised too, including farm



Figure 2. The Trans-Volga Steppe (n.d.).

Source: The German Russians (Stumpp 1993). Used with permission of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.

implements (Long 1988). The newcomers had to carve dugouts out of the clay soil to find shelter from the harsh elements until thatched-roofed houses made from log could be built which often took up to two or three years because the logs had to be hauled upriver from other areas then dragged by horses to the settlement areas (Giesinger 1993).

The settlers found their Russian hosts had not been truthful in other matters either. Merchants, craftsmen and professionals who had migrated to the Volga region had been told they would be able to establish their trade in Russia, but once they arrived they were told they too would have to farm. Those who refused to cooperate were beaten into submission (Long 1988).

The settlers were often robbed by Gypsies and subjected to frequent attacks by

nomadic tribes and sometimes carried off by their captors never to be seen again (Beratz 1991; Giesinger 1993). Often newly established villages were almost completely destroyed in the raids (Sinner 1989). Nevertheless, they accepted their circumstances and decided to make the best of it.

The first German villages were established in Saratov and Samara Provinces, separated by the Volga River (Figure 3). Saratov was on the “mountainous side” of the river, a region richer in minerals and with better soils than the “meadow side” in Samara Province (Long 1988, 6). The settlers grew wheat and raised livestock.

Within four years of the arrival of the first settlers in the Volga region, 103 German villages had been established. Villages were linear in design with the church in the center between the *Überdorf* (upper village) and the *Unterdorf* (lower village) (Long 1988, 13). An observer of one of the German villages on the Volga steppe wrote (some years later) that he was amazed that in the short time the Germans had been there, they had built stone churches, an inn, distillery, candle factory, soap factory, tobacco factory, pharmacy, flour mill and had piped-in water in every house. He also noted the villages were, unlike Russian peasant villages in the area, “clean and tidy”, and that the Germans were “law abiding, family oriented, industrious and humble (Long 1988, 63).”

German migration to the Volga ended by 1768. “The population increased naturally from that point on, doubling about every 25-30 years (Long 1988, 11).” As a result of the rapid population increase, serious land shortages ensued and the settlers were forced to spread out more into the fringes of the Lower Volga where land was



Figure 3. Volga German Settlements – 1763-1860.

Source: Karte der ehemaligen und heutigen siedlungsgebiete der Deutschen in der Sowjetunion (Stumpp 1962).

not as good.

Although migration to the Volga steppe ended in 1768, German migration

continued into other pockets of the Russian Empire. In the sixteenth century, the Mennonites, a small, left wing religious group that originated in the Netherlands, migrated across Germany where it picked up many converts and eventually settled in Prussia (part of modern-day Poland). Most were agriculturists renown for their skills. But in the late 1700's, relations between the religious sect and King Frederick William III of Prussia began to deteriorate. Catherine, eager to accept these hard-working people, invited them to resettle in Russia. They settled in various parts of the country; a few went to the Volga region (Giesinger 1993, 29).

In the meantime, Napoleon's armies had been trampling back and forth across Germany to fight the Prussians, Austrians, and the Russians compelling many Germans once again to want to leave Germany. From 1801-1825 several thousand more German families headed to the Black Sea region, Bessarabia, Volhynia, and the Southern Caucasus. Most of these people had also been invited by Catherine and later by Alexander I, to populate the vast territory Russia had recently won from the Turks in the Crimean War. Others were invited by wealthy landowners who had already become established in these regions (Giesinger 1993). Another German settlement was established when some Volga Germans and Black Sea Germans migrated to southwest Siberia in the late 1800's to farm there (Figure 4).

Policy Changes Following the Crimean War Degrade Russian-Germans

Although the settlers were initially coerced and lied to by the Russian government to persuade them to migrate to Russia, it can be said they were generally



Source: Stumpp 1962; Giesinger 1974

Figure 4. German Settlements in Volhnyia, Black Sea Region, Volga Region and West Siberia – 1763-1897.

Source: Karte der ehemaligen und heutigen siedlungsgebiete der Deutschen in Der Sowjetunion (Stumpp 1962); From Katherine to Khrushchev (Giesinger 1993).

treated favorably after their arrival, at least for a while. Russian-Germans had autonomy and were considered by many to be privileged and spoiled. In 1763, the government established the “Guardianship Council for Foreigners” (*Vormundschaftskanzlei* or *Tutelkanzlei für Ausländer*) in St. Petersburg to “look after the colonization program (Giesinger 1993, 48; Long 1988, 16).” The Council set up an office in Saratov officially known as the “Saratov Office for the Guardianship of Foreigners”, but was referred to by local citizens as the *Kontora* (Giesinger 1993, 48).

The *Kontora* was a special administrative system that acted as a liaison between the settlers in the Volga region and the Guardianship Council in St. Petersburg. Grievances could be aired through the *Kontora* who oversaw the settlers and acted as a sort of protector. However, in 1871, following the Crimean War, government policy shifted to one of indifference toward Russian-Germans, and later to one of open hostility. Originally the new policy was directed at the Russian peasantry and the “socioeconomic backwardness of the Russian state” but it affected Russian-Germans as well (Long 1988, 16). The ultimate goal of the reform was to have “complete amalgamation of the colonists with the peasantry in all areas; social position, administration, and government (Long 1988, 16).” Russian-Germans considered the new policy directive degrading, as they had never suffered the status of the peasant class. The *Kontora* was ordered abolished leaving the settlers no way to voice their complaints. The government also mandated that all further correspondence with the government be written in Russian, and although Russian-Germans had been promised they would have freedom from military service, military conscription of Russian-Germans suddenly became law (Long 1988). Heavy taxes were also imposed on the settlers in violation of Catherine’s manifesto.

Because of cultural diffusion and isolation a strange dialect began to emerge in the German settlement areas. “*Kolonistendeutsch*” (colonists German) was a mixture of Russian and German words and phonetics, but it was only a spoken dialect, not written (Long 1988, 50). Russians ridiculed them and said their language was a “hybrid” and wanted them to adopt Russian but the settlers were determined to

keep up their traditions as they had been promised they could (Long 1988, 50). In defiance, they continued to use the German language in schools, religion and festivals, but by 1917 most Germans living in Saratov and other towns had become Russified much to the satisfaction of the Russian government.

The Churches' Role in the German Settlements

The settlers had complete freedom of religion until World War I, but in 1896 the government ordered they “could not exert a harmful influence on the Orthodox population in the neighborhood (Stumpp 1993, 104).” The 1897 official Russian census reported that 76% of the German settlers were Lutheran, 13.5% Roman Catholic, 3.7% Mennonite, 3.6% Reformed, 1.9% other Christian faiths and 1.3% Jews and other non-Christians (Stumpp 1993, 20).

Permits were required to build churches and all churches had to be built entirely with private funds. Russia's tsar, Nickolaus I, was concerned with the establishment of “orderly church relationships” (hierarchies within each denomination), so he set up the “Ordinance for the Evangelical Church of Russia” (a blanket term for Lutheran, Reformed, Baptists and Separatists) and another ordinance for the Roman Catholic Church. Until the Bolshevik Revolution, the settlers were subjected to the church, which in turn was subjected to the tsarist government (Stumpp 1993, 98).

Baltic Germans, as well as Germans in Volhynia, the Black Sea region and the Caucasus were of the Evangelical faith. Volga Germans were mostly Evangelical and

Roman Catholic. Mennonites settled mainly in the Black Sea region and later in West Siberia.

In 1897, 80% of the Russian people were illiterate but there were hardly any illiterate persons in the German settlements (Stumpp 1993). The churches raised enough money from their congregations to establish schools of higher learning where both the German and Russian languages were taught. Farmers donated land to be used for modern agricultural training and sons of farmers from all over Russia arrived at the school in Halbstadt (West Siberia) established in 1907 to learn German agricultural practices.

German churches in St. Petersburg and Moscow established universities where Germans, as well as Russian aristocrats, would send their sons to be educated (Stumpp 1993). The settlers, with no state subsidies, also built many schools, hospitals and orphanages (Figure 5).

Agricultural Development in the German Settlements

Droughts were common in Russia, particularly on the steppe, but in the good years the settlers grew wheat, rye and potatoes; later they also grew barley, millet, sunflowers, melons and pumpkins (Long 1988). Mennonites introduced tobacco to the region to be used as a cash crop. The tobacco was hauled in the winter (when prices were high) by sleigh to Saratov and sometimes as far away as Moscow. Tobacco was also traded with Kirghiz nomads for hides, felt, lard, blankets, saddles, etc. The nomads liked the tobacco's strength and its "stinking odor (Beratz

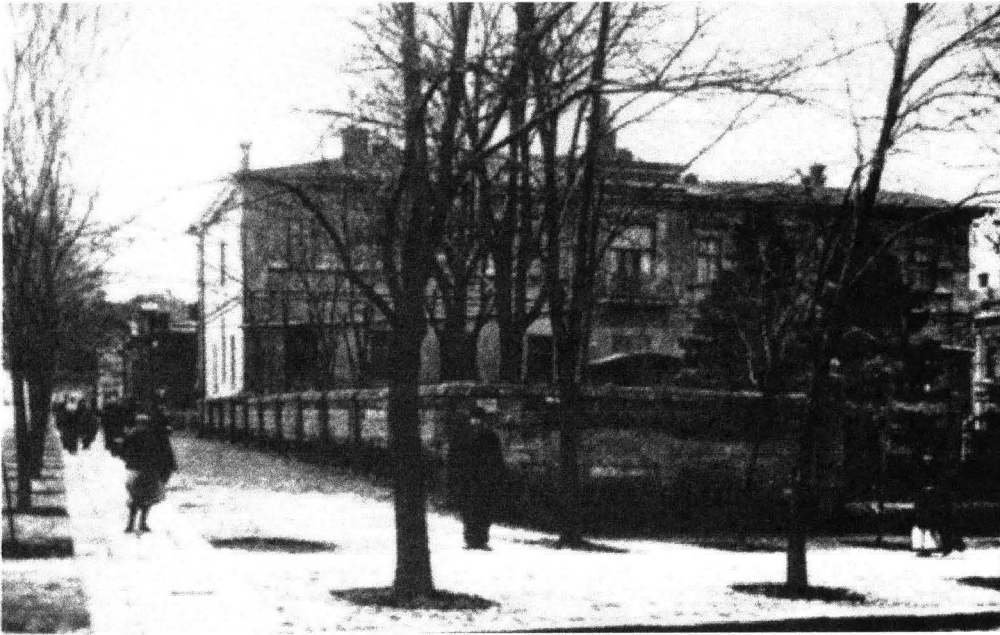


Figure 5. German Hospital in Odessa (n.d.).

Source: The German Russians (Stumpp 1993). Used with permission of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.

1991,167).”

Between 1860-1917 the Volga area changed from being a grain exporter to a flour exporter. Saratov became the “Minneapolis of the Lower Volga” and Volga Germans the “Pillsburys of the flour milling industry (Long 1988, 103).” In between drought and famine years, some Volga Germans made fortunes. Black Sea Germans also experienced enormous economic boom during this time (Stumpp 1993; Baumeister 1991) (Figures 6-8).

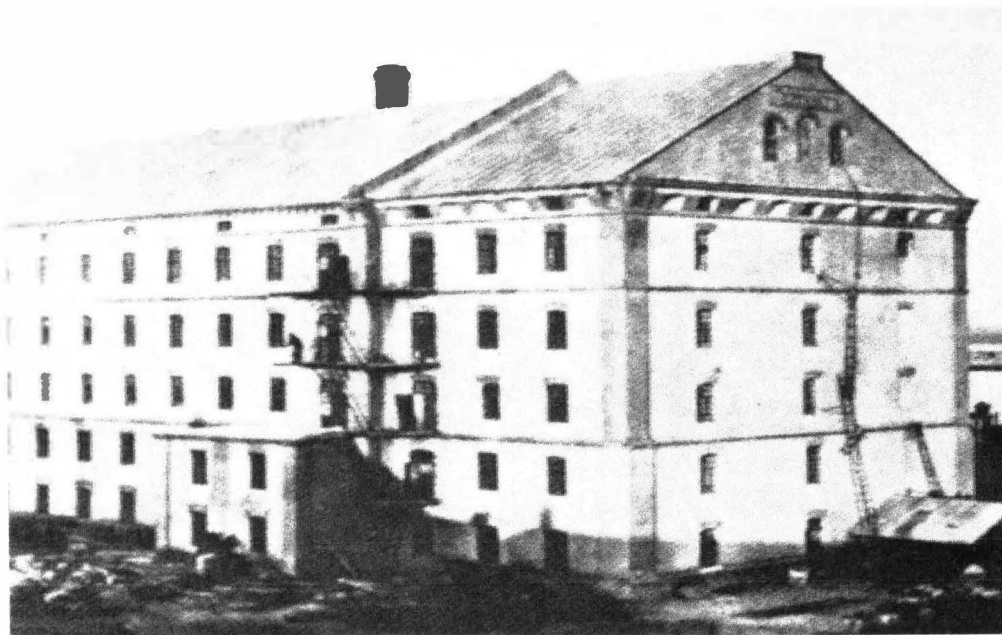


Figure 6. Steam-driven Flour Mill in Zarizyn (n.d.). In early German settlements windmills were used to ground grain (to make into wheat flour) but later every large village had its own steam-driven mill. The mills were used by Germans as well as by their Russian neighbors.

Source: The German Russians (Stumpp 1993). Used with permission of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.

Rise of German Nationalism: Russian-Germans Treated With Contempt

Between 1890-1894 relations between Russia and Germany deteriorated. Bismarck's establishment of the German Empire and subsequent rise of German nationalism caused Russian-Germans to become targets of condemnation by the Russian press. They were labeled as "a dangerous, subversive element" and an "unproductive, parasitic, economic drain who deserved no better treatment than Russian peasants (Long 1988, 57)." The German government, on the other hand, considered them to be Russian and was not in the least interested in their well being.



Figure 7. Fall Market on the Don (n.d.). As agriculture became modernized, industries sprung up in the larger German villages to produce farm equipment for local communities, but handicrafts were also important. Local farmers came to the market villages, such as the one shown in the photograph, to buy and sell handmade items such as rakes, pitchforks, and other farm implements.

Source: The German Russians (Stumpp 1993). Used with permission of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.

Actually, the settlers did not pose any threat to Russia. Having no elite to represent or lead them, most were oblivious to the attacks launched at them by the Russian press. They were German only in language and religion. They continued to live peaceably among their non-German neighbors but their prosperity in Russia increasingly became a curse as many in “panslavic circles” began to view the German settlers with ill-will, envy and hatred and viciously stirred up rumors that the settlers might use their economic success to betray the Russian government (Stumpp 1993, 28-29; Baumeister 1991). It was during this time that some German settlers decided



Figure 8. Town of Katharinenstadt in the Volga ASSR (n.d.). There were no German cities in Russia but the German influence was strongly present as in the town of Katharinenstadt.

Source: The German Russians (Stumpp 1993). Used with permission of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.

to leave Russia and join other Germans who had settled in the New World. Thousands of Russian-Germans came to America to farm. Others went to Canada, South America and elsewhere (Sallet 1974).

World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution: Consequences for Russian-Germans

Ethnic Germans who chose to stay in Russia were shocked by news of war between Russia and Germany. They did not want to fight against their bloodbrothers in Germany but when war broke out they remained loyal to the tsarist government and many Russian-Germans inducted into the military died for their adopted

homeland. Russian-German civilians also tried to show their loyalty. They provided food and raised horses for the Russian army, and cared for wounded soldiers in their hospitals (Stumpp 1993). In spite of efforts to prove their loyalty, the Russians were suspicious of them. The government abolished the settlers' right to freedom of assembly; the German language was no longer permitted in schools and German teachers were replaced with Russians. The publication of German newspapers was also forbidden (Giesinger 1993).

When the war did not go well for Russia the situation for the German settlers worsened. Falsely accused of being "spies and saboteurs", "Russian-German soldiers were pulled out of units on the western front and sent to the Caucasus to fight against the Turks (Giesinger 1993, 250)." Further, the "Liquidation Laws" of February and December, 1915 required that Russian-Germans living in Russia's western border areas were to be deported and their lands expropriated and given to Russian soldiers after the war as a reward for their service (Stumpp 1993, 141). More than 200,000 Russian-Germans from the province of Volhynia were loaded onto trains and shipped to Siberia, Kazakhstan and to Central Asia under the most inhumane conditions. Nearly half of them died along the way (Stumpp 1993, 141).

The government's motive for deporting the settlers to the east was not that Russian-Germans were guilty of being spies, but because the country needed skilled laborers in the east. Since the mid-1880's, when Russia became the colonial power in Kazakhstan and Central Asia, the government had tried to expand sedentary agriculture for wheat and cotton growing on the vast steppe but met with resistance

from nomadic herdsmen in the region who, the Russians found, were not easy to control (Olcott 1995). The Russian government also wanted to exploit the great mineral wealth of Kazakhstan and Central Asia and needed laborers to work in mining and other industries being established there. German settlers had already proved their worthiness in other parts of the Russian Empire so the government conveniently used the war as an excuse to deport them to where they could provide the necessary labor for Russian expansion in the region (Stumpp 1993; Olcott 1995). As with those from Volhynia, Volga Germans were also to be deported but the Russian Revolution began before the directive could be carried out (Giesinger 1993; Stumpp 1993).

Communism and Russian-Germans

Following the Revolution, the new Bolshevik government did not rescind the deportation law directed at the German settlers but did not act on it either. At the urgent pleading of Volga Germans, however, the law was temporarily suspended and they were spared being deported, at least for the time being. The law was also relaxed regarding German settlers from Volhnyia and some returned to their ravaged villages after the war (Stumpp 1993).

Russia lost territory in Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as a result of World War I. Poland's borders were pushed to the east. Baltic Germans were no longer Russian subjects and in 1918 declared their independence, but during World War II they lost their independence when Russia retook Estonia and Latvia by

agreements between Hitler and Stalin. Around 86,000 Baltic Germans were transferred to Germany or its territories. Bessarabia was another border region Russia had lost. Consequently, another 79,000 German settlers were transferred from Russian citizenship to Romanian, at least until World War II (Giesinger 1993, 301).

Communists took over local governments in the German settlements in 1917 and ordered the settlers to grow grain to feed the Red Army. “All villages, Russian and German, went hungry and were left without even enough grain for replanting (Giesinger 1993, 260).” The settlers began to resist and uprisings were common. In 1921-22 another drought brought even greater misfortune to Russian-Germans. In earlier times the settlers had been able to store grain to protect themselves but now all grain had been requisitioned by the government. After all the farm animals were eaten, as well as dogs, cats and mice, the mass starvation began. “Between 150,000 to 200,000 Russian-Germans starved to death (Stumpp 1993, 142).”

The German government became very concerned about Russian-Germans who were demanding to leave the Soviet Union. Russian-German settlers in the United States and elsewhere also began to voice their concern about relatives and friends living in the Soviet Union, and the Russian-German plight finally got the attention of the world press. As a token gesture by the Soviets around 5,000 German settlers were allowed to leave the Soviet Union after many thousands marched to Moscow and demanded to be set free; those left behind were sent to slave labor camps in the east as a warning to other settlers who might try to leave.

In an effort to restore order after the Revolution and the great famine, in 1923

the communist's party chief, Vladimir Lenin, announced his New Economic Policy (NEP) granting each farmer 15 hectares (36 acres) of land (Stumpp 1993, 142). Also in the early 1920's the Soviet Union, which considered itself a union of nations, began its policy of granting ethnic minority groups their own (or shared) autonomous regions within the Soviet Union (Lydolph 1990). At the time of the Revolution the Bolsheviks promised minorities the right of national self-determination as part of their campaign strategy. Lenin knew it was crucial to follow through with the promise in order to keep the Soviet Union's many ethnic minorities content. Each minority, including the ethnic German minority, was granted a certain status which, according to Marxist doctrine, was supposed to be based on the economic value of the land they occupied (Lydolph 1990).

The complex system of government in the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was initially comprised of four Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR's) which included the Russian Federated SSR, the Ukrainian SSR, the Belarussian SSR and the Transcaucasian SSR. Within the four republics sub-divisions were formed to give recognition to minority groups (Lydolph 1990, 26-27) (Figure 9).

Boundaries drawn within the SSR's giving political recognition to important minority nationality groups were named "Autonomous Republics" (ASSR's). Two other political sub-divisions, called "Oblasts" and "Krays" were also laid out for administrative purposes. Oblasts had no significant nationality group but Krays could be subdivided into "Autonomous Oblasts" which were also, as with Autonomous Republics, based on nationality. Another subdivision within a Kray was an

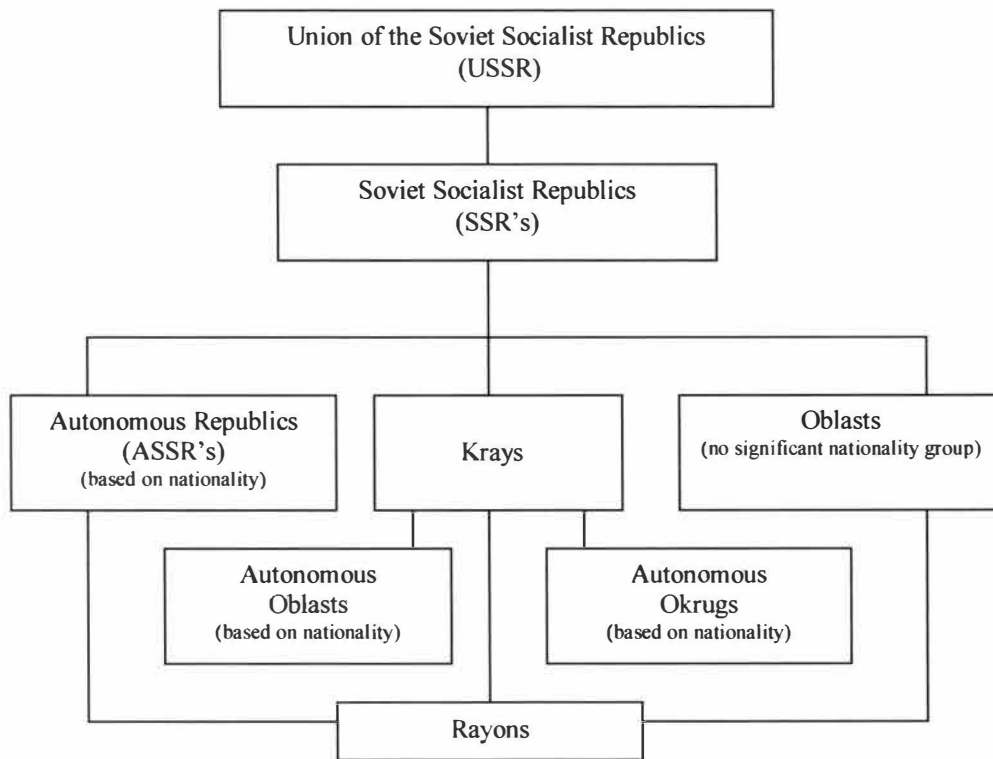


Figure 9. Administrative System of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics.

Source: Adapted from *Geography of the U.S.S.R.* (Lydolph 1990). Used with permission.

“Autonomous Okrug” which is similar to an Indian reservation. Further, all Oblasts, Krays and ASSR’s were subdivided into a number of “Rayons (Lydolph 1990, 26-27).”

Lenin granted the Russian-German settlement in the Volga region “Autonomous Republic” status, the second highest status for an ethnic minority. In 1918, Lenin appointed Ernst Reuter, a former prisoner of war, as commissary of the Volga republic. Reuter named the republic “The Work Commune of the Territory of the Volga Germans” (renamed the “Autonomous Republic of the Volga Germans” in

1924) (Klüter 1993; Richter-Eberl 1992, 172). Although Lenin was himself of German descent (his mother was a German) (Treasure 1991), critics suggest the real reason the Soviets set up the “model German communist state” was in the hopes that it would impress Germans in Germany and help the Communist movement in Germany to bring about a revolution there (Giesinger 1993, 279).

The Volga Republic, geographically located at 14° 30' to 17° 30' east longitude and 49° 30' to 52° 00' north latitude, was approximately 250 km² (Richter-Eberl 1992, 172). The Republic was divided into a number of cantons (districts). Not all villages within the Autonomous Republic were German communities. Some villages were occupied by Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars and others but most of the Republic was occupied by German settlers (Richter-Eberl 1992). The German settlement in Altay Kray in West Siberia was granted “Rayon” status in 1927 (Deutscher Nationaler Rayon im Altaj-Gebiet in der Russischen Föderation 1994).

In other parts of the Soviet Union, German settlements were given the status of “Autonomous Oblasts” (national districts) which by then existed in the Black Sea region, in (part of) Volhynia, the Caucasus, Georgia, Azerbaidzhan, Samara, the cis-Ural Region, and throughout Central Asia. Within these districts Germans had the right to use the German language in schools, courts and in business (Giesinger 1993, 283).

Barely had Soviet citizens recuperated from the war, the famine and the Bolshevik Revolution when Lenin died and the ruthless Joseph Stalin came to power. Stalin wanted to make agriculture more productive so he could move more of the

population from the agricultural sector to the industrial sector and thought this could be accomplished quickly by the collectivization of agriculture. In 1929 Stalin began his first “Five Year Plan” to collectivize the agricultural sector (12.9% of all agricultural land was to be collectivized within five years) (Olcott 1995). Landowners, including those living in autonomous regions such as the Volga Republic, were forced to sign a petition to be accepted into the *kolkhozes* (collective farms) and forfeit their own property. Prosperous farmers (*kulaks*) naturally resisted the order so Stalin mercilessly decided to liquidate them. “The “*cheryni voron*” (prisoner van) known as the “Black Maria” would drive into villages at night and round up landowners and “haul them into banishment from which they never returned (Bachmann 1983, 4; Stumpp 1993, 142).” Countless numbers of *kulaks* were murdered; others were sent to Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia to work as slave laborers on collective farms.

Between November 1929 and March 1930, the massive collectivization of farms in Kazakhstan and Central Asia also took place. At the same time, Stalin was still trying to force nomadic Muslims into permanent settlements in the eastern territories but his plan was thoughtless and disorganized. Stalin did not consider that he was breaking nomadic traditions that had been carried on for centuries. He also did not consider the lack of water on the steppe, nor could the Soviets provide enough supplies to the region. As a result, Stalin’s plan failed and nearly three million Soviet citizens living in the region starved to death (Edwards 1993, 29).

Stalin was persistent however and from 1929 to the outbreak of World War II

the Soviets continued to enforce the collectivization of farms in Kazakhstan. The government also used forced labor for mineral extraction and to build an industrial sector in the republics, which would later be turned into war industries for the Soviets. Slave laborers, including many Russian-Germans, were also used to build canals to divert water from the Syr Darya and Amu Darya Rivers to irrigate land for cotton growing.

World War II: Soviets “Liquidate” Russian-German Villages

With the rise of Hitler in the 1930's, Russian-Germans once again became scapegoats for the Soviets and found themselves “completely cut off from the outside world.” Correspondence with relatives in Germany was considered “traitorous”, as were connections with foreign organizations such as churches. Radios were confiscated and German newspaper publication was forbidden (Giesinger 1993, 299).

Then, in 1939, Hitler and Stalin “suddenly became friends” and signed a non-aggression pact. A secret clause of the treaty of September 28, 1939 “provided for a large-scale population exchange between Germany and the Soviet Union (Giesinger 1993, 300).” All ethnic Germans living in areas that were to be annexed to Russia were to be permitted to resettle in Germany or German-controlled territory. In exchange, Ukrainians, and White Russians (Belarussians), living in German-occupied Poland were allowed to return to Russia or its territories if they desired.

Baltic Germans and Germans living in Polish Volhynia, and Bessarabian Germans found their homelands had now been returned to Russia. Once they were

granted permission to leave under the agreement between Hitler and Stalin many fled to Germany. Other ethnic Germans from Lithuania and central Poland also went to Germany.

Hitler Invades Russia: Russian-Germans and Other Minorities Deported to the East

Relations between Germany and Russia deteriorated rapidly when conflicts between Hitler and Stalin over territory in the Baltics could not be resolved. Consequently, in June of 1941 Hitler ordered his troops across the Russian border. By September, the Soviets issued a decree which declared that “all Russian-Germans in the Volga area were diversionists and spies, concealing enemies of the Soviet people (Giesinger 1993, 305).” The German minority was not the only ethnic group to be accused of treason. In all, eight ethnic “nations” living in European Russia (west of the Urals), including the Karachai, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Meskhetians and Volga Germans along with other smaller groups were “collectively branded, despite an almost total lack of evidence, as traitors and collaborators (CIS conference on refugees and migrants 1996, 6; Lewis and Rowland 1979).” The Soviets decided to deport all eight nations “for the purpose of resettlement” to “much arable land” in West Siberia, Kazakhstan and the Central Asian Republics (Giesinger 1993, 305). Village leaders were quickly deposed and replaced with Soviet police agents (Giesinger 1993).

The Soviets were concerned that these particular minorities might collaborate with the Nazis, but the government had another motive for the deportations in 1941-

42 (just like they had an ulterior motive for deporting settlers from Volhynia during World War I). The reason was that by November, 1941, 40% of the Soviet population, 38% of the total land used to grow grain, and 38% of the cattle had fallen into Nazi hands (Olcott 1995, 188). The Soviets had been putting extreme pressure on Kazakhstan, located far behind enemy lines, to produce more food but Kazakhstan lacked the manpower to do this because 450,000 Kazakh men had been inducted into the Soviet military (Olcott 1995, 188). Some men were left to run the *kolkhozes* but the majority of workers were women and children. Consequently, in 1941 1,420,000 people were forced from their homes, including the entire Volga German “nation” of 366,000 people (CIS conference on refugees and migrants 1996, 6). In 1942 another 334,000 Russian-Germans were forced from their homes and deported to the east to provide surplus labor on *kolkhozes*, in factories, etc. (Giesinger 1993; Olcott 1995) (Figure 10).

Soviet agents surrounded villages to prevent escapes and sent agents to every house to register suspected minorities for deportation. Some families were given only minutes to pack clothing and food. “They were transported in cattle cars, with no sanitary facilities and little food or water on journeys that lasted sometimes for months (Giesinger 1993, 306).” Many deportations were carried out during the winter month when temperatures reached -20° C in West Siberia and parts of Kazakhstan (CIS conference on refugees and migrants 1996, 6). Tens of thousands died along the way, their bodies thrown from the train. “Those that survived found appallingly primitive conditions when they arrived at their destinations (Giesinger

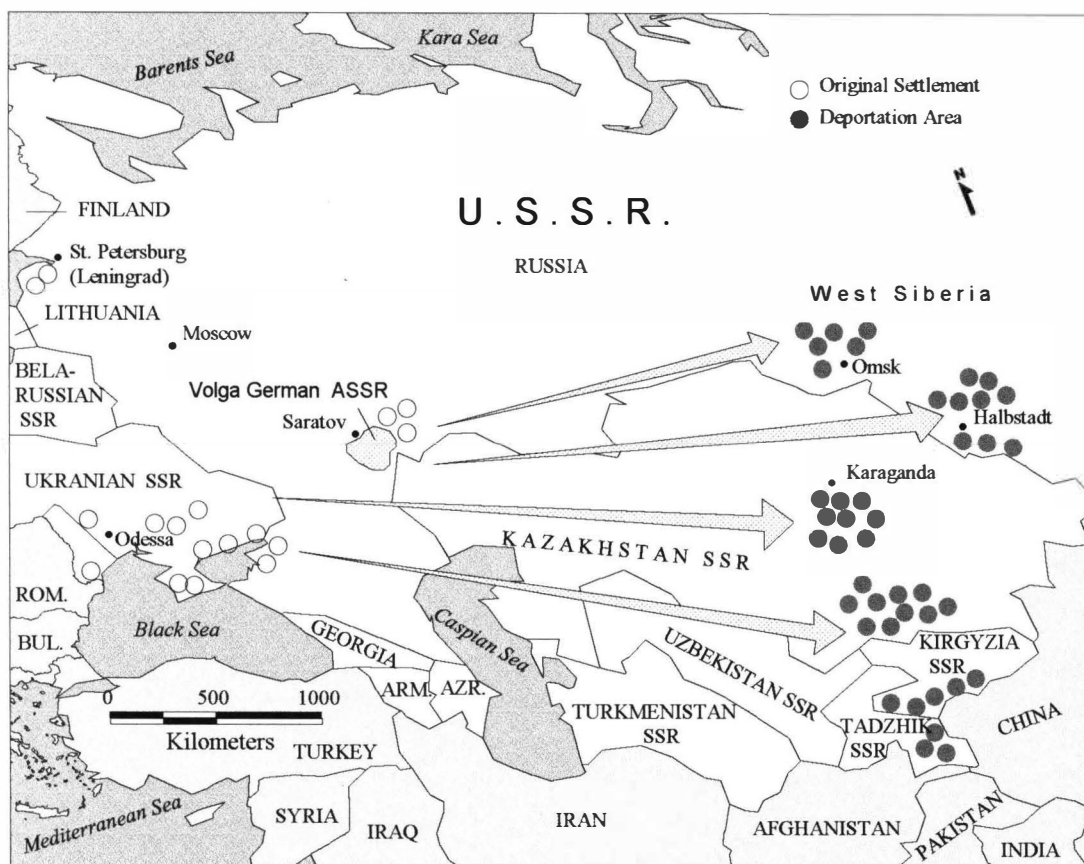


Figure 10. Deportations of Ethnic Germans – 1941-1942.

Source: Die Geteilte Heimat (von Moor 1994).

1993, 306).” They were dumped alongside the railroad tracks, often several miles from the nearest villages. Some managed to walk to local villages where other settlers would give them shelter but many had to dig underground shelters, when possible, to protect themselves from the elements (Giesinger 1993). Straying from their designated areas meant 15-20 years in a *gulag* (slave labor camp) if they were caught (CIS conference on refugees and migrants 1996,7).

Russian-Germans also found they would no longer be able to live as families. All men between the ages of 18-65 were sent to certain camps while their families

were sent to others. Young children were often placed in foster homes or left to take care of themselves.

In the meantime, the Nazis continued to advance into Russian territory. The turning point in the war occurred in 1943 when a German and Romanian army of 120,900 men surrendered to the Russians in Stalingrad. “By the spring of 1944 the German invasion ended and a counter-invasion of Germany in the fall of 1944 began.” Russian-Germans living in occupied territory in Russia (occupied by the Nazis), mostly around Volhynia and the Black Sea region, sensed danger as the Soviet troops approached. “They took off *en masse* for the west (Giesinger 1993, 311).”

Soviet Counter-Invasion of the Reich: The Ethnic Cleansing of Central European Germans

By late fall of 1944, Soviet troops had invaded Hitler’s Reich “from the north, south, and the east (Giesinger 1993, 312).” Russian-Germans living in border areas tried to escape by fleeing westward, “propelled by sheer terror (Ziemke 1996, 425).” Many refugees in the Baltics were trapped and thousands perished as Russian fighters attacked refugee caravans with machine-gun fire as they tried to reach the Baltic port for evacuation to safety (deZayas 1994). At the same time, ethnic Germans from Central Europe were also trying to escape to the west.

As revenge for the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the Soviets showed no mercy to ethnic Germans as they swept through Central Europe. The Soviets cannot be blamed entirely for what happened to ethnic Germans, however. The Nazis

were also to blame because they failed to evacuate the ethnic German population as the Soviet troops advanced into Central Europe (deZayas 1994).

The Soviet infantry scoured villages determined to destroy anyone and anything “German.” The settlers’ houses were looted and burned, their livestock butchered, their churches, cemeteries and historic records destroyed. Many ethnic Germans captured by the Soviets were murdered often in the most brutal ways. Thousands were shot then doused with fuel and burned beyond recognition. Others were flattened as Soviet tanks rolled over refugee caravans in the streets. Some people were found literally torn in half, their bodies having been tied with ropes between two vehicles that pulled their legs in opposite directions. Others had been bashed in the skull with rifle butts or stabbed through the head with bayonets (deZayas 1994).

Many women survivors of the Soviet counter-invasion have testified they were gang-raped, sometimes as often as sixty to seventy times a day for several days, and repeatedly beaten by the Soviet infantry, then left for dead. Some of these women had to be institutionalized after the war; others remain emotionally and physically scarred for life. Thousands of women and young girls did not survive this terrifying ordeal at all. Often, after gang-raping ethnic German women, some Soviet soldiers found particular pleasure in cutting off their victims’ breasts and crucifying their naked bodies to barn doors (deZayas 1994).

The United States, Great Britain and France knew about the ethnic cleansing of Germans that took place in Central Europe in the final days of the war and

immediately after World War II but, because the allies needed Stalin to help them win the war, failed to do anything about it. Besides, no one had much sympathy for anyone “German” in 1944-45. Millions of people lost their lives as a result of World War II and Hitler’s genocidal policies (deZayas 1994). European Jews lost 70% of their population and Gypsies lost 75-80% (Crowe and Kolsti 1992, 25, 44). Further, not all ethnic Germans were innocent. Some, especially village leaders in Central Europe, were “junior partners in Hitler’s Aryan master race (deZayas 1994, 9).” But the majority of ethnic Germans, like millions of other people in Europe, were victims of the war, and when the settlers were finally forced to make a decision, their choices, between Hitler and Stalin, were rather limited. Further, more than one-half of those living in the shatter belt of Central Europe were women and children who had no say in political matters (deZayas 1994).

Russian-Germans who lived in border areas of the Soviet Union occupied by the Nazis earlier in the war also had limited options. Most Russian-Germans in the Soviet Union had already been uprooted from their homes and shipped to concentration camps in the east as early as 1941. To avoid the same fate, those living on Russia’s western border had no recourse but to try to flee to Germany when the Soviet counter-invasion began.

Russian-German Escapees Redeported to the Soviet Union

Some Russian-Germans did manage to escape and were living in Germany when Soviet troops penetrated the Reich in 1944-45 but their freedom was short-

lived. “There were several million Soviet citizens living in Germany, not only Germans, but members of all nationalities of the Soviet Union.” Some were volunteer workers, some were prisoners of war or had been forced to come as slave laborers. When the war ended, the Soviets insisted that all Soviet citizens, including Russian-Germans, come home. “Soviet commissars scoured Germany for their nationals (Giesinger 1993, 313).” Around 100,000 of the 350,000 Russian-Germans who had escaped to Germany eluded the Soviets by obtaining false identity papers, but the other 250,000 were not so fortunate (Stumpp 1993, 143). They were collected by the Soviets and shipped off to Russia, many torn from their families in Germany who had “managed to escape the Soviet dragnet (Giesinger 1993, 314).” They were told they would be returned to their villages in Russia but were shipped to Siberia and Kazakhstan instead. Only 180,000 reached their destination, the rest died along the way (Stumpp 1993, 143).

The fact that some Russian-Germans had actually been living in Germany in 1944-45 but were forced back to the Soviet Union has remained an issue with the German government and is a key reason why the country has remained steadfast in its commitment to assist Russian-Germans who want to leave the former Soviet Union. (Some Central European ethnic German civilians captured by the Soviets during the war were also deported (to the Ural region of the Soviet Union) to work as slave laborers but, unlike Russian-Germans, most Central European ethnic Germans were expelled from the Soviet Union in 1949-50.)

Amnesty for Russian-Germans

Actually there was worldwide concern about the fate of the estimated one million Russian-Germans who had remained in or had been redeported to the Soviet Union during World War II. For many years after the war the Soviets ignored all requests for information about Russian-Germans. “Official statistical and geographical literature made no mention of Germans in the USSR. Their old colonies in European Russia had been wiped off the map, even their one-time existence was never mentioned. Their history had been expunged from the record (Giesinger 1993, 314).” The seven other deported “nations” (the Chechens, Kalmyks, etc.) suffered the same fate. In all, between 1936 and 1952 (during the Stalin era) a total of 3.1 million Soviet citizens living in European Russia were uprooted from their homes and deported to the east, 1.3 million of whom were Russian-Germans (CIS conference on refugees and migrants 1996, 6).

Upon Stalin’s death in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev became the new party leader of the Communist regime. More humane than the ruthless Stalin, in 1955 Khrushchev finally pardoned German soldiers still imprisoned in Russia and allowed them to return to Germany. The German government continued to clamor for the release of Russian-German civilians deported to the Soviet Union in 1945, claiming they had been granted German citizenship during the war and that the grant had been ratified in 1955 by the *Bundestag* (parliament). As German citizens they should be permitted to leave the Soviet Union. The Soviets countered by saying they did not deport Germans but had merely repatriated Soviet citizens (Giesinger 1993). Finally, in

1955, the Soviets issued two decrees. The first granted amnesty to Soviet citizens who collaborated with occupation forces during the war. The second decree ordered that the eight minority “nations” deported in 1941 from European Russia, be released from slave labor camps and allowed freedom of movement within the Soviet Union. Russian-Germans were among those released but only with certain conditions. First, those who were granted German citizenship during the war were only allowed to leave the camps if they agreed to exchange their German citizenship papers for Soviet documents. Secondly, they had to sign a pledge never to return to their native villages. The amnestied also had to forfeit any claim to the property that had been taken from them (Stumpp 1993).

Thousands of letters from the Soviet Union to Germany collected and analyzed by the *Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Rußland*, a Russian-German historical organization in Stuttgart, determined that the majority of Russian-Germans were found living in Kazakhstan, the Central Asian Republics, and in southwest Siberia. When Russian-Germans were freed from slave labor camps and given the freedom to migrate within the Soviet Union, a north to south migration began as many set out to join their families and friends in the warmer climates of Kazakhstan and Central Asia (Stumpp 1993).

Anxious to leave the Soviet Union, most of those who had been granted German citizenship during World War II but redeported to Russia began demanding emigration visas. During the summer of 1958, 4,122 individuals were finally allowed to leave the USSR (Info-Dienst 1996). This was only a token act by the Soviets

though as 109,842 requests for emigration rights had been made (Giesinger 1993, 322).

As another token gesture, in 1957-58, the Soviets once again allowed German to be taught in schools. A German weekly newspaper, *Neues Leben* (New Life), published by the Soviets in Moscow first appeared in 1956 and German radio broadcasts could be heard over short wave via Radio Moscow; however, both were just “Soviet propaganda organs that encouraged German cultural activity but little else (Giesinger 1993, 329).”

In 1959 the Soviets took a census which included the number of Germans still in the USSR. It showed there were 1,619,000 citizens who claimed German ethnicity (Giesinger 1993, 323). (A 1989 census showed their number had increased to 2,038,000 (Die Situation der Deutschen...1996, 9).

Not until August 1964 did the Soviet government issue its “rehabilitation decree” stating that Volga Germans had been treated unfairly during the war, and that charges against them made by Stalin that they had been disloyal were unfounded (Stumpp 1993, 41). The decree also stated that because Russian-Germans had been resettled, the republics to which they were sent, such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, for example, were supposed to provide assistance to the German people living in their republics in their economic and cultural development “with regard to their national peculiarities and interests.” This was not possible, however, because the Soviets would not allow them to live in “homogenous” German villages (Stumpp 1993, 41). To discourage resettlement in the former Volga Republic, the Soviets even bulldozed

some of the old Volga German villages. Nevertheless, once they were given freedom of movement, some Russian-Germans returned to the Volga region but remained in “small islands in a great sea of Russians and Ukrainians (Kloberdanz 1995, 5).”

In 1974, Adam Giesinger, author of *From Catherine to Khrushchev: The Story of Russia's Germans* wrote the following regarding Russian-Germans:

Although internal travel is not restricted and even visits abroad are permitted under certain conditions, there is a very tight restriction on emigration from the Soviet Union.” “Soviet citizens are rarely permitted to leave. The desire to leave Russia is especially strong in the older generation who have not forgotten their sufferings of the Stalin era. They do not trust the regime, even in its present more benevolent guise, and are not happy about the prospects they see for their children in Russia. They realize that the loss of language, culture and religion is almost inevitable under the conditions in which they now live. If the doors were opened, they would undoubtedly leave Russia by the thousands and go where they were assured of cultural and religious freedom (Giesinger 1993, 325).

In the late 1980's, as the Soviet Union began to crumble and the doors were finally opened, Russian-Germans did indeed begin to leave and have continued to leave since that time, but not by the thousands as Giesinger had predicted, but by the hundreds of thousands.

CHAPTER III

“ODE TO JOY AND FREEDOM” (1987-)

On the Road Again

It was not until 1987 that the doors of the Soviet Union were finally opened allowing Soviet citizens to freely emigrate. From 1945 to the late 1980's, emigration from the Soviet Union was discouraged except for a brief period during the Brezhnev era in the 1970's when emigration policies were relaxed slightly. Emigration tapered off again in the early 1980's until Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985 upon the death of Konstantin Chernenko. Shortly after Gorbachev took office, he announced his new policies of Glastnost (openness) and Perestroika (reconstruction) which paved the way to economic and political reform, but consequently also led to the unintended collapse of the Soviet Union.

There were two critical events that occurred in 1986 that caused Gorbachev's reform movement to go haywire. The first was the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in April of 1986. Although the Chernobyl incident was the worst environmental disaster in the history of the world, the Soviets tried to downplay the incident. In fact, the disaster was not even reported in the Soviet media until two days after it occurred. The first reports about Chernobyl came out of the West and when the seriousness of the disaster became apparent, the Soviets were harshly criticized in the Western press.

Of greater consequence was that the Chernobyl disaster compelled the media within the Soviet Union to also criticize the Soviet government (Brown 1994). From that time forward, dissidence in the Soviet Union snowballed.

Another important event occurred in 1986 that would also contribute to the collapse of the Soviet Union was when rioting broke out among Kazakh citizens in Alma-Ata, after a Kazakh national was replaced by a Russian as the First Secretary of the Communist Party in Kazakhstan (Brown 1994). This incident, along with the Chernobyl disaster, influenced minorities in other Soviet republics to also openly express their grievances.

By 1987 the Soviet Union was in chaos and “long suppressed” inter-ethnic problems began to surface all over the Soviet Union (Brown 1994, 129). Gorbachev tried to subdue the growing discontent by relaxing the government’s strict travel and emigration policies. Further, on November 1987 during a speech celebrating the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, Gorbachev admitted that Stalin’s guilt was “immense and unpardonable (Brown 1994, 131).” He also stated that the rehabilitation of Stalin’s victims that had ended in the late-1960’s would begin again and that a commission would be set up to hear unresolved cases of repression. But rather than pacify Soviet citizens, Gorbachev opened a Pandora’s box giving ethnic minorities, including Russian-Germans who had suffered greatly under Stalin’s regime, the green light on the road to self-determination.

Land disputes erupted between ethnic groups all over the Republics, the result of Stalin’s “tinkering” with their borders in earlier decades (CIS conference on

refugees and migrants 1996, 4). Tensions flared into conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and civil wars broke out in the Caucasus and Tajikistan. By 1988, the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians had also begun to assert their rights of “national self-determination” and aired their grievances about being forced into the Soviet Union during World War II (Brown 1994, 134).

Russian-Germans also became more assertive. They demanded the immediate re-establishment of their homeland in the Volga region and, exercising their new right to emigrate, threatened to leave the Soviet Union if their demands were not met. The Soviets were willing to negotiate with Russian-Germans over the gradual re-establishment of their homeland, but were not about to be pressured into immediately re-establishing the former Volga Republic. Defiantly, some Russian-Germans returned to the region anyhow. Local citizens (mostly Russians and Ukrainians who had moved into the Volga Republic when Russian-Germans were deported to the east during World War II) were not happy to see the Germans come back to the region and held demonstrations against their return. Tensions escalated between the groups and, deciding they had had enough, Russian-Germans began to leave Russia in vast numbers. At the same time, Russian-Germans living in Kazakhstan and Central Asia also began to leave because of ethnic conflict and nationalist movements in the republics.

The Wall Came Tumbling Down

Meanwhile, events were also unfolding rapidly in the Soviet satellite countries

of Central Europe, particularly in the German Democratic Republic (DDR) (East Germany) that would also trigger the migration of ethnic Germans. By 1989, democratic revolutions were already taking place in Poland and Hungary. Then in May 1989, Hungary defiantly opened its borders with Austria allowing East Germans a corridor through which they could flee to the West. Many more East Germans, seizing the opportunity, drove to Prague where they entered the West German embassy and refused to leave until they too were given permission to go to the West. The East German government responded by calling those leaving the DDR “scum and ingrates (Pond 1993, 98).” It did not stop East Germans from leaving though and by October 1989, around 100,000 *Ossies* had fled for the West.

At a time when Gorbachev envisioned a “common European home”, Erich Honecker, the hard-line leader of the DDR was calling for the strengthening of the Warsaw Pact and insisted the Wall would still be standing in 50 or 100 years time (Pond 1992, 98). Nevertheless, East Germans continued to voice their dissent. Rather than celebrating the forty-year anniversary of the DDR on October 9 as was planned for them by East Germany’s leaders, demonstrators turned out by the thousands to protest against it.

Realizing his government was near ruin, the ill and aging Honecker finally resigned on November 8 in an attempt to save the DDR from total collapse. The new secretary general, Egon Krenz, promised the people immediate change but East Germans did not take him seriously. Then, in a desperate attempt to appease the growing number of demonstrators, Günter Schabowski, party secretary in the district

of East Berlin, announced during the evening news on November 9, 1989 that travel restrictions were to be lifted. For the first time since the Berlin Wall was raised on August 13, 1961, East Berliners could now travel freely to the West. Permits for travel were to be given upon request (Schubert 1990).

Confused by what they had just heard on the news, tens of thousands of East Berliners began to appear at the Wall (Figure 11). By 1:40 AM, November 10, many East Germans started to pour over the border into West Berlin as border guards just stood by watching (Schubert 1990). West Berliners were also gathering at the Wall, jubilantly welcoming those who came across the border to gaze at what they had been forbidden to see for the past twenty-eight years. Brandenburg Gate, considered the “gateway to the city” (although officially still sealed off) became the site of a huge party; the city was “charged with energy (Schubert 1990).” By 4:00 AM the Wall began to crumble as people began to hammer away at it. Then, on December 22, 1989 as reporters from all over the world stood by, the Brandenburg Gate was finally reopened signifying the beginning of a unified Germany. In celebration of this historic event, Leonard Bernstein was invited to conduct Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony “Ode to Joy” (to which Bernstein added the words “and Freedom”), at the Berlin Philharmonic on New Years Eve (Pond 1993).¹ Finally, and without a struggle, the Reunification that West German leaders had advocated for decades had come to pass, and East and West Germans woke up in 1990 to find they had gone from being a people divided by a wall between two ideologies to being *Eins Volk* (one people) again for the first time since the end of World War II (Figure 12).

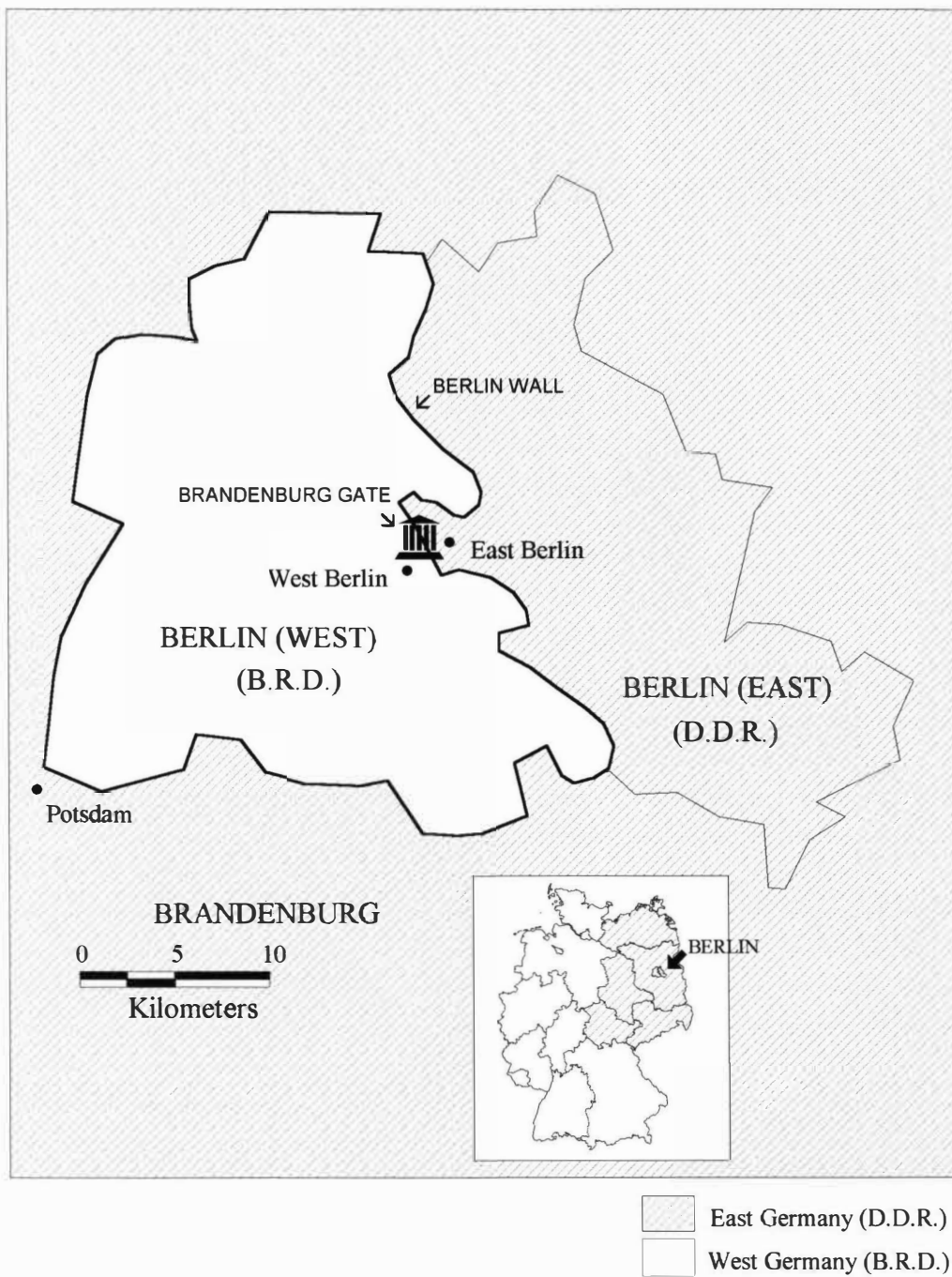


Figure 11. Berlin Wall Prior to Reunification.

Source: Britannica Atlas 1988



Figure 12. Berlin Wall (1995). Small section of the Berlin Wall left standing at “Checkpoint Charlie” (in the American sector) as a memorial to those who died trying to escape East Berlin during the communist era.

Source: Personal photograph.

The Hangover

Most Germans were ecstatic to have a unified Germany and emotions ran high, but it did not take long for the euphoria to wear off as West Germans were sobered by reports in the media as to what the cost of national unity would be for the new Germany. West Germans had enjoyed the benefits of the country’s *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) for decades with one of the highest standards of living in the world. Suddenly they had 16.5 million East German citizens at their doorstep who, still sore about being sold out to the Soviets following World War II, expected immediate reciprocity. The *Bundesministerium* (Federal Ministry)

announced it was going to spend DM 115 billion per year over the next four years to reconstruct East Germany (Jones 1994). The money was to come from budget cuts and from borrowing on the international markets and not from raising taxes, but as it turned out, taxes were raised and after four years the reconstruction of East Germany was far from finished (Figures 13-14). It is now thought that another DM 150 billion



Figure 13. Construction in East Berlin (1995). Everywhere in East Berlin today there is evidence of the massive restructuring of the city to bring it up to par with West Berlin.

Source: Personal photograph.

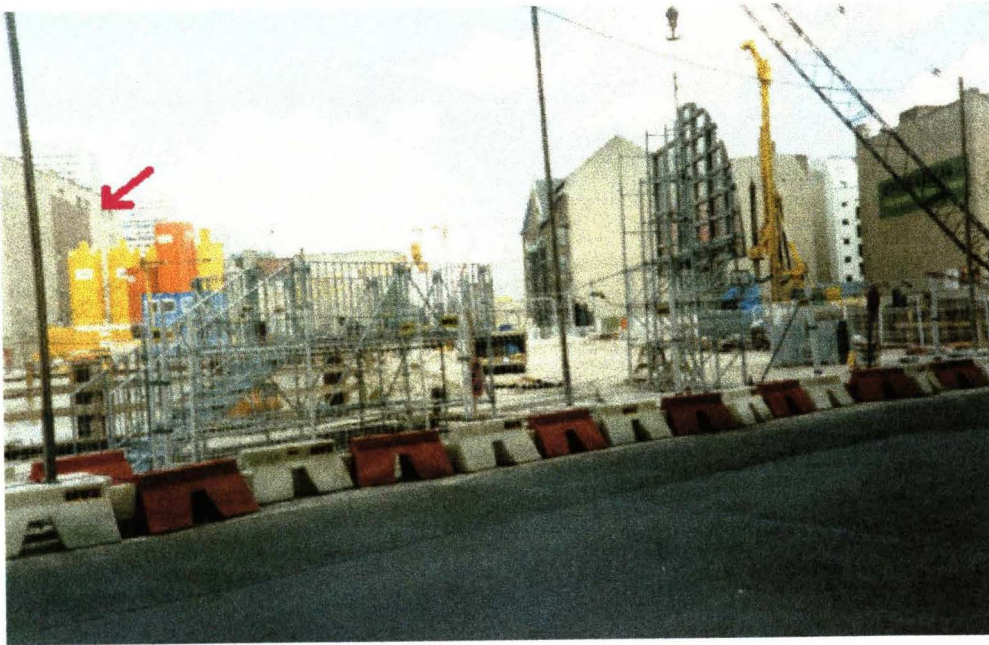


Figure 14. Construction Zone in Former “No Man’s Land (1995).” Development of a huge office complex and condominiums in what was once “no man’s land” between East and West Berlin near “Checkpoint Charlie.” Note that the windows of the building on the far left (in former East Berlin) have been filled in with bricks and cement. This was done to all buildings near the Wall in East Berlin to prevent people from jumping out of windows to escape into West Berlin during the communist era.

Source: Personal photograph.

per year to at least the end of the millenium will be needed before East Germany is up to par with the West German states (Heilemann and Reincike 1995). (Much of the appropriated funds go toward unemployment compensation and for pension benefits (Eastern Growth 1996, 9).)

Even for a country as affluent as Germany, the amount of money needed to rebuild East Germany is staggering, especially considering Germany is a small country only slightly larger than the state of Montana that already had a population of

over 63 million people prior to Reunification and now exceeds 80 million. Germany is Western Europe's third most densely populated country following Belgium and Holland (Kappler 1993). As Germany's economy nose-dived with rising taxes and 8 percent of the West German GNP going toward the reconstruction of East Germany, many *Wessies* began to resent their poor relations from the East. Chancellor Helmut Kohl did nothing to relieve the people's *Angst* when he warned of further tax increases and called on all Germans to "make a mighty effort to prevent the country from falling into economic crisis (Jones 1994,161)."

Germany's Liberal Asylum Law Further Complicate Matters

Integrating 16.5 million East Germans into the economy was not the only problem for the new Germany. When it became apparent that the Wall was going to fall, Germany's leaders also began to worry about the possibility the country would be flooded with asylum seekers and refugees from all over Eastern Europe. Germany's geographic proximity to Eastern Europe and its economic affluence naturally made it attractive for those seeking a better life. More importantly, Article 16 of Germany's Basic Law (not to be confused with Article 116), also adopted in 1949, contains the most liberal asylum laws in the world (Geipel 1993; Ardaugh 1991). Written to make up for and to avoid the mistakes of Germany's past, Article 16 states simply that "persons persecuted on political grounds shall enjoy the right to asylum, that is, if they are recognized by the authorities as truly in need of asylum (Foreigners... 1994, 1)."

Thus, as Germany's leaders had feared, Article 16 increasingly became "a floodgate for uncontrolled immigration" as thousands of asylum seekers and refugees began to arrive in Germany from all over Central and Eastern Europe (Foreigners...1994, 2). In fact, from 1991 to the end of 1993, Germany took in over 1 million asylum seekers, more than all other countries in the European Union combined (Info-Dienst Oct. 1994) (see Appendix A). At the same time, Germany had to brace itself for yet another group of immigrants as tens of thousands of ethnic Germans began to arrive every month from Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Relaxed Emigration Policies in Central Europe and the Former Soviet Union
Encourage Ethnic Germans to Take Advantage
of Germany's "Right to Return"

While Article 16 of Germany's Basic Law involves asylum seekers and refugees not of German descent, Article 116, as was mentioned in Chapter One, was written by the founders of Germany's constitution out of concern for former German nationals and ethnic Germans remaining in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union following World War II.

Although Germany's policy has never been to encourage them to immigrate to Germany, a steady stream of ethnic Germans arrived from the 1950's to 1986, the annual number of which depended on emigration policies in their countries of origin. Immediately following World War II, Germany experienced a tidal wave of ethnic German immigration as millions were forcefully expelled from Poland, Romania,

Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia (deZayas 1994; Info-Dienst 1996) (Table 1). Then, from 1950 to 1969, immigration of ethnic Germans to Germany tapered off to 659,738 (an average of 32,987 per year), the majority of whom were arriving from Poland. Only 3% arrived in Germany from the Soviet Union.

Table 1

Ethnic German Expellees Arriving in Germany – 1945 - 1950

State, Province or Territory Expelled From	Ethnic Germans
From Territory that belonged to Germany before 1937	6,980,000
From Free State Danzig	290,000
From Czechoslovakia	3,000,000
From Poland	690,000
From Yugoslavia	300,000
From Romania	250,000
From Hungary	210,000
From the Soviet Union	100,000*
From other countries	<u>930,000</u>
Total	12,750,000

*Includes only ethnic Germans from Volhnyia (in part of East Poland) that was annexed by the Soviets during World War I). By lawful definition expellees from Volhnyia are not part of this group.

Source: Die deutschen Vertriebenen in Zahlen (Reichling, Gerhard). See Bundesministerium für Aussiedlerfragen 1996).

Between 1970 and 1986 another 681,702 ethnic Germans (an average of 40,100 per year) resettled in Germany (mainly from Poland and Romania). Because of improved relations in the 1970's between Germany and the Soviet Union emigration restrictions in the USSR were eased slightly (Jones 1994). As a result, the number of ethnic Germans arriving in Germany from the Soviet Union during this time increased to around 10% of the total arrivals.

As communism began to crumble in the late 1980's, the number of ethnic Germans arriving in Germany, particularly from the USSR, began to rise significantly. In 1987, 78,523 new arrivals (still mainly from Poland) resettled in Germany, but a substantial 14,488 arrived that year from the Soviet Union as compared with only 753 in 1986 (Info-Dienst July 1995).

Seen as a sign of the times, Germany began to brace itself as conditions continued to worsen in the Soviet Union and Central Europe, but nothing could have prepared the country for what was to come. From 1988 to the end of 1991 another 1,198,796 ethnic Germans arrived in Germany, the largest number of arrivals since the end of World War II. Migration finally peaked in 1990 when the total number of ethnic Germans arriving in Germany that year alone reached an alarming 397,073 (Info-Dienst 1995) (Figure 15).

The Ethnic Germans Admissions Act

Most alarming to Germany was that while ethnic Germans were supposed to enter the country with their visa applications pre-approved, many (particularly Polish-

Ethnic Germans

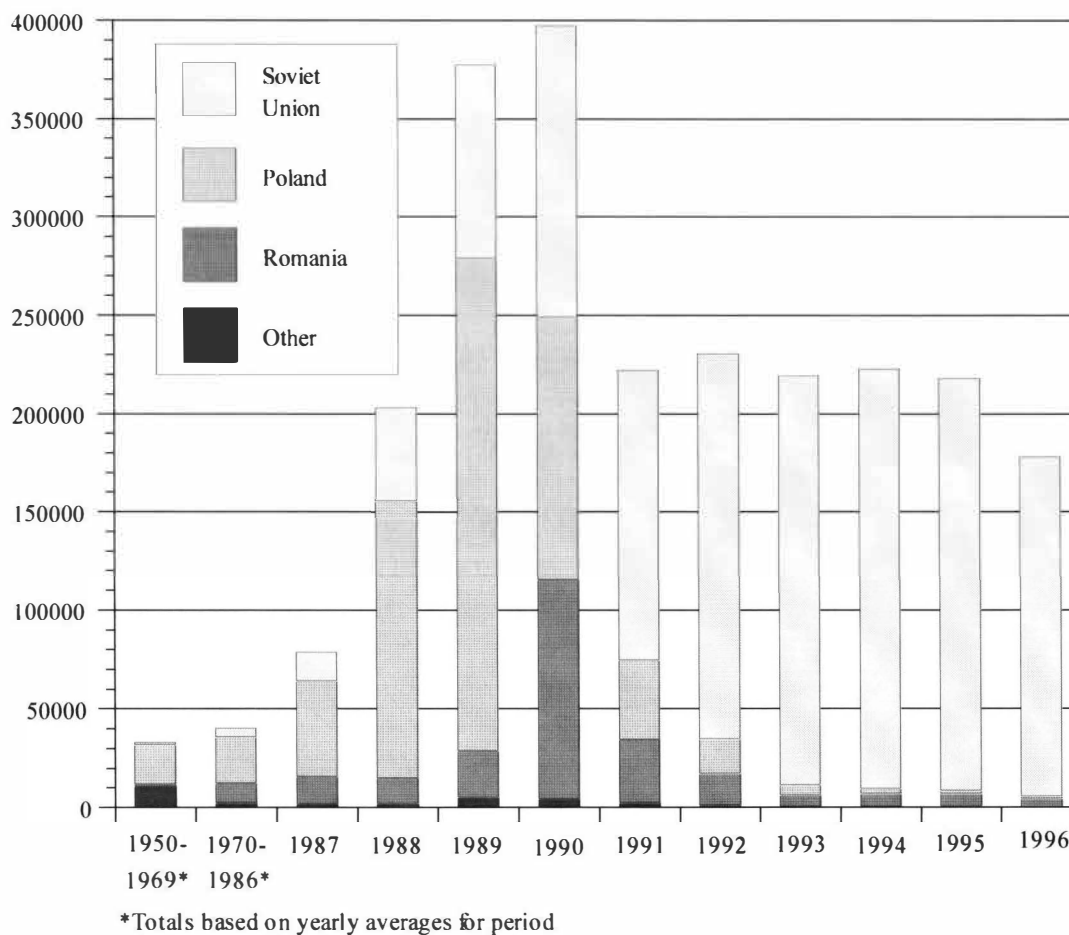


Figure 15. Ethnic German Migration to Germany – 1950-1996.

Source: Info-Dienst 1996

Germans) evaded the immigration law by entering the country as tourists, or entering illegally, then applying for citizenship. Unless new arrivals have family or friends in Germany that they can stay with, the settlers are sent to one of the many *Übergangswohnheime* (transitional shelters) located around the country until they become acclimated and find jobs and a place to live. Those that arrive with their papers in order spend about one to two years in the shelters but for those who arrive

illegally, the stay in the shelters is much longer because it takes a great deal of time to investigate their claims, especially since there is such a huge backlog of cases pending (Jones and Wild 1992). Meanwhile, the German government has to provide for them, which is very expensive.

In order to deter ethnic Germans from entering illegally or entering under the guise of tourists with no intentions of returning to their homelands, the government quickly took measures to slow the migration. The new law entitled the “Ethnic Germans Admissions Act” (*Aussiedleraufnahmegesetz*) came into effect on July 1, 1990 (Dietz 1994). The law requires that all immigrants remain in their countries of origin while their applications are being processed. As a result of the Ethnic Germans Admissions Act, migration to Germany dropped from 397,000 in 1990 to 221,000 in 1991 (Info-Dienst July 1995). (In 1992, Germany placed a ceiling on the number of new arrivals that could enter the country each year at 220,000 (Münz and Ulrich 1995).)

Germany Tries to Persuade Russian-Germans to Stay in the Soviet Union

Also distressing to Germany in the early 1990's was that more and more of those arriving were coming from the former Soviet Union. Prior to the collapse of communism, most ethnic Germans that had migrated to Germany came from territories that had belonged to Germany prior to World War II such as those in Poland, or from other German-speaking parts of Central Europe such as in Romania, Czechoslovakia and Hungary; many of those settlers, particularly the older

generation, could speak German and had some familiarity with Germany. Most Russian-Germans, on the other hand, arrive with barely any knowledge of the German language, and are not familiar with Germany and the ways of the West, putting even greater stress on state and local authorities in charge of integrating them into Germany society.

In an effort to slow the exodus of Russian-Germans, the German government sent representatives to Moscow who tried to pressure the Russian government (or then still Soviet government) into re-establishing the Volga Republic. Russian-Germans themselves had already been pressuring the Russian government into re-establishing the Republic, but the Russians, as was previously mentioned, rejected the their claim. The German government then intervened, “arguing in legal terms about the concept of rehabilitation (Klüter 1993, 427).” The German diplomacy was a disaster. All they succeeded in doing was to elevate nationalistic feelings in the Russians who were still licking their wounds, so to speak, over the loss of East Germany and the subsequent Reunification of Germany, Russia’s former adversary (Klüter 1993).

The Germans then offered to provide financial assistance and cultural activities for Russian-Germans living in the Soviet Union in the hopes that some of them would stay there if their lives were improved. The Soviets accepted the offer but in spite of the transfusion of millions of *Deutschmarks* to the would-be emigrants, Russian-Germans continued to exercise their right to return under Article 116 and quit the Soviet Union at a rate of around 12,000 a month (Info-Dienst 1996).

Germanomania

As Germany's economy continued to worsen, both East and West Germans began to resent the growing number of ethnic Germans entering the country. Not only were ethnic Germans made scapegoats, but asylum seekers who were exercising their right to asylum (under Article 16) also became targets. Tensions began to escalate in the early 1990's and the number of violent crimes against ethnic Germans and asylum seekers began to rise substantially. Prior to Reunification, there were less than 200 attacks by right-wing extremists, skinheads or xenophobic groups. In 1991, the number rose to 1,493. By 1992, 2,285 violent acts were reported "triggering international criticism of Germany's handling of the situation (Kappler 1993, 367)."

According to the German government, there were several factors contributing to the increase in violence. One reason was that the growing number of ethnic Germans and asylum seekers claiming political persecution angered the population who were aware that many immigrants were not coming to Germany to escape political persecution, but were just trying to improve their economic situation. East Germans in particular resented the immigrants because they felt the money Germany was spending to help ethnic Germans and asylum seekers should have been going to them instead. East Germans were also more prone to commit acts of violence because, the government says, "they had higher unemployment, a lack of experience with democracy and a mingling with other cultures (Kappler 1993, 367)." Further, police in East Germany lacked the experience and the equipment to deal with demonstration matters; "they also had friends and family who were unemployed and

were generally less assertive in dealing with racial violence as they were in the West (Geipel 1993, 57).” (Police in both East and West Germany have been accused of police brutality against foreigners, but according to the German government, only a handful of officers pose a problem (Federal Republic...1995; With Sensitivity... 1995).)

Always hungry for votes, some politicians began to use the asylum issue and the ethnic German issue as campaign ammunition. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) (part of Kohl’s coalition party - the party currently in power), although tolerant of ethnic Germans, has traditionally been opposed to Germany’s asylum law (Article 16) claiming that the law is far too liberal. In the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, when hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers began to arrive in Germany, the CDU became even more concerned because they felt the other EU member states were not taking in their fair share of Eastern Europeans seeking asylum. The Social Democratic Party (SPD), in opposition to the CDU, accused the CDU of scapegoating asylum seekers by blaming them for all of Germany’s problems. The SPD went on a campaign to gain sympathy for asylum seekers but the campaign failed to win votes and when the number of violent crimes continued to increase, the SPD dropped their campaign that Germany keep its liberal asylum laws and aligned itself with the CDU on the asylum issue (Fisher 1995). But while the CDU was more concerned with the number of asylum seekers coming to Germany, the SPD party, headed by Oskar Lafontaine, began to criticize the country’s policy toward ethnic Germans and has repeatedly called for limitations on the number of ethnic Germans that should be

allowed to enter Germany. The SPD has since been gaining the support of the populace, particularly in areas of the country where large numbers of ethnic Germans have settled. According to one public opinion poll conducted in Germany in 1996, over 70 percent of the population now support Lafontaine's line (Blood Disorder 1996).

Ius Sanguinis vs. Ius Soli

One reason Lafontaine has found support in his campaign against ethnic Germans is that while ethnic Germans are granted automatic citizenship upon request, asylum seekers and long-time Turkish residents (who originally came to Germany as "guest workers" but ended up staying permanently) and their descendants are not accorded this same privilege. While it is not impossible for guest workers, asylum seekers and other foreigners to become German citizens, the process is much more complicated, time-consuming and expensive.

Under German law, nationality is determined by "*ius sanguinis*" (the law of parentage) which stipulates that for those born in Germany a child must have at least one parent who is a German citizen to be considered a German (German Citizenship...1995). (The law of parentage also applies to ethnic Germans and their descendants arriving in Germany even though they were not born in Germany.) *Ius sanguinis* is not unique to Germany; in fact, it is used most widely internationally.²

For persons who do not qualify for German citizenship under *ius sanguinis*, there are other requirements for naturalization. Under current law, foreigners

between the ages of 16 and 23 have a claim to naturalization if they have lived in Germany for eight years, have attended school in Germany for six years, give up their previous citizenship and have not been convicted of a felony (German Citizenship 1995). Foreigners who have resided legally in Germany for 15 years, such as many of Germany's Turkish guest workers, also have a claim to naturalization if they give up their previous citizenship, and have not been convicted of a felony. In addition, until recently, each person had to pay administrative fees of DM 5,000 for the naturalization process, but this fee has now been lowered to DM 500 (Ardaugh 1991). One must also prove a guaranteed income and cannot be receiving social security or unemployment benefits in order to qualify for naturalization. Although the majority of foreigners fulfill these requirements, most of them never apply for citizenship. According to the German government, the greatest obstacle is that foreigners have to give up their citizenship from their countries of origin when applying for naturalization, and many are not willing to do this (German Citizenship... 1995).

Lafontaine has been able to capitalize on the ethnic German question by arguing that while the government grants citizenship to ethnic Germans (particularly Russian-Germans) who arrive in Germany "barely able to say *Guten Morgen*" and "head straight for the dole queue", Turkish residents and other foreigners who have lived and worked in Germany for years, speak perfect German, and have children born on German soil usually never become German citizens (Blood Disorder 1996, 49). The ethnic German question continues to be the topic of much heated debate among the two political parties. Lafontaine and his allies in the SPD (the SPD is

split on this issue) accuse the CDU of being nationalistic because the CDU wants to let ethnic Germans in. In retaliation, the CDU accuses Lafontaine and his allies in the SPD of being nationalistic because they want to keep ethnic Germans out.

Entitlements for Ethnic Germans

Another reason ethnic German immigration to Germany has become controversial involves a number of government assistance programs the immigrants receive. At the end of World War II, as was mentioned earlier, millions of ethnic German expellees arrived in Germany, most of whom came from agricultural and industrial regions of Central Europe. At the same time, industrial production was down to 27 percent of its pre-war volume in Germany because of the dismantling of Germany's industries by the allies in 1944-45 (deZayas 1994). As a result, Germany was economically crippled and faced with millions of unemployed and hungry people. For humanitarian reasons, the United States sent tons of food but it was not enough to help the country recover; Germany needed an "economic miracle (deZayas 1994, 126)."

In 1947, Secretary of State, George C. Marshall announced the US plan to reconstruct post-war Europe. Most of the money was intended to go to Great Britain, France and Italy, but Germany was also to receive US funding. One goal of the Marshall Plan for Germany was to have "rapid economic recovery" by the injection of \$1.4 billion for reconstruction (deZayas 1994, 126). The second goal was to integrate the millions of ethnic German expellees arriving in Germany. Around one

million ethnic Germans were invited to resettle in the United States during the 1950's. Others went to Canada and Australia. But not all of them wanted to leave Germany permanently. Ethnic Germans, many of whom had useful agricultural and technical skills, were willing to work hard to help rebuild the war-torn country in exchange for a new start in Germany.

They lived in hastily erected temporary shelters (*Übergangswohnheime*) constructed of plywood with no windows or indoor plumbing. Holes were filled with pieces of cardboard to keep the rain out. Some shelters were furnished with beds but they had to be shared with others. Most expellees arriving in Germany had no warm clothing, shoes or blankets; all that they owned was in their rucksacks they arrived with in Germany. Tuberculosis and other diseases were ramped in the shelters and human suffering was immeasurable (deZayas 1994).

The immigrants worked hard to help rebuild Germany, in spite of their miserable conditions, and by the mid-1950's the country was already experiencing the beginning of the *Wirtschaftswunder*. In 1953, the parliament enacted the Federal Expellee Law (*Bundesvertriebenengesetz*) which describes who is eligible for citizenship as an ethnic German under Article 116 and defines their rights (Haberland 1994, 115; Lehmann 1995, 103). Shortly thereafter, the government began to introduce a series of entitlements under the Federal Expellee Law to help other ethnic German arrivals become established in Germany.

Until the collapse of communism and the subsequent Reunification of Germany when an average of only 40,000 ethnic Germans resettled in Germany

annually, the country welcomed the immigrants because they provided necessary labor during Germany's economic boom period and no one complained about the financial assistance the immigrants receive. But in the late 1980's and early 1990's when hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans arrived in Germany each year, Lafontaine and his allies found support among taxpayers who began to question the government's entitlement policies for ethnic Germans. Many Germans were especially angry that they should have to pay to resettle the *Rußlanddeutsche* (Russian-Germans) whose ancestors had migrated to Russia 200 years ago; people who, many Germans feel, should no longer be considered "German." Further, many Germans felt the immigration of ethnic Germans was no longer necessary because the country had just inherited 16.5 million East Germans who could provide labor in Germany.

From 1990 through 1996 the federal government spent DM 35.2 billion on entitlements for ethnic Germans under the Expellee Law, although because of budget cuts in recent years, the amount spent in 1996 was half of what it was in 1990 (Info-Dienst, 1996; Hilfen für Spätaussiedler aus den Bundeshaushalt 1996) (Figure 16). Most costly is money allocated for adaptation and language training which cost the government around DM 1.45 billion in 1996 alone. Other entitlements have included resettlement compensation for possessions the immigrants had to leave behind in their countries of origin, and a lump sum compensation (DM 6,000) for those born before January 1, 1946, and DM 4,000 if born between December 31, 1945 and April 1, 1956 (Wegweiser für Spätaussiedler 1994, 24). There are also guaranteed cash funds

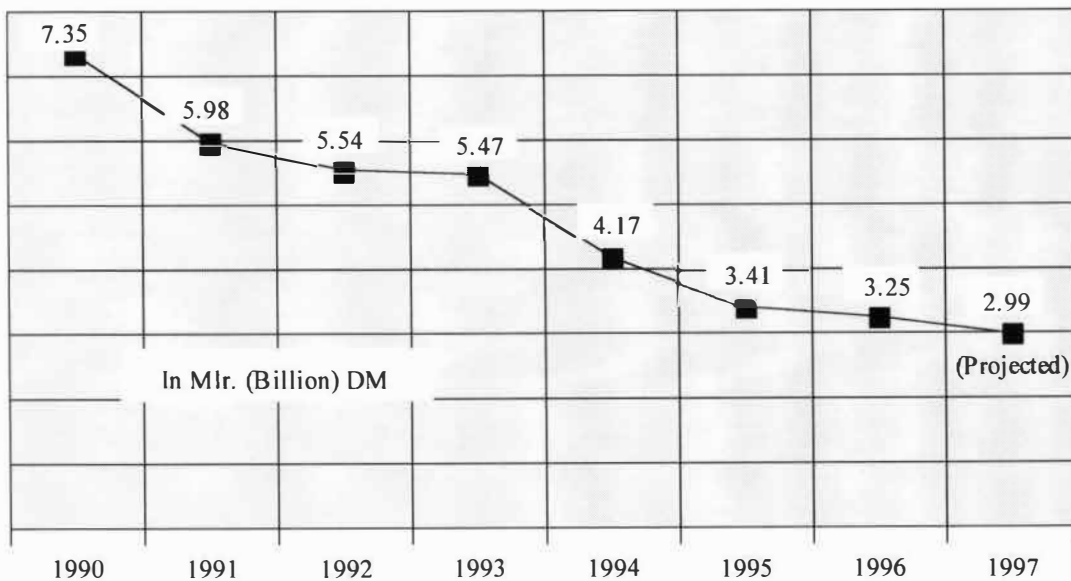


Figure 16. Federal Assistance for the Integration of Ethnic Germans.

Source: Hilfen für Spätaussiedler aus dem Bundeshaushalt (1996)

(*Wohngeld*) to help ethnic Germans get established in Germany and to offset their living expenses until they find jobs. Families receive monthly *Kindergeld* (allowances) for their children to age 16 (DM 200 for the first and second child and DM 300 for three children, etc.), and there are many other benefits including university scholarships, health care, and pension plans for the elderly, to name just a few (Hessischer Wegweiser für Spätaussiedler 1996). Because ethnic Germans are considered displaced, the government also assists them in locating their relatives (DM 68 million in 1996). In addition, the federal government also allocates around DM 150 million per year for direct assistance for Russian-Germans still living in the former Soviet Union³ (Table 2).

Table 2

Federal Assistance for Ethnic Germans - In (thousands) DM

Entitlements under the 1953 Federal Expellee Law	1995	1996
Travel to Germany	120,000	113,000
Cost for Initial Reception in Germany	104,000	109,000
Adaptation/Language Training	1,400,000	1,450,000
Resettlement Compensation	495,000	400,000
Prisoner of War/Prisoner Compensation	278,000	237,000
Integration of Russian-Germans	200,000	202,500
Relief for German Minority in the CIS	143,500	150,000
Guaranteed Funds for Education and Training	240,000	240,000
Welfare Trust for Expellees	41,000	38,000
Integration of Young Ethnic Germans	60,000	60,000
Social Services for the Integration of Ethnic Germans	16,900	16,530
University/Scientific Programs	16,500	16,000
Health Care/Reimbursement for Illness	32,000	30,000
Search for Relatives	65,749	68,808
Other	<u>197,902</u>	<u>119,651</u>
Total (Thousands) DM	3,410,551	3,250,489

Source: Hilfen für Aussiedler aus dem Bundeshaushalt 1996 and 1997

The 1989 Soviet Census

Not only were German citizens angry that they should have to pay to resettle hundreds of thousands of Russian-Germans who had already landed in Germany, but when it was reported there were possibly millions more Russian-Germans than was previously thought, German citizens became outraged. According to the 1989 Soviet census there were 2,038,603 ethnic Germans living in the Soviet Union, but by the early 1990's, it became apparent that the census had been grossly undercounted (Table 3). In 1992, it was reported that there were an estimated one to two million Soviet citizens, over and above the 2,038,603 counted in the census, who could have claimed German ethnicity in 1989. "The number is always rising", the government states, as more and more "come to their nationality (Die Situation der Deutschen...1996, 9)."

The reason the census was so inaccurate is, because of widespread discrimination between 1941-1965 against anyone "German" living in the Soviet Union, many people, particularly those of mixed-nationality marriages, registered their children as non-German (Klüter 1993). Further, as was previously mentioned, Article 116 extends citizenship to ethnic Germans "and their descendants (Foreigners in Germany 1994, 2)." Consequently, when the Soviet Union finally opened its doors, hundreds-of-thousands of people of German descent suddenly saw the opportunity to leave the Soviet Union by claiming or reclaiming ethnic German status for themselves and their children (Info-Dienst April 1996).

Apparently this is not the first time Germany has discovered citizens it did not

Table 3

Ethnic Germans Living in the Former Soviet Union
(According to the 1989 Soviet Census)

Countries of Origin	Census
Kazakhstan	957,518
Russian Federation	842,295
Kirgyzia	101,309
Uzbekistan	39,809
Ukraine	37,849
Tadzhikistan	32,671
Moldova	7,335
Turkmenistan	4,434
Latvia	3,783
Belarus	3,517
Estonia	3,466
Lithuania	2,058
Georgia	1,546
Azerbaijan	748
Armenia	<u>265</u>
Total	2,038,603

Source: Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland 1996

know it had. In the late 1980's, during negotiations between Poland and Germany, Poland insisted there were no more Germans living in Poland, but several hundreds-of-thousands of them were found living in Silesia (a former German territory). Most of them immigrated to Germany in the late 1980's and early 1990's which accounts for the 564,567 Polish-Germans arriving in Germany during this time (Info-Dienst Aug. 1996). "This embarrassing disclosure had its roots in the policies of the communist leaders of the late 1940's who, after expelling most ethnic Germans to the West, proclaimed that those who remained were 'Germanized Poles.'" "It was not until forty years later they finally dared to assert their true identity (Korbonski 1992, 257)."

The 1992 Post-War Settlement Act

In light of the census undercount, and under extreme pressure by the opposition party, in December 1992, the federal government finally amended the forty year old Federal Expellee Law, announcing that the return of ethnic Germans is simply a "late consequence of World War II" and that the law no longer makes sense (Die Situation der Deutschen...1996; Münz and Ulrich 1995, 8)." The amendment, called the *Kriegsfolgenbereinigungsgesetz* (Post-war Settlement Act) mandates that those arriving after December 31, 1992 must have been born prior to January 1, 1993 and must be a descendant of an ethnic German in order to qualify for the status of "Spätaussiedler" (late returnee) (Bundesgesetzblatt 1993; Haberland 1994).) Although the new law has been effective in slowing the overall migration of ethnic

Germans, the percentage arriving from the Soviet Union has continued to rise. Between 1992 and the end of 1996, another 1,067,693 ethnic Germans arrived in Germany, 94% of whom emigrated from the former Soviet Union (predominantly from Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation) (Info-Dienst 1996) (Table 4).

Table 4

Ethnic Germans Arriving in Germany From the Former Soviet Union – 1992-1996

Country of Origin	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Armenia	6	22	83	42	16
Azerbaijan	52	39	53	44	25
Belarus	175	176	136	227	186
Estonia	446	283	366	363	337
Georgia	283	514	155	165	127
Kazakhstan	114,382	113,288	121,517	117,148	92,125
Kirgyzia	12,618	12,373	10,847	8,858	7,467
Latvia	334	266	267	360	248
Lithuania	200	166	243	230	302
Moldova	950	1,139	965	748	447
Russian Federation	55,875	67,365	68,397	71,685	63,311
Tadikistan	3,305	4,801	2,804	1,834	870
Turkmenistan	304	322	485	587	463

Table 4 - Continued

Country of Origin	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Ukraine	2,700	2,711	3,139	3,650	3,460
Uzbekistan	<u>3,946</u>	<u>3,882</u>	<u>3,757</u>	<u>3,468</u>	<u>2,797</u>
Arrivals from SU	195,576	207,347	213,214	209,409	172,181
Total Arrivals	230,565	218,888	222,591	217,898	177,751
Percent from SU	85%	95%	96%	96%	97%
Total Arrivals 1992-1996 – 1,067,963 – Average of 94% from the Soviet Union					

Source: Info-Dienst 1996; Jahresstatistik Aussiedler 1996

The government's policy toward Russian-Germans since 1993 is that they are still German citizens as long as the law says they are (Ein Schlechter... 1996). Although the German government would prefer Russian-Germans to stay where they are, it has given its assurance to those still living in the former Soviet Union that "*das Tor bleibt offen*" (the door remains open) for those born before January 1, 1993 and that there is no fixed date as to when they can come, but for economic reasons Germany cannot take them all at once (Info-Dienst April 1996, 8; Kinkel 1996, 2).⁴

¹ The text for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was actually put to words by Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805) in his hymn "An die Freude" ("Ode to Joy").

² The United States, Canada and Australia use "*ius soli*" (the law of birthplace) to determine citizenship.

³ The DM 35.2 billion is money spent on entitlements by the federal government. This figure does not include money spent by state and local governments to integrate ethnic Germans. From information obtained from some of the state governments in Germany, it appears the DM 35.2 billion figure is roughly half of what the total cost has been thus far to integrate ethnic Germans since 1990.

⁴ In 1993 Germany also modified Article 16 making it more difficult for non-German asylum seekers to enter the country, particularly those who are entering the country solely for economic reasons. See Appendix B for further information.

CHAPTER IV

THE INTEGRATION OF ETHNIC GERMANS

To Be or Not To Be

All ethnic German immigrants (*Aussiedler*) are registered, processed, and allocated to the sixteen states by the Federal Administration Office (*Bundesverwaltungsamt*) which is under the control of the Federal Ministry (*Bundesministerium*) in Bonn. The department within the Federal Administration designed specifically to handle ethnic German questions is the Office for Ethnic German Inquiries (*der Bundesregierung für Aussiedlerfragen*) which has been under the direction of Dr. Horst Waffenschmidt since its creation in 1989. Ethnic Germans arriving after the 1992 Post-War Settlement Act (the quota law and law that says they must have been born before January 1, 1993 to qualify for entry and receive entitlements) are called *Spätaussiedler* (“late settlers”) but will be referred to here simply as ethnic Germans.¹

As was mentioned in Chapter I, the Home Office categorizes ethnic Germans as being of German “nationality” (*Staatsangehörige*) or of German “ethnicity” (*Volkzugehörige*) (Haberland 1994, 115; Die Situation der Deutschen in den Staaten...1996, 10). Those who claim to be of German nationality, such as many of those migrating from former German territories in Central Europe, must show proof

of German nationality, such as birth, marriage, or death certificates. Ethnicity, on the other hand, is based on the applicant's recognition as an ethnic German in his/her country of origin. Often because so many ethnic Germans hid their true ethnicity, as in the case of those in the former Soviet Union and Poland, "ethnic markers" such as speech and upbringing are considered, but these people are also usually required to offer some sort of documentary proof of ancestry (Jones and Wild 1992; Malchow 1993).

The Home Office also classifies ethnic Germans as belonging to one of three groups. The first group is comprised of those who are determined to emigrate from their countries of origin because they have located their families in Germany and are anxious to join them. The second group is those who are still undecided about leaving. Some ethnic Germans remain optimistic about future developments in their countries of origin and would prefer to stay if they are given the assurance that their future will be secure there. The third group includes those who want to stay in their countries of origin simply because they belong to mixed-nationality marriages, have assimilated into their spouses ethnic community and, consequently, have no desire to leave.

The German government concentrates its efforts on ethnic Germans who want to immigrate to Germany as soon as possible; and concentrates on those who would stay in their countries of origin if permanent homelands can be secured for them (Die Situation der Deutschen... 1996). The remainder of this chapter will focus on ethnic Germans belonging to the first group: Those emigrating to Germany and their

integration possibilities and difficulties, and evaluation of government policies regarding their immigration to Germany.

It should be noted here that the German government often lumps ethnic Germans together as one group under the blanket term *Aussiedler* when counting them for statistical purposes. For example, in data obtained from the German federal government regarding the number of ethnic Germans arriving in Germany annually by age group, the data reflect only the total number of ethnic Germans in each age group; the numbers are not broken down by the countries of origin from where the immigrants came. Consequently, in some instances it is not possible to separate Russian-Germans from Polish-Germans, etc. when analyzing statistical data regarding ethnic German immigrants. Therefore, the term “ethnic German” will often be used throughout Chapter IV. The term “Russian-German”, “Polish-German”, etc. will be used only when referring strictly to a specific group of ethnic Germans. It can be assumed however, that because the overwhelming majority of ethnic Germans arriving in Germany since the late 1980’s is Russian-German, the term “ethnic German” still applies mainly to Russian-Germans.

The Immigration Process

For ethnic Germans who wish to immigrate to Germany, the process begins by filling out a 20-page application (over 50 pages prior to 1993) to establish their German ethnicity. The application is then presented to one of the German consulate offices in Central Europe or the former Soviet Union which forwards the application

to the Home Office in Germany for processing. Once application is made to the embassy, the immigrants must wait for the day when they are granted visas to leave which could take years because there are presently hundreds-of-thousands of cases pending (Jach 1996).

Family Planning

There are other pull factors at work besides Article 116 and all its amenities drawing ethnic Germans to Germany. Often, when the older generation (usually the caretakers of old family records) decides to immigrate to Germany, they take the family documents with them. This leaves the younger generation with no proof of German ethnicity should they decide to immigrate later, which more or less forces them to leave when their elders leave. Also, because the convoluted application form requires detailed information about ancestors, relatives, and in-laws, often entire families need to get involved. Critics suggest these factors serve to propagate the whole “exile idea” and explain why entire families leave together as opposed to leaving as individuals (Jones and Wild 1992).

First Reception in Germany

The German government pays for the immigrants’ airfare to Germany (totaling DM 113 million in 1996) (Hilfen für Spätaussiedler 1996). In the earlier days, the government paid for overweight baggage and for household items to be shipped to Germany as well, but because of budget cuts in recent years, the

immigrants are no longer reimbursed for these expenses. (Ethnic Germans from Central Europe often arrive by train or car.)

After their arrival in Germany, ethnic Germans have traditionally been required to register at one of the federal reception centers (*Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen*) in the West German cities of Friedland or Bramsche (near Onsabrück) or the newer reception centers at Hamm, Empfingen, Rastatt or Dranse (Info-Dienst 1996; Bundesverwaltungsamt 1998) (Figure 17). After the initial formalities of being registered, x-rayed for Tuberculosis, etc., and given language testing, ethnic Germans are then sent to a state reception center (*Landesaufnahmestellen*) based on a quota system and on availability. (All sixteen states now have reception centers.) After a short stay in a state reception center, the immigrants then settle in a transitional shelter (*Übergangswohnheim*) (UWH) (unless they have relatives or friends with whom they can live) until they find jobs and settle in their own apartments or houses. Around 88% end up going to the shelters (Dietz 1994, 94).

From the late 1980's to the mid-1990's, as more and more ethnic Germans arrived in Germany, the transitional shelters were quickly filled to capacity and authorities became "hard-pressed" to find shelter for them, especially since the government was also scrambling to provide emergency shelter for hundreds-of-thousands of non-German asylum seekers and refugees arriving at the same time (Jones 1994). The reception centers were so overcrowded it took ten days just to go through the registration process (Malcow 1993). Often army barracks, deserted



Figure 17 . Reception Centers for Ethnic Germans Arriving in Germany.
 Source: Info-Dienst 1996; Bundesverwaltungsamt 1998

warehouses, former breweries, etc. had to be used to house new arrivals. So desperate was the city of Hamburg to find shelter for all its new arrivals, the city even housed some immigrants on a ship in the harbor (Jones 1994).

Although the government has done its best to provide adequate accommodations for all the new arrivals, psychologists who visited some of the shelters say conditions are clearly unsuitable and insufficient (although the shelters of today are much improved over the shelters ethnic German expellees had to live in after World War II) (Cropley 1994). Often up to six families have to share one room no bigger than 10² meters, sleep two to a bed, and share kitchen and bathroom facilities with other families. The families are frequently from different countries, which further adds to the confusion. It was noted by the psychologists that when, for example, Russian-Germans are housed with Romanian-Germans, the families become territorial and tend to look out for their own. Although they are superficially nice to one another, they do not council each other or pass along information. It was also noted that Romanian-Germans will often take up the largest share of the room and that they “far and wide grieve over their preferences; eating and drinking all advantages (Cropley 1994, 97) (writer’s translation).” It was also observed that families quarrel amongst themselves, often over why they came to Germany in the first place, and quarrel with other families in the shelters over petty matters such as using the bathroom, etc. Further, because there is no privacy in the shelters, children and the chronically ill have no chance of getting any rest, nor do students have any chance to study.

In the past, the immigrants were allowed to choose a shelter to settle in, usually to be near relatives and friends already living in Germany, but by 1989 some shelters were so overcrowded the situation had reached the crisis stage. Ironically, in many instances, the immigrants had opportunities to go to other, less crowded shelters, but refused to do so because they did not want to leave their families and friends.

The government reacted to the housing problem by imposing a new regulation to better distribute new arrivals. In accordance with the "Place of Residence Allocation Law" (*Wohnortezuweisungsgesetz*) effective July 1, 1989, all new arrivals must settle in an assigned shelter for two years (unless they move to private residences) rather than go to one of their own choosing as in the past. Those who do not abide by the law lose all government assistance (Malchow 1993). (Although the government does still try to place them according to their wishes whenever possible.) The government also responded to the housing problem in the early 1990's by allocating DM 750 million to the states to build 30,000 new dwellings to be used strictly to house ethnic Germans (for the first seven years after construction) to "reduce their geographic concentration in some of the more crowded areas (Jones and Wild 1992,10)."

Many ethnic Germans have also been allocated by the week or by the month to an *Ausweichunterkunft* (AU). These are often former homes, pensions, and guesthouses, mostly in smaller towns and villages, which were organized by the government to accept the overflow from shelters in the larger cities. Those who have gone to shelters in smaller towns and villages say life is better there. They say the

cities are too hectic and fast-paced and people have no time to help, but people in villages are often more friendly (Schafer 1995).

The State Role in Assisting Ethnic Germans

The states have the task of sending ethnic Germans to the cities and communities in their states “according to the law, their wishes, family bindings, accommodation facilities, etc. (Nordrhein-Westfalen Landstelle für Aussiedler 1996) (writer’s translation). To accommodate new arrivals, the states publish monthly bulletins which include exhaustive lists of all the UWH and AU in their states including the names of the managers, addresses and phone numbers of each shelter, and the total capacity (total number of beds) and the number of beds available in each shelter. The number of beds in a shelter varies greatly. While some shelters house 600 or more occupants, others may have a capacity of just ten or twelve beds.

Most shelters are usually filled to capacity but the situation varies from month to month. In Bayern, for instance, there are 452 shelters (UWH and AU) with a total capacity of 43,005 beds. In the month of April 1996, for example, of the 43,005 bed capacity, 3,890 were available that month. According to the Bayern State Ministry for Employment and Social Order, the federal government spent nearly DM 1.3 billion between 1991 and 1996 to administer and allocate ethnic Germans, to build new shelters, and to provide for the immigrants living in provisional lodgings in Germany (Bayerisches Staatministerium für Arbeit and Sozialordnung 1996) (writer’s translation).

Guidebooks for Ethnic Germans

Relatives and friends who have arrived earlier are the most important helpers and the main information source to new arrivals about such things as access to institutions, laws governing ethnic Germans, and the necessary first steps after arriving in Germany. Whoever has such contacts can soon be much better informed than those who must rely on governmental information channels which are overburdened with requests for assistance (Baumeister 1991). To help ethnic Germans get oriented to their new country both the federal and the state governments distribute guidebooks to new arrivals. The *Wegweiser für Aussiedler (Guidebook for Ethnic Germans)* published by the federal government, instructs the immigrants on how to go about registering for the various government assistance programs they are entitled to such as receiving *Wohngeld* (reimbursement for living expenses), *Kindergeld* (allowances for children), *Renten*, (old-age pensions), etc. The federal guidebook also advises new arrivals on a variety of tasks they will need to do soon after getting settled in their transitional shelters such as obtaining a valid identification (or a driver's license) and passports. Because ethnic Germans usually become German citizens, young men over the age of 18 are instructed to register for military service, but not until they have lived in Germany for two years.

The state-published guidebooks, written in German on one page and Russian on the corresponding page, are similar to the federal guidebooks in that they also provide information about how to go about signing up for the various entitlements, but state guidebooks also provide information about local services available to the

immigrants such as daycare, sports programs, etc. One state-published guidebook entitled the *Hessischer Wegweiser für Spätaussiedlerinnen und Spätaussiedler* (*Hessen Guidebook for Ethnic Germans*) informs ethnic Germans that they can get answers to all their questions or concerns from the Hessen Ministry, and that other organizations such as churches and the German Red Cross also provide services for ethnic Germans and can help them find shelters to stay in if there are no UWH available (Figure 18). If they find the UWH in their area filled to capacity, they must find other shelter (such as in an AU or a private shelter) and then apply in writing. They will be given a room in a UWH as soon as one is available.

The Hessen book also reminds the immigrants that the economic system in Germany is different from the systems in their countries of origin. The German economic system, the book says, is based on competition, so when ethnic Germans go shopping for goods or services they must compare various offers before making a decision, especially when buying merchandise. If a shopper finds one store is more expensive than another, he/she should “calmly and quietly depart the shop (Hessischer Wegweiser für Spätaussiedlerinnen 1996, 18) (writer’s translation).” The guidebook also warns that rashes and infections are common in the UWH, and that there have been outbreaks of Tuberculosis in the shelters, so if one has any of the symptoms noted, he/she should get to a doctor as soon as possible as there is medicine available to treat the diseases.

Wage earners are advised to register, within one week, with the local employment agency and to enroll in a *Sprachkurse* (German language course), if they



Figure 18. Guidebook for Ethnic Germans Arriving in Germany (1996). The guidebook is given to ethnic Germans arriving in Hessen by the State Ministry. The photo implies that the family dog can also come to Germany. When asked if this is so, a representative at the Hessen Ministry said the dog was included only as a “friendly graphic element.” “A Russian-German dog must stay at home and may not as a *Spätaussiedler* travel to Germany...it is better if the immigrants find a nice [German] dog that can help them get oriented to their new country (writer’s translation).”

Source: Used with permission of the Hessisches Ministerium für Umwelt, Energie, Jugend, Familie und Gesundheit.

need to, which is available free through employment agencies. Finally, ethnic Germans are reminded that, by law, once admitted to a UWH or AU, they are required to pay for the room (paid for out of their *Wohngeld*). How much is determined by the manager and if not paid in a timely manner, the tenant can lose his/her room. They are also reminded that, as the name implies, living in a transitional shelter is not meant to be a permanent stay and to stay for longer than a year is not good, so they should find an apartment as soon as possible. Of course the immigrants would like nothing better than to move to their own residences and get on with their lives, but for a variety of reasons many ethnic Germans have not integrated well into Germany's economy. Consequently, some end up living in the shelters for years.

The Settlement Pattern of Ethnic Germans: A Major Obstacle to Integration

The German government considers the spatial distribution of ethnic Germans to be one of the major obstacles to the economic and social integration of the immigrants. Figure 19 indicates that nearly 49% of all ethnic Germans have settled in just three West German states, with Nordrhein-Westfalen leading at 21.93%, followed by Bayern at 14.57%, and Baden-Württemberg with 12.13%. The total percentage of ethnic Germans who have settled in West German states is 79.45%, while only 20.55% have settled in the eastern states (the former DDR) with Sachsen leading at 6.07% (Info-Dienst Aug. 1996).

There are several factors contributing to the uneven distribution of the ethnic

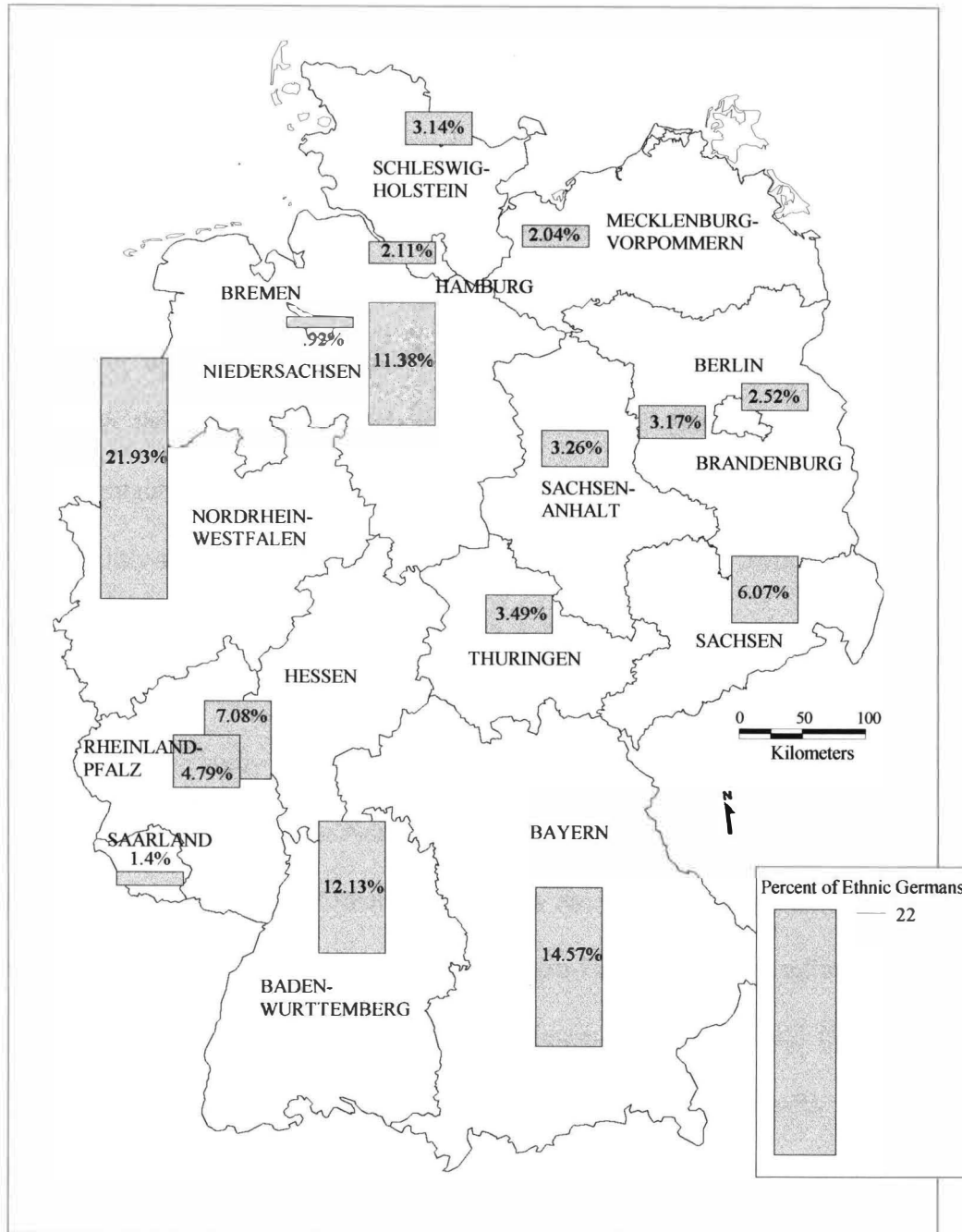


Figure 19. Distribution of Ethnic Germans in Germany's Sixteen States.
Source: Info-Dienst 1996

Germans. First, because they have traditionally been allocated to reception centers in certain West German cities upon arrival (such as those shown in Figure 17), it is only natural some would settle permanently in these areas.

Secondly, after leaving the shelters, new arrivals tend to go where other ethnic Germans have settled before them, or what is described as “chain migration” in migration theory (Ravenstein 1885, 1889).² Because ethnic Germans, like all German citizens, are guaranteed freedom of movement under Article 11.1 of Germany’s constitution, they are free to settle wherever they choose. Ethnic Germans like to stay in close contact with relatives and friends from their countries of origin and prefer to live in tightly-knit communities rather than to be separated from each other and spread all over the country. This is partly a holdover from having been separated from each other during, or following, World War II.

An earlier study by two British geographers indicates that Russian-Germans have settled predominantly in Nordrhein-Westfalen, Niedersachsen, Rheinland-Pfalz, and Baden-Württemberg. Romanian-Germans are strongly represented in southern Bayern and Baden-Württemberg, while Polish-Germans have settled mainly in northern Germany, Nordrhein-Westfalen and Hessen (Jones and Wild 1992). A more current look at statistics shows this pattern is still occurring but with some notable differences. First, as indicated in Figure 20, ethnic Germans arriving in 1995, for example, in all of Germany’s sixteen states are overwhelmingly from the former Soviet Union. From 1989 through the end of 1991 Russian-Germans made up only 16 to 66% of the total arrivals. By 1995, Russian-Germans made up 96% of the total

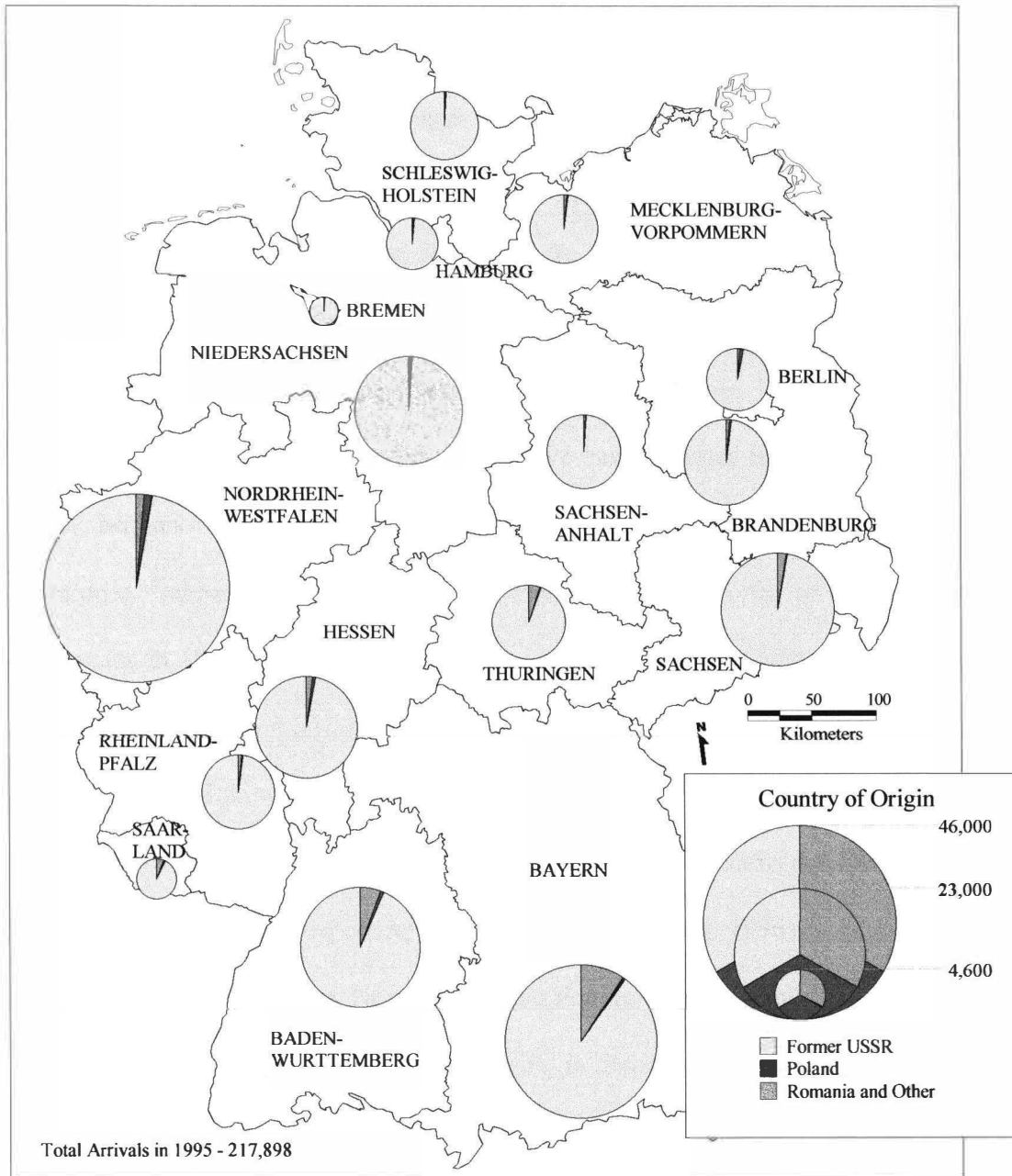


Figure 20. Ethnic Germans Arriving in Germany by Nationality - 1995.

Source: Info-Dienst 1996

arrivals in Germany.

Secondly, Figure 20 indicates that a substantial number of ethnic Germans are now settling in the East German states. From 1988 through 1989, prior to Reunification, all of the 579,728 immigrants that arrived in Germany during that time, of course, settled in West Germany. In 1990, (following Reunification) when another 397,073 more ethnic Germans arrived, only 597 of them settled in the former DDR (mostly in East Berlin) (Bevölkerung 1993). From 1991 through 1996, the number of ethnic Germans settling in the five eastern states has slowly increased but only because they have been pressured by the government to settle there. For example, Sachsen-Anhalt, located in central Germany, only received 119 ethnic Germans in 1991. By 1992 the number of ethnic Germans who settled in Sachsen-Anhalt increased to 8,667 and in 1995 reached 8,751 (Bevölkerung 1993; Info-Dienst Aug. 1996). Likewise, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, another eastern state, received 331 ethnic Germans in 1991, 1,111 in 1992 and by 1994 received 8,183 (Statistisches Landesamt Mecklen-Vorpommern 1996; Info-Dienst Aug. 1996).

The example of Nordrhein-Westfalen is used to show the distribution of ethnic Germans (of all nationalities) arriving in that state between 1989 and the end of 1995. Figure 21 shows the majority has settled in large urban-industrial cities such as Köln, Essen and Dortmund. Another part of Nordrhein-Westfalen that has received many ethnic Germans is the area between Düsseldorf and Wuppertal, in the well-known Ruhr conurbation, one of the world's largest industrial regions.

The uneven distribution of ethnic Germans, and their impact on the German

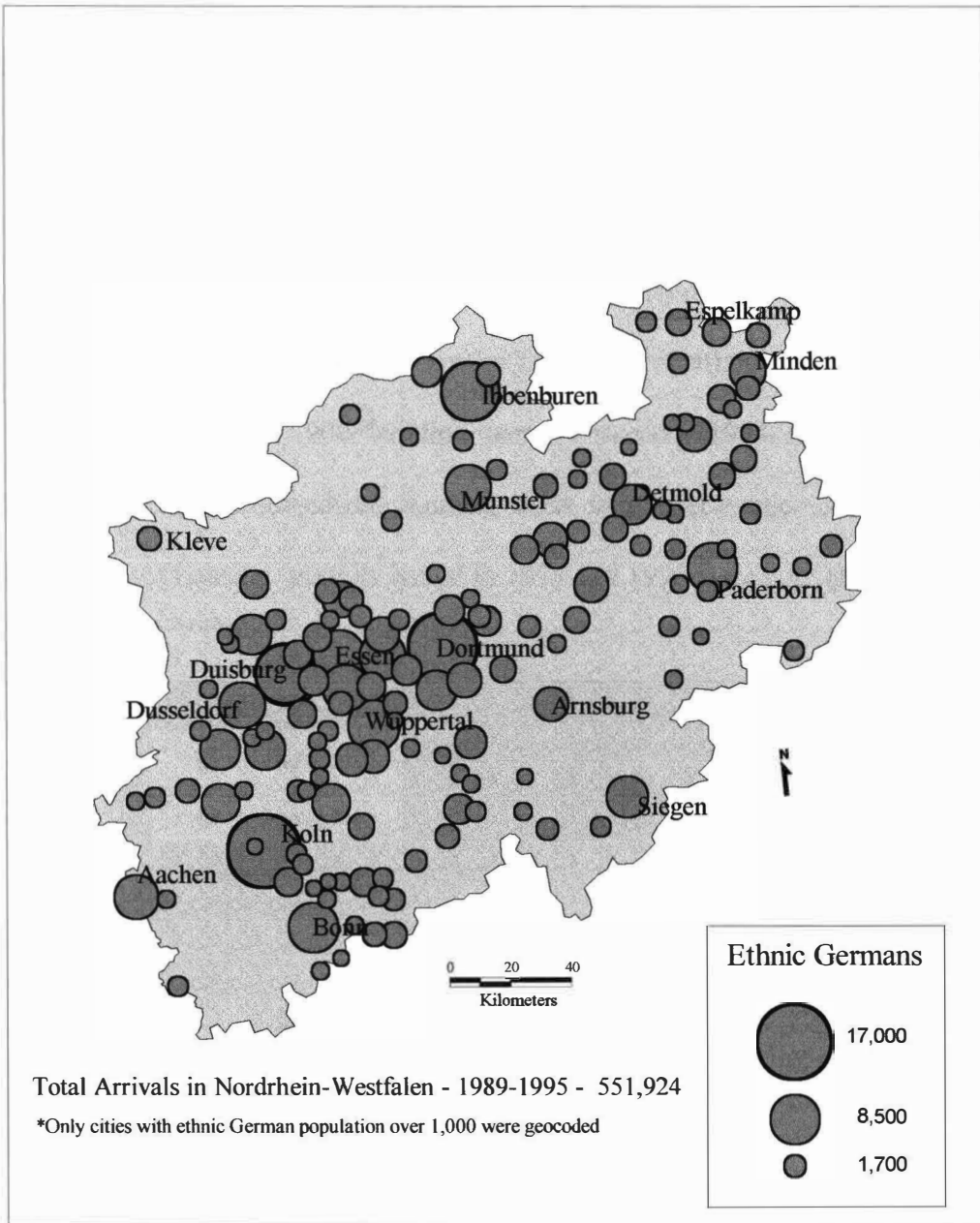


Figure 21. Settlement Pattern of Ethnic Germans in Nordrhein-Westfalen.
 Source: Nordrhein-Westfalen Landesstelle für Aussiedler 1996

economy, can also be looked at in terms of the increase in the number of building permits issued to build subsidized rental and privately-owned housing units for ethnic Germans in each of Germany's sixteen states. According to the German government, the number of building permits issued in West Germany in 1988 was around 209,000 but by the end of 1995 had increased to 639,000 (459,000 in the West German states and 180,000 in the eastern states (Figure 22). Many of the building permits issued between 1991 and the end of 1995 were for the reconstruction of the East German states. But of the 587,000 building permits issued in 1994, for example, 163,021 were for additional subsidized housing units to shelter ethnic Germans.³ (The breakdown of housing permits issued in 1995 and 1996 were not yet available at the

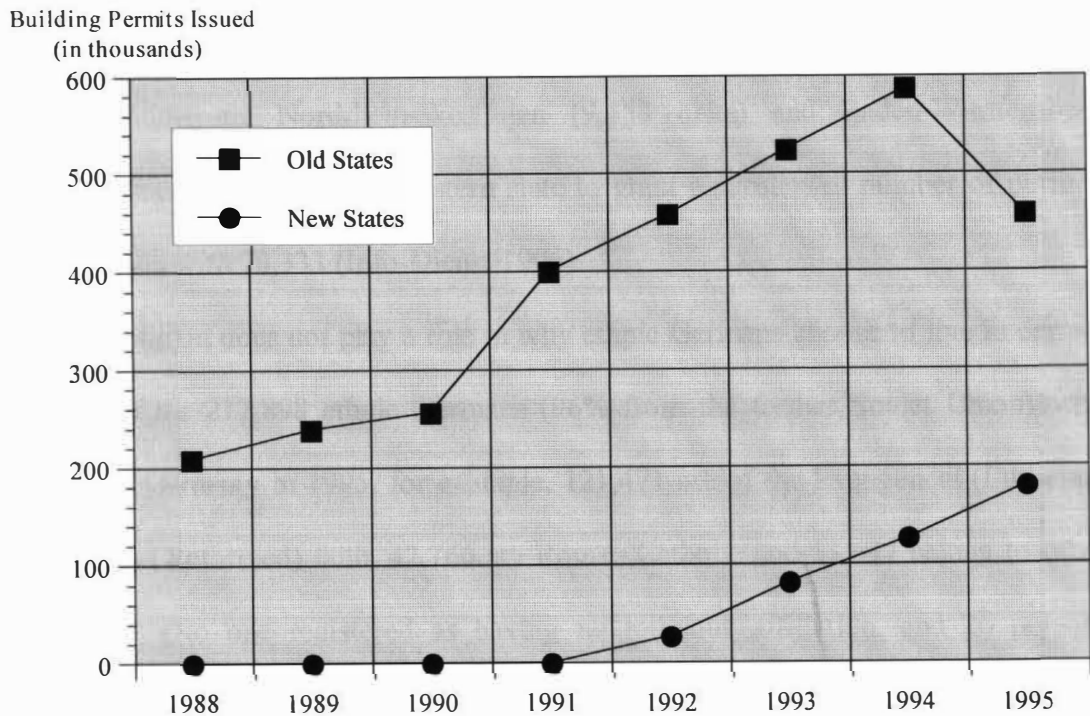


Figure 22. Impact of Ethnic German Immigration on the Housing Market in Germany.

Source: Info-Dienst 1996

time of this writing.) Nordrhein-Westfalen, the state to receive more ethnic Germans than any other state in West Germany, granted permits for an additional 16,652 units in 1994; Baden-Württemberg added another 8,392 units, and Niedersachsen built an additional 8,814 units. The former East German state (with the exception of East Berlin) with the highest number of building permits issued in 1994 for subsidized housing is Sachsen with 2,838 (Info-Dienst 1996) (Figure 23).

Not all of the building permits issued in 1994 for subsidized housing were for rental units. In addition to the 163,021 permits issued in 1994 to build rental units, another 152,669 permits were granted to build (subsidized) privately owned, single-family houses or condominiums for ethnic German immigrants (Figure 24). The two western states granting the most permits to build privately-owned houses or condominiums are Nordrhein-Westfalen (9,158 units) and Baden-Württemberg (13,002 units), while the only eastern state to grant a substantial number of permits was Sachsen with 10,333 (Info-Dienst 1996).

Religion does not play a role in why ethnic Germans choose to live in certain areas. Of the 217,898 ethnic Germans (96% from the former Soviet Union) who arrived in Germany in 1995, for example, 121,471 are of the Evangelical (Lutheran, Baptist and Reformed) faith, 42,766 are Roman Catholic and 53,637 belong to other religions. (No one registered as having no religious affiliation, and 26 persons registered as being non-believers.)

Figure 25 indicates that a substantial number of ethnic Germans of the Evangelical faith have settled in southern Germany, such as in Bayern, which is

Units Built

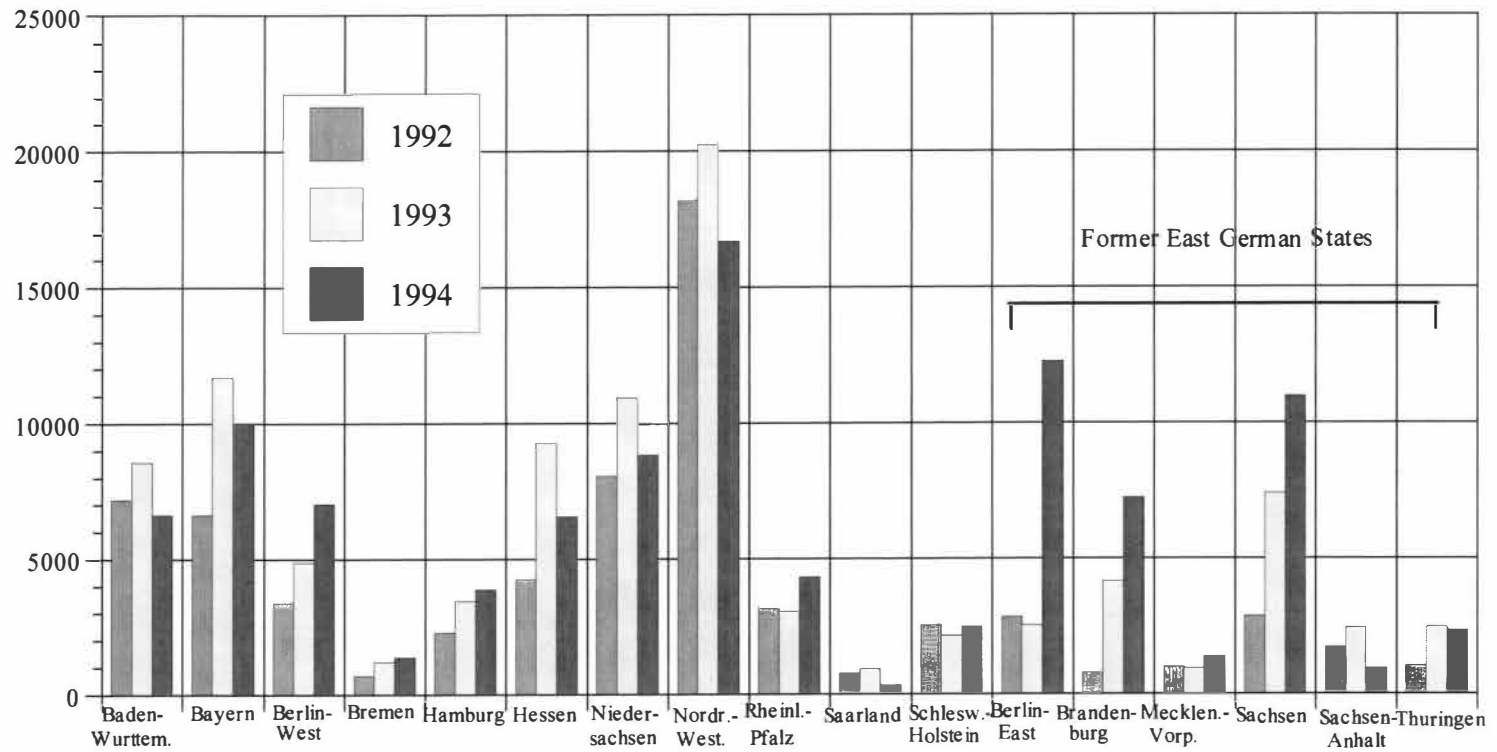


Figure 23. Subsidized Rental Units Built in the German States - 1992-1994.

Source: Info-Dienst 1996

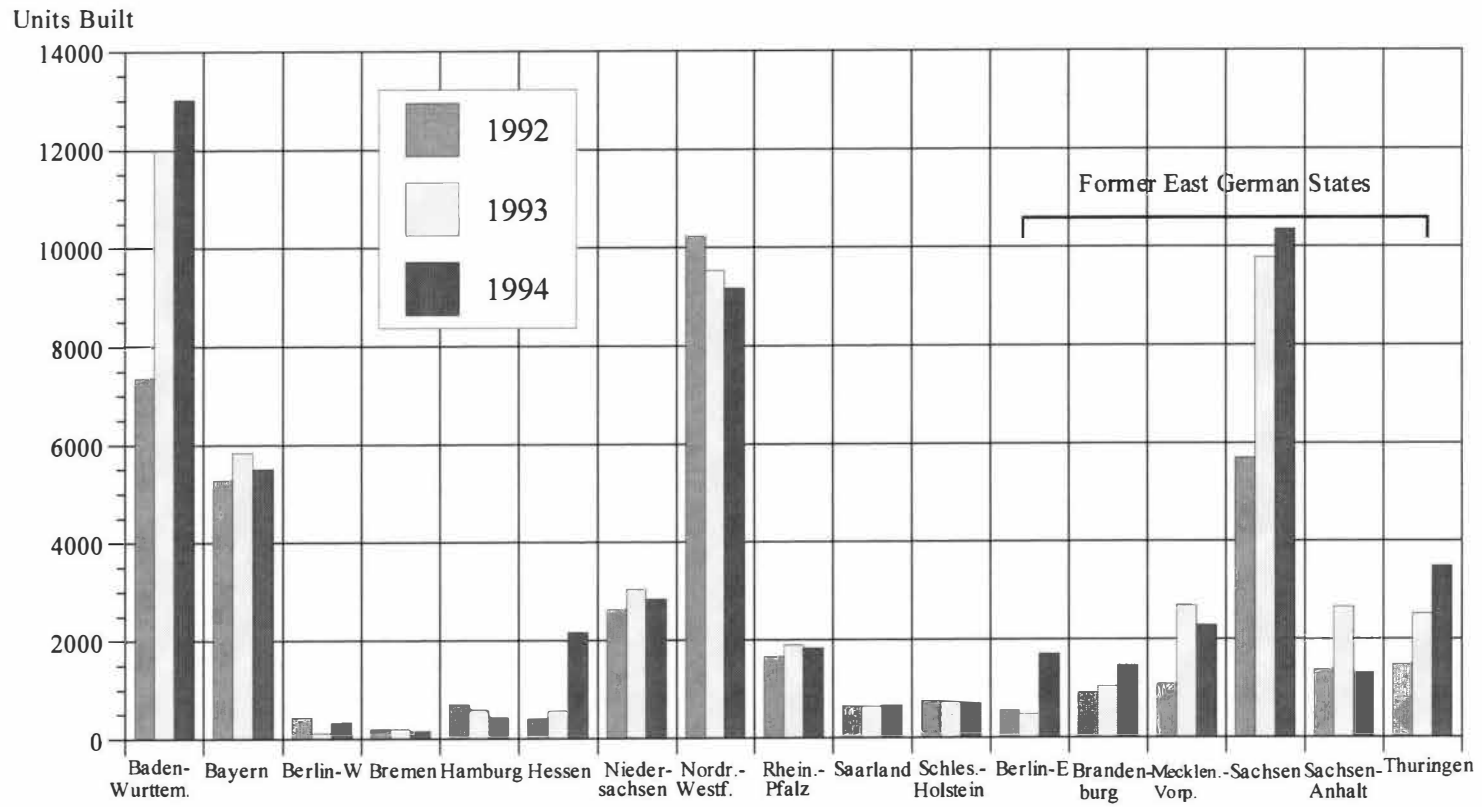


Figure 24. Subsidized Single-Family Houses and Condominiums Built in the German States - 1992-1994.

Source: Info-Dienst 1996

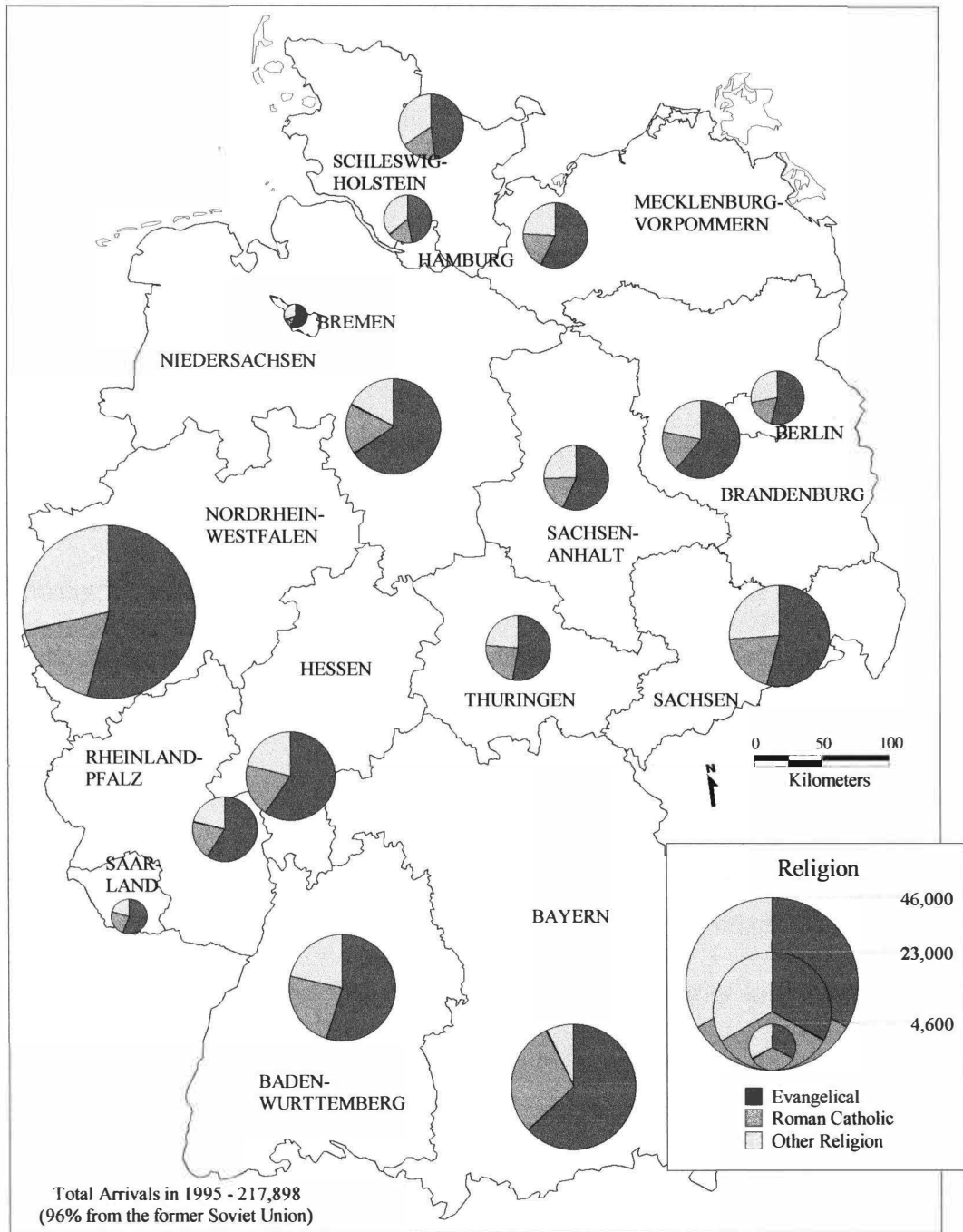


Figure 25. Religious Affiliation of Ethnic Germans Arriving in Germany - 1995.
Source: Info-Dienst 1996

traditionally Catholic, while some Catholics arriving in 1995 settled in northern Germany, such as Nordrhein-Westfalen, Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony) and Schleswig-Holstein which are traditionally Protestant regions. There is no simple explanation for this pattern but prior to World War II Germany was comprised of four major ethnic groups (the Franks, Saxons, Swabians and Bavarians) each with its own tradition and dialect, and each group found within a specific region of the country. Since World War II these ethnic regions are “no longer identical to the present sixteen German states”, most of which were formed after World War II by the occupying forces (Kappler 1993, 14). Some ethnic German expellees who arrived in West Germany immediately following the war tended to return to their ancestral regions, but the massive flow of immigrants since World War II, along with the ease of mobility and the attraction to industrial cities in search of work, have “blurred” these ethnic boundaries causing the cultural (and religious) make-up of Germany to be much more complex and intricate than it once was (Kappler 1993).

Another reason religion is not much of a factor in why ethnic Germans choose to live in particular areas is that religion is not a high priority in the lives of many young ethnic Germans, especially those from the former Soviet Union from where the majority of ethnic Germans have migrated in recent years. Because the Soviet Union was an atheist state, anti-religious propaganda tactics were used in schools as early as Kindergarten. The older generation tried to keep religion alive in the family by practicing their faith privately in small private groups but were apparently ineffective in making Believers out of many of the young people. A survey conducted in 1992 in

Germany showed that only 51.9% of Russian-Germans under 39 years old said they believe in God as compared to 96.6% of those over 60 years old (Dietz 1994, 105) (writer's translation). Ironically, even though many young Russian-Germans do not believe in God, almost all register themselves with the authorities as belonging to a particular religion. They also go to church occasionally, especially on religious holidays such as Christmas and Easter. The reason is that the immigrants believe going to church will help speed their integration into German society (Dietz 1994).

From a demographic standpoint, ethnic German migration is good for Germany, or at least it will be in the long-term, because the country's general population has been decreasing since the early 1970's (Münz and Ulrich 1995; Knapp 1992). The age profile of ethnic Germans shows the majority of the immigrants arriving in Germany are young people (Figure 26). In 1995, for instance, 34.34% of the 217,898 arrivals that year were under 18 years old. Those between ages 18-25 made up 10.76% of the total and another 33.87% were between the ages of 25-45. The profile shows that only 13.92% were between the ages of 45-65 and a mere 7.11% of those arriving in 1995 were 65 years old or older.

In comparison to the general population, Figure 27 indicates that ethnic Germans arriving in Germany in 1995 have 4.4% more in the working-age bracket (41.2%) as compared with the general population (36.8%). But the graph also shows that while ethnic Germans in the under 20 age bracket make up 37.8% of the total, only 20.8% of the general population fall in this category. Also good news for Germany is that only 21% of ethnic Germans are found in the over 45 age bracket as

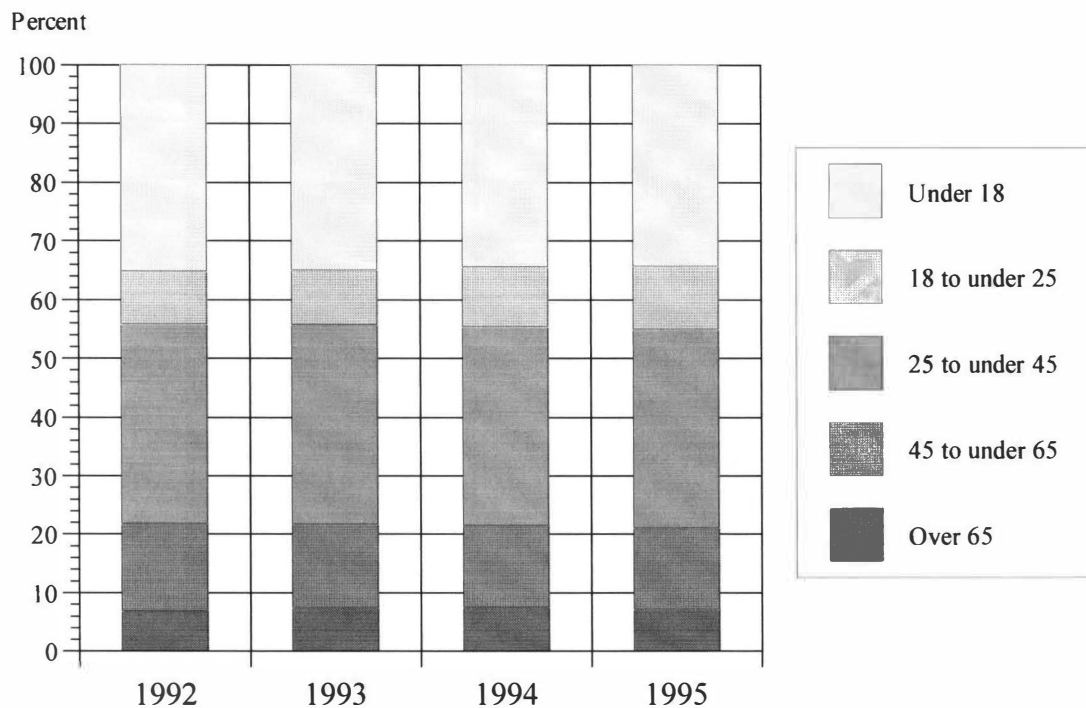


Figure 26. Age Profile of Ethnic Germans Arriving in Germany – 1992-1995.

Source: Info-Dienst 1995 and 1996

compared to 42.4% of the general population. On the downside, newcomers arriving in Germany are increasingly older (Gugel 1994). Although the trend is not that notable now (showing only fractions of percents), the number of older ethnic Germans coming to Germany will continue to rise, especially since those born after December 31, 1992 will no longer be eligible for entitlements.

Young ethnic German families arriving in Germany are especially welcomed in the east German states because since Reunification much of the young east German population has migrated to the west German states. Simultaneously, the birth rate has sunk dramatically in the east, so that in many areas there is a drastic aging of the population (Spätaussiedler...1996). But most ethnic Germans are not keen on settling

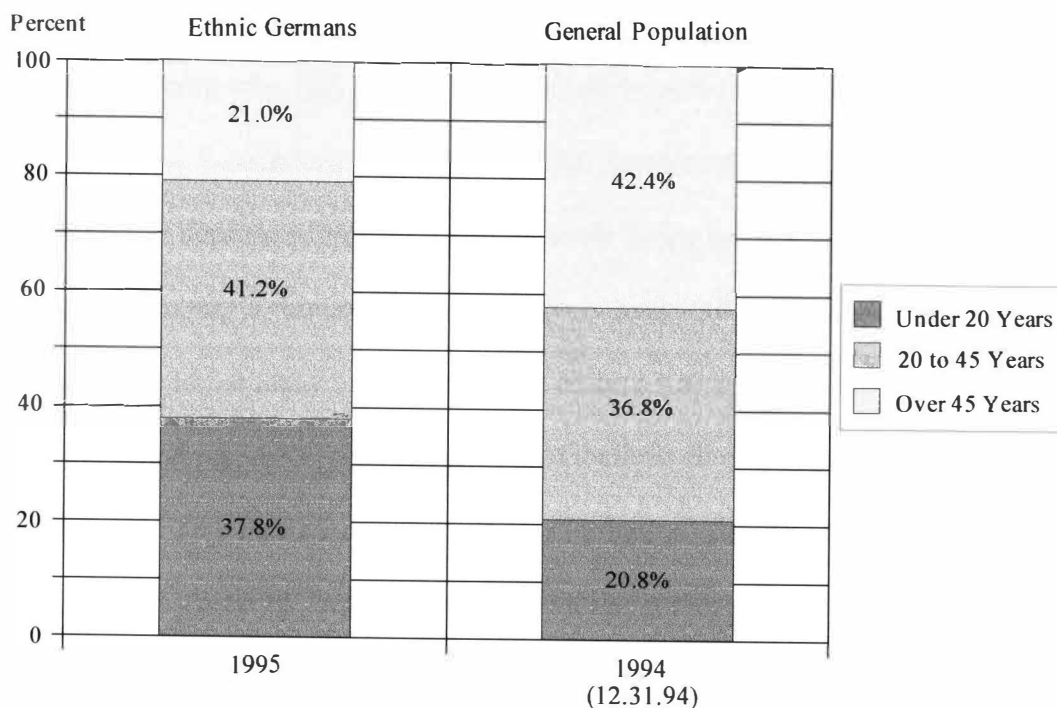


Figure 27. Comparison Age Structure.

Source: Info-Dienst 1996

in the east. First, as was previously mentioned, they do not want to be isolated from their families and friends living in established communities in the western states. Secondly, living conditions in the east are not as good as they are in the west. Another important reason is because, as was discussed in Chapter III, there have been thousands of reported cases of racial violence committed against ethnic Germans and asylum seekers in the east German states which has made many potential settlers suspicious of living there; but the situation is slowly improving. For instance, the minister of Brandenburg (one of Germany's eastern states) recently welcomed the 20 thousandth ethnic German to the state. Cause for celebration was that the young man and his family specifically requested they be allowed to settle in this eastern state.

“With flowers and handshakes” the minister welcomed Andres Miller, his wife and their three children who had just recently arrived from Kazakhstan (Spätaussiedler... 1996) (writer’s translation). The reason the immigrants requested residence in Brandenburg is because Miller has a sister already living there.

Brandenburg’s minister says the state is happy to receive the young family and would like to see many more come. The eastern states have been working hard to dispel prejudice against ethnic Germans and believe they are getting the situation under control. To entice more young ethnic Germans to the state of Brandenburg the government has recently begun a model building project in the city of Wünsdorf. Brandenburg’s minister boasts that the city has many prototypes of seventeenth century Huguenot architecture.⁴ Some of these buildings, which were used to house the Russian army during the Cold War days, could be developed by “self-propelled” immigrants if they decide to settle there (Spätaussiedler... 1996, 2).

The Language Barrier

In addition to the uneven distribution of ethnic Germans, another reason the immigrants have not integrated well into Germany’s economy is that many ethnic Germans have no knowledge of the German language when they arrive in Germany. This is particularly true of Russian-Germans. Under the Soviet system, which considered itself a union of nations, ethnic minorities were supposed to be able to retain their cultural identity, of which language is a crucial part (Klüter 1993). (Catherine’s Manifesto of 1763 had also guaranteed this right to ethnic Germans.)

But, when Hitler's army invaded Russia in 1941, Stalin revoked the right for Russian-Germans to use the German language, forcing them to use Russian instead. It was not until after Stalin's death in 1953 that the German language was once again permitted. According to a regulation issued in 1957 by the Ministry of National Education of the USSR, German children were supposed to be given two hours of German language training in school each week, in theory at least. "In practice, there was always a lack of German-speaking teachers and a shortage of textbooks." Instead, German children were forced to watch films about "bad Germans" and were ridiculed by other students who called them "*Faschisten*" (fascists) (Stumpp 1993, 147).

The older generation who grew up speaking German in the pre-World War II days continued to speak their language in their private lives among family and friends, but gradually each succeeding generation "profited less" from hearing their elders speak German and as a result, German became the "*Großelternsprache*" ("grandparent language") (Dietz 1994, 22) (writer's translation). By 1959, only 74% could speak German and by 1989 the number decreased to 49%. Of this 49%, it should be noted, not all can speak high (proper) German. Because of cultural isolation, the German language spoken in the former Soviet Union has evolved differently than it has in Germany over the past 200 years. Many Russian-Germans speak "colonists German", a combination of German, mixed with local dialect and Russian words (Dietz 1994, 22; Long 1988, 50).

In the earlier days, prior to the collapse of communism in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, most ethnic Germans who immigrated to Germany came

from Central Europe, so a good share of them, particularly the older generation, could speak German which helped speed their integration into German society. By the late 1980's the situation changed as more and more Russian-Germans arrived in Germany who were unable to speak the language. In 1992, for example, of all the ethnic Germans who arrived at the reception center in Nürnberg and were given language tests (all those between ages 10 and 60), 93.4% did not pass the test (Dietz 1994, 49).

Russian-Germans arriving now have a better grasp of German than the first of those to arrive in Germany because stricter laws have been enacted regarding the language requirements necessary to obtain immigration visas. Since July 1, 1990, in accordance with Ethnic Germans Admissions Act (*Aussiedleraufnahmegesetz*) potential immigrants must be able to fill out their application in German and be able to pledge allegiance to Germany in the mother tongue. In 1993, immigration restrictions became even tougher. Pursuant to the Post-War Settlement Act (*Kriegsfolgenbereinigungsgesetz*) of December 22, 1992, all of those who plan to immigrate to Germany must take a German language-training course in their countries of origin and pass a rigorous language test before leaving. To facilitate them, the German government has shipped thousands of textbooks to areas in Russia, Kazakhstan and the Central Asian Republics where large numbers of Russian-Germans live and has encouraged German-speaking teachers in the CIS to promote the German language in schools (Info-Dienst March 1996).

The reason behind the stricter laws is that it is much more cost-effective to have would-be emigrants learn German in the former Soviet Union than to house

them in transitional shelters for months to years in Germany while they learn the language. Figure 28 shows the average number of ethnic Germans enrolled in language courses in Germany each year since 1990. Of all the money spent to integrate ethnic Germans, language and job training are by far the most costly for the German government. Just since 1993, the government has spent DM 5.76 billion on language and job retraining (Hilfen für Spätaussiedler 1996).

The stricter policies are beginning to have an impact on the number of ethnic Germans coming to Germany. The Federal Ministry announced in April 1997 that ethnic German migration to Germany in 1996 fell far below the quota of 220,000 to 177,000 (172,000 from Russia and the Soviet successor states), the lowest annual

Ethnic Germans

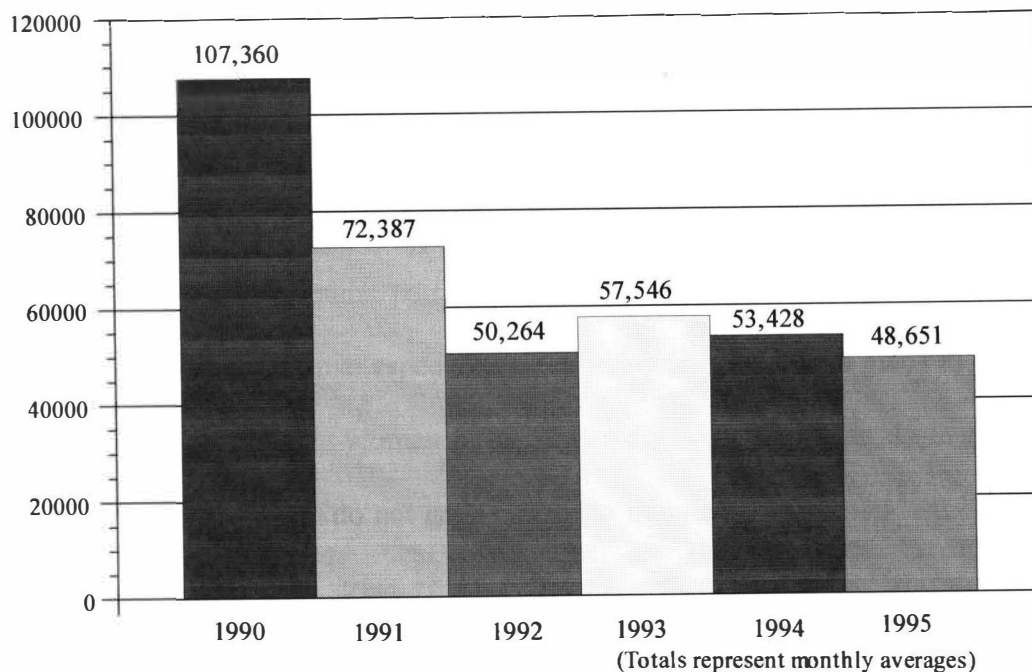


Figure 28. Ethnic Germans Enrolled in Language Courses in Germany – 1990-1995.

Source: Info-Dienst 1996

number of arrivals since 1987 (Figure 29). The reason, according to the Office for Ethnic German Inquiries, is that nearly one-third of the ethnic Germans who applied for immigration visas to Germany failed the required language test and were therefore denied permission to resettle there (Number of Resettlers... 1997). The government has since announced that it plans to allocate more of its yearly budget to assist those in need of language training.

Both in Germany and in the former Soviet Union, language courses are not only used to teach the language but because Russian-Germans are “oriented on collectivization” (Dietz 1994, 28) the concepts of capitalism and democracy are also incorporated into the program, as well as other aspects of life the immigrants will be faced with in their new homeland such as “learning to use the mass transit system or dealing with officialdom (School Addresses Social and Linguistic Needs... 1996, 7).” Prior to 1993, the language courses were spread out over one year, but because of budget cuts, the course must now be completed in just six months.

Many Russian-Germans, particularly adults, have a hard time learning the new language in such a short time, especially since living in the shelters gives them very little opportunity to study. Women have greater difficulty than men do in learning German because they often do not get a chance to mingle socially outside the family. In the patriarchal family structure of Russian-Germans, men take the dominant position with contact outside the family in the workplace, schools, and in official matters, while many women stay at home with the kids and other women in the shelters (Schafer 1995, 41).

Ethnic Germans

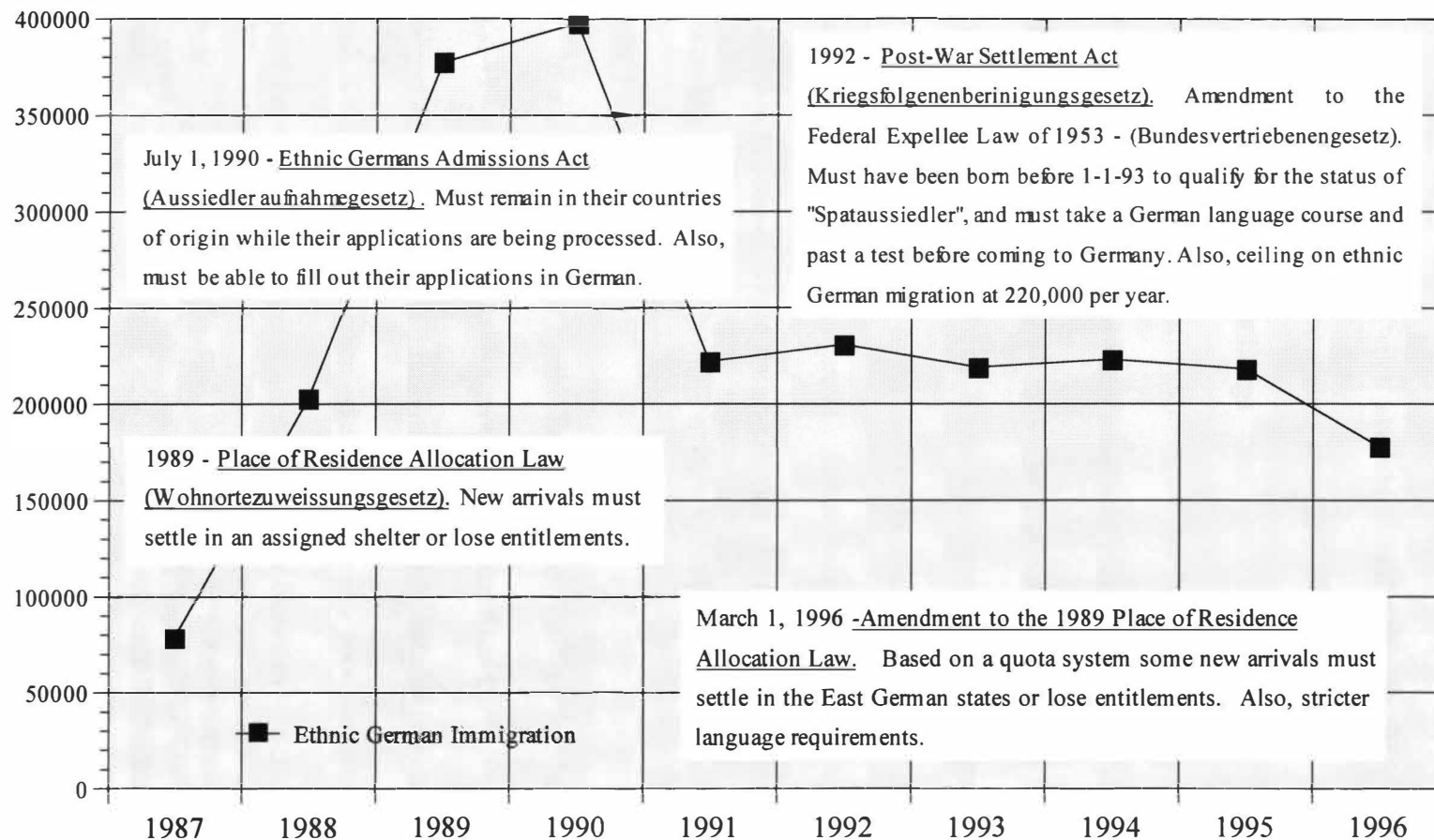


Figure 29. Laws Affecting Ethnic German Immigration to Germany - 1989 to 1996.

Source: Info-Dienst 1996; Bundesverwaltungsamt 1997

Children seem to adjust the easiest. Initially they are sent to special schools for ethnic German children (when available) until they are ready to enter regular schools which usually takes about eight months (Dietz 1994). Younger children often adapt easier than their older siblings. Teenagers who come to Germany without a grasp of the language find it difficult to adjust and do not do well in school.

Another integration problem unique to ethnic Germans living in shelters is that they have a lot of anxiety about learning proper German. So much so, that the different ethnic groups, such as Russian-Germans, Polish-Germans, etc. live in isolation amongst themselves in the shelters because they want to be identified with Germans, not with other immigrants. Often Russian-Germans will refuse to send their children to schools where Polish-German children attend because they fear their kids will not learn proper German if they socialize with Polish-German children (Schafer 1995, 89).

In a study conducted by the East European Institute in Munich in the early 1990's, 427 ethnic Germans who arrived in Germany from 1975-1985 were surveyed. The object was to see if the immigrants had economically integrated or remained isolated. Of those surveyed, when asked if they have a good command of the German language (seven to fifteen years after arriving in Germany) 16.2% said they could speak good German, 31.15% said they had some grasp of the language, 44.9% responded that their command of German is bad, and 7.3% said they have no knowledge of the German language (Dietz 1994, 57).

The Employment Situation for Ethnic Germans

The employment situation is not good for many ethnic Germans. The jobless rate has soared to a post-World War II high in Germany recently to 12.2% nationally and 18.9% in the East German states (Unemployment... 1997,4). This is not good news for ethnic Germans whose unemployment rate has been averaging 24% in recent years, and in the more densely populated areas, such as in Nordrhein-Westfalen, the rate is much higher. The 24% figure, it should be noted, reflects only those who have arrived in Germany over the past five years. After five years of residency in Germany ethnic German employment figures are counted in with the general population (Info-Dienst 1996).

In addition to the dismal state of Germany's economy at present, there are several other factors, "ethnic German specific factors", that contribute to the reason why 98% of all ethnic Germans have a hard time finding a job (Gugel 1994,113) (writer's translation). One reason, as was already discussed, is that the immigrants have followed a chain migration path and have chosen to settle in ghetto-like communities with others from their countries of origin rather than go to other, less crowded areas of the country where they may have a better chance of finding employment. Secondly, until recently, most of those in the working-age bracket have come to Germany without having learned the German language before arriving which has also seriously hindered their integration into the job market.

Another disadvantage for ethnic Germans is that many have found their job skills brought with them from their countries of origin are inadequate or unnecessary

in Germany's job market. In 1995, for example, of the 217,898 ethnic Germans that arrived in Germany, 116,609 (53%) are wage earners, the other 101,289 persons belong to the non-wage earner category, such as housewives, children, pensioners, etc. (Table 5). Of the 116,609 wage earners, 42% worked in the service industry in their countries of origin. Many of those in the service industry, such as lawyers, teachers, social workers, etc. cannot find employment in Germany because their qualifications do not meet western standards. This is particularly true of recent arrivals who claim to have had "management" or "sales" experience in their countries of origin, people who, German employers say, make many blunders (Gugel 1994).

It also seems that in their anxiousness to leave their countries of origin, some ethnic Germans may have registered themselves as having a particular job skill without having really been employed professionally in that capacity. For instance, in 1994, of the 118,509 wage-earners who arrived in Germany that year, 13,026 (or nearly 11% of the total wage-earners) claimed to have been "hairdressers" in their countries of origin (Info-Dienst 1995).

Industrial workers made up 35% of those who arrived in 1995. If they can speak German, their chances of finding employment are good, but employers cannot hire them if they do not know enough German to be able to fill out order-forms, etc. Mechanics, construction workers, craftsmen, those involved in transportation and other jobs of a less technical nature also have possibilities of finding employment soon after arriving in Germany if they can speak the language.

Academics also have a good chance of finding employment, but those

Table 5

Ethnic Germans Arriving in Germany – 1995:
Wage Earners vs. Non-Wage Earners

Wage Earners	Census	Percent
Agriculture and Forestry	8,288	7
Mining	734	1
Industry	40,884	35
Technical	10,603	9
Service Industry	49,274	42
Undecided	<u>6,826</u>	<u>6</u>
	116,609	100
<hr/>		
Non-Wage Earners	Census	Percent
Housewives/househusbands	1,175	1
Pre-school Children	24,375	24
School-aged Children	48,694	48
Pensioners	26,542	26
Other	<u>503</u>	<u>1</u>
	101,289	100
Total Arrivals in 1995 (96 % from the former Soviet Union)	217,898	

Source: Info-Dienst 1996

involved in specific branches of science have a very hard time getting established in Germany. Because of differences in training, they find their qualifications are not adequate. Subsequently they have to go through years of retraining before they can become re-certified in their professions. Many are forced to take jobs well below their qualification and income levels.

Agricultural workers, who made up 7% of those who arrived in 1995, also have a hard time finding a job, because they have found their skills are unnecessary in Germany's agro-tech society. They also have to go through extensive retraining before they can find employment.

Another factor contributing to high unemployment among the immigrants is that, as shown in Figure 30, the occupation structure of ethnic German wage earners is quite different from that of the native German population. For instance, while 8% of German wage earners were registered as "self-employed" in 1995, Figure 30 shows there are no ethnic Germans represented in this category, reflecting the differences in the economic structures of Germany and the eastern block countries. Figure 30 also shows that another 6% of those arriving are "undecided" about their profession. This category is not represented in the profile of German wage earners.

Many ethnic Germans arriving in Germany believe their qualifications and willingness to work will automatically land them a job. However, since Reunification they face competition not only with east Germans, but also with other ethnic Germans. The immigrants want to work though; they want to be contributors, and companies who have had experience in hiring ethnic Germans like them. One

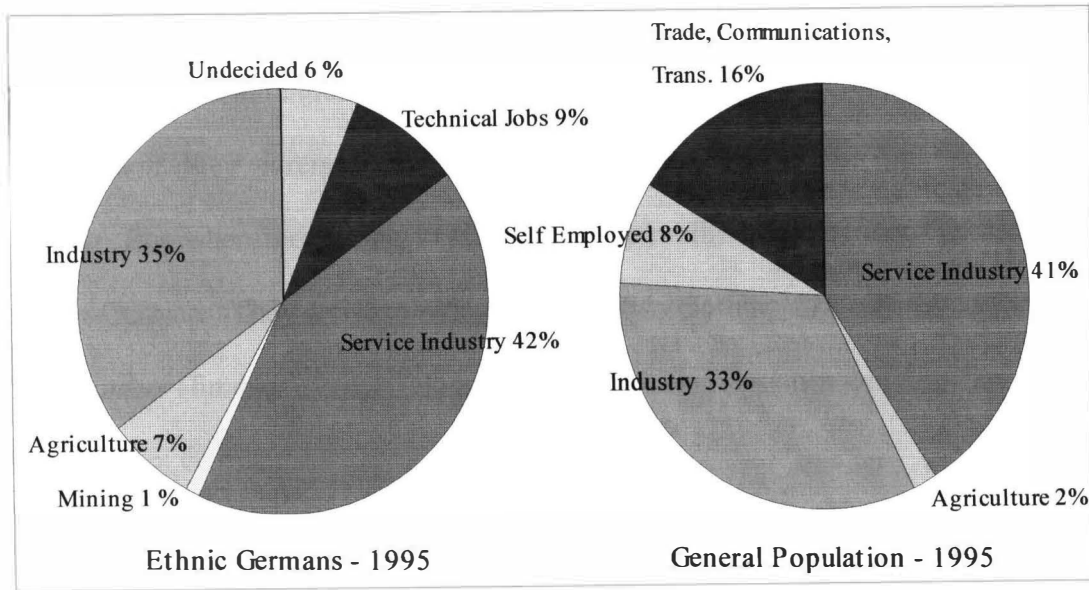


Figure 30. Occupation Structure – Ethnic Germans vs. the General Population.

Source: Info-Dienst 1996; Zahlenkompaß 1995

construction company owner who has employed scores of ethnic Germans claims they are hard working and punctual. They are also willing to take jobs Germans do not want, and are willing to work overtime and on weekends; but, the company's owner said, he prefers to hire Russian-Germans rather than Polish-Germans. Poles, he says, are more materialistic and think "milk and honey flows in Germany"; they all want the house and the Mercedes while Russian-Germans are more humble and willing to settle for less (Malchow 1993, 97) (writer's translation).

Cultural Differences Also Hinder Integration

Because Russian-Germans have lived in cultural isolation for hundreds of years, their integration into German society is more difficult than with those from

Central Europe who have only been separated from the German culture since World War II. From the immigrants' viewpoint, they were raised in German homes in the Soviet Union, their parents and grandparents spoke German; their upbringing was German. But when they come to Germany they realize they are not German, but Russian-German. They arrive wearing peasant-style clothing like *babushkas* (scarfs) and *ushankas* (fur hats) which, along with their thick Russian accents, makes them different from Germans.

Elderly Russian-Germans immigrate to Germany because they want to hang on to their cultural identity and religious beliefs. They fear their children and grandchildren will become culturally diluted if they stay in the former Soviet Union. They also fear that the current governments in Russia and the other newly formed nations of the CIS could change again and things will be as they were before.

Unfortunately, the immigrants also arrive with “unrealistically high expectations” and believe “all is good” in Germany (Blahusch 1992, 176). They think that once they get to Germany their lives will automatically improve, and for some this is true. But for the majority of the immigrants the reality is they will probably be living in an *Übergangswohnheim* (transitional shelter) for months to years. They will have to go through extensive language training and job training and even then, they may not be able to find work. They also have to face new living standards and a new economic system. Deprived of western-style consumer goods in the Soviet Union and its successor states, they immediately want to buy cars, houses and fulfill other material wishes. Spending money seems to give them instant

gratification and as a result debt consultation for ethnic Germans was recognized early on as an urgent need (Baumeister 1991).

Russian-Germans also experience culture shock. They come to Germany with 200 year old ideologies about nationalism and blood ties and believe Germany is full of Germans but find Turks, Japanese, Indians, etc. and think it is “all mixed up (Malchow 1993, 145; Schafer 1995, 77).” They are intimidated by the fast-paced lifestyle of Germans. They are shocked that young people smoke, drink and live together without being married. They believe German parents are not strong enough with their children and say German youngsters are disrespectful to their elders. Many who come from rural areas find living in cities intimidating and depressing. Unemployed, they have nothing to do but watch television all day. There are no gardens to work and no place for their children to play.

In a book entitled *Die fremden Deutschen (The Foreign Germans)*, several ethnic Germans were asked to give their impressions of life in Germany (Malchow 1993). One young man of 35 who brought his wife and three children to Germany from Russia in the mid-1990's told the interviewer that he found a job in construction nine months after settling in Germany. He and his wife also receive *Kindergeld* (a government allowance) for their children but they still have a difficult time making ends meet and feel insecure about their future.

The immigrant says it was easy to find a place to live when he was unemployed, but now that he has a job, he cannot find a place for his family to live. When he calls about an apartment, the manager (recognizing his Russian accent)

always asks if he has children and when he says he has three, refuses to rent to him. He says his parents finally found an apartment, but it was so dirty it took his mother two months to clean it and then, when the toilet broke, the landlord told his parents they never should have left Russia.

His mother-in-law is trying to immigrate to Germany but he tells her “all that glitters is not gold in Germany” and that if she comes, she will have to sleep on the floor. She says she does not mind she just wants to leave Russia. When she goes to the market in her village, she sees no more Germans there; all her neighbors have left. He thinks this is sad.

When he hears on television or when people say to him that too many Russian-Germans are coming and taking taxpayer money for pensions and welfare without ever having contributed to the revenue office he tells them yes, that is so, but there are not that many pensioners coming, and the young people will be paying taxes too one day. He asks, “What is one to do? We had a hard time too and if you had lived through what we had to, you would have a *Schauze Voll* (be fed up) too. Here we are *Aussiedler* and there we are Germans. We are not at home here and we were not at home there (Malchow 1993, 146) (writer’s translation).”

The immigrant situation has not been easy on Germans either. Germany is already densely populated. No one would have thought so many ethnic Germans would have come to Germany in recent years. Germans thought that each of their communities could take twenty or so families each year, but not all at once. Germans are especially angry that so many Russian-Germans are coming to Germany. In a

survey taken in the early 1990's, it was reported that only 36% of the population think of Russian-Germans as 'true' Germans and resent having to pay to resettle them in Germany. Only 17% of the population said they think it is a good idea that Russian-Germans come to Germany (Malcow 1993, 71). The overwhelming majority condemn violence against the immigrants, however, and have held mass demonstrations against it. Many German citizens have worked hard to protect the immigrants and have donated substantial amounts of money and have given many hours of their time in caring for them.

Churches are also doing what they can to ease tensions. In Bayern, for instance, a model project was begun in 1989/90 by the Catholic Church Commission geared specifically toward helping children of ethnic German families who are living, more or less isolated, in transitional shelters. "The separation from the old home, from relatives and friends in their countries of origin, the difficult living situation, the lack of German language knowledge, and often the lessening of the social position has led to problems and tensions between ethnic German children and Germany's young people (Adler 1995, 56) (writer's translation)." The project is designed, therefore, to promote contact between ethnic German and German youngsters and teenagers by sponsoring sports programs, music, theater and dance events, camping adventures, etc. (Figure 31). Churches also offer consultation to the young immigrants in personal, social and vocational matters. To promote the furtherance of a multi-cultural Germany, many youth clubs have also been established with mottoes such as "Borderless" and "A Colorful Germany: It is so if we use the chance (Adler



Figure 31. Sports with Ethnic Germans. Copy of advertisement published by the Bundesministerium für Aussiedlerfragen (Office for Ethnic German Inquiries) in Bonn to promote sports programs designed to help integrate ethnic German children who lived isolated in transitional shelters. Through sports activities ethnic German children living in the shelters can have contact, and hopefully make friends, with German children.

Source: Info-Dienst 1996. Used with permission of the Bundesministerium des Innern.

1995, 8) (writer's translation)." Churches also hold seminars where issues such as xenophobia are discussed.

The German government's response to violence against ethnic Germans and non-German asylum seekers has also been positive. Authorities have instituted programs for unemployed youths and programs whose aim it is to prevent xenophobic behavior (Bee 1994, 22-25). The media also play an important role in the education process by distributing booklets that demonstrate how the "foreigners" help the

economy and contribute to the cultural diversity of the country. One such booklet, entitled *Ausländer und the Deutsche Wirtschaft (Foreigners and the German Economy)* was written to dispel prejudices against ethnic Germans and asylum seekers by listing ten propositions that show the positive economic impact they have on Germany as taxpayers, contributors to social security, investors, business owners, employees, employers, and consumers (Ausländer und die Deutsche Wirtschaft, 1994). Brochures such as *Deutsche Aussiedler: 10 Fragen – 10 Antworten (Ethnic Germans: 10 Questions – 10 Answers)* and *Hilfen für Deutsche im Osten Europas: Warum? (Help for Germans in Eastern Europe: Why?)*, distributed by the Office of Ethnic German Inquiries (*der Bundesregierung für Aussiedlerfragen*), are used in schools and to educate the general public in Germany about the country's commitment to help ethnic Germans in the hopes of giving citizens a more positive view of the immigrant situation.

The government has also increased efforts to improve police leadership throughout Germany. Police are sent to sensitivity training where they are introduced to new cultures through local cultural events of the different ethnic groups (With Sensitivity Training... 1995). The government is also hiring more non-German police (such as long-time Turkish residents) who they hope can ease tensions between minority communities (Range 1993).

Amendment to the Place of Residence Allocation Law

On a less positive note, Oskar Lafontaine and his followers in the Social

Democratic Party still use the ethnic German question in their campaign strategy and manage to stir up feelings of animosity among the populace toward the immigrants even though ethnic German immigration has continued to decline since early 1996. In order to diffuse the growing resentment against ethnic Germans, the government has once again made its immigration laws more stringent. Pursuant to an amendment to the 1989 Place of Residence Allocation Law (*Wohnortezuweisungsgesetz*), all ethnic Germans arriving after March 1, 1996 must live in designated states based on a quota system (including in the eastern states) for a period of two years or lose their entitlements (Info-Dienst June 1996). The government hopes that by better distributing the immigrants around the country, the financial burden will be more evenly dispersed among the states and thereby relieve tensions in the more crowded areas (Info-Dienst June 1996).

Although ethnic Germans, like all German citizens, are guaranteed freedom of movement under Article 11.1 of Germany's constitution, Article 11.2 gives lawmakers the right to amend the law should they feel the necessity to do so. Article 11.1 of the "Charter of Basic Rights" states that "All Germans enjoy freedom of movement throughout the federal territory (Holborn 1970, 154)." However, Article 11.2 states "This Right may be restricted only by or pursuant to a law and only in cases in which an adequate basis of existence is lacking and special burdens would arise to the community as a result thereof or in which the restriction is necessary to ward off an imminent danger to the existence of the free democratic order of the Federation, or a *Land* (state)..." (Holborn 1970, 154). When asked how the

government decides which ethnic Germans will have to settle in the eastern states for two years, e.g. by a lottery or whatever, an official within the German federal government told this writer the government has “subtle ways” of persuading them to go.

On the very day the new Place of Residence Allocation Law went into effect, Lafontaine angrily denounced the government’s action by saying the law is still not strong enough and once again demanded that the country place limitations on the number of new arrivals. He is of the opinion, considering higher unemployment and the problems at the revenue office, that the law should no longer include taking in 220,000 new ethnic Germans each year. Lafontaine thinks that in the future the number of new immigrants should be based on the economic situation in Germany.

The Home Office responded to Lafontaine by saying that the use of the cash box will of course be heavy. Ethnic Germans receive, when needed, unemployment and pensions without ever having performed for this right of inheritance. Nevertheless, the government argues, this will later level out through the Social Benefit Policy Fund (*Sozialversicherungsbeiträge*) as young ethnic Germans find jobs and contribute to the fund.

The government does agree there are problems that have to be overcome. For example, in cities where there are large numbers of ethnic Germans, particularly Russian-Germans, the rate of crime among the young is especially high. Young people who come from the Soviet Union without a strong grasp of the German language are “not in good order” when they arrive, and if they come to

unemployment, end up “venting their frustration and bottled up energy in acts of violence and criminality (Ein Schlechter... 1996, 2) (writer’s translation).” The government is aware that solutions must be found to these problems.

But, the government argues, ethnic Germans are, so says the Basic Law, German, and as long as that is so, they have a right to immigrate to Germany and receive their entitlements. The government also reminds Lafontaine that in his “divine attribute” as Saarland’s president did he himself in 1992, in the grip of the new asylum regulations, vote for the determined yearly quota of 220,000 per year. The government also asks which devil is in Lafontaine that would compel him to use the ethnic German issue as an election war topic. The government insists Germany will be a land of immigrants and that “whoever is of the opinion that using this explosive topic as election war ammunition is not only misusing the system, but possesses an alarming flaw in sensibility and human nature (Ein Schlechter... 1996, 2) (writer’s translation).”

¹ Ethnic Germans are commonly known in Germany as *Aussiedler* (out-settlers), *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans), *Flüchtlinge* (refugees), as well as a variety of other names. See Appendix C for a complete list of terminology used in Germany to describe ethnic Germans.

² “Chain migration” is a form of “step migration” flow in migration theory (Ravenstein 1885, 1889; White and Woods 1980). Step migration usually implies movement through a series of places such as from a village to a larger town or city. However, while step migration is often associated with migration taking place for economic reasons, chain migration, on the other hand, links flow associated with kinship ties as in the case of ethnic Germans.

In systems analysis chain migration is considered part of the positive feedback loop whereby a change in one variable, in this case an increase in the ethnic German population (A), influences a change in migration to the same area from B, which in turn influences a change in A (further increase of ethnic Germans). This type of system, having only positive feedback, is called “morphogenetic” which means that equilibrium is not maintained, the result being a disproportionate number of ethnic Germans in certain areas of the country. The German government would like to achieve an equilibrium in the distribution of ethnic Germans, e.g. by encouraging more of the immigrant population to settle in the eastern states or in other less crowded areas of the country. With a more even distribution of ethnic Germans throughout Germany (by the introduction of a variable in the

negative feedback loop, such as tougher immigrant laws), the system, in theory, would return to a “morphostatic” state, or condition of dynamic equilibrium.

³ Some of the subsidized housing units were added to house East German arrivals in West Germany in the early 1990’s, but, for practical reasons, after 1991, East Germans were no longer eligible for subsidies as they were prior to Reunification.

⁴ Huguenots were persecuted French people who migrated to Brandenburg-Prussia in the 1700’s and brought with them robust economic stimulus. (Some Huguenots also fled to England, Holland or America.)

CHAPTER V

THE ALTERNATIVE: A DIVIDED HOMELAND

Making Amends

While it may not be good news for Russian-Germans anxious to leave the former Soviet Union that immigration to Germany has fallen drastically since 1996, it is a relief for the German government which has been under extreme pressure to limit the number of ethnic Germans coming to Germany. Less emigration of Russian-Germans is also good news for government leaders in Russia who are concerned that so much of its ethnic German population is leaving the country.

Although Russian-Germans were treated harshly and unfairly for many years, since 1955 when Khrushchev granted them amnesty, the settlers have once again been regarded by the government as hard-working, industrious, dependable, and well-organized (Klüter 1993; Stumpp 1993). The Soviet propaganda newspaper *Neues Leben* called them “heroes of labor (Stumpp 1993, 131).” The reason is that politicians are aware that many Russian-Germans are skilled farmers who contribute much to agricultural production in Russia.

In southwest Siberia, for example, where the majority of wheat is produced that the government buys to feed the rest of the country east of the Urals, Russian-German farms are prospering while many Russian farms operate at a loss (see Klüter 1993). Russian-Germans also raise or produce many other commodities important to

the economy such as cattle, pigs, sheep, dairy products, etc., and they are renowned for their horse-breeding skills (Stumpp 1993). One reason they have been so successful in agriculture is that they have their young people to help on the farms. Since 1955, when Soviet citizens were given freedom to migrate within the Soviet Union, many young people left rural areas in search of jobs in larger towns and cities. For young Russian-Germans this meant giving up their cultural and religious identity which many were not willing to do. So while elderly Russians were left to take care of their farms, German settlers had their young people with modern technological skills to take over farm management. In 1989 around half of all Russian-Germans still lived in rural villages (Kluter 1993).

Another reason the settlers have been successful, particularly in West Siberia, is that they have been established in the region for over a century (Klüter 1993). In the early 1800's, some Volga Germans and German settlers from the Black Sea region (mostly Mennonites) migrated to southwest Siberia to farm there as was mentioned in Chapter II. Unlike those who stayed in the Volga region and in other settlement areas west of the Urals, Siberian Germans were never deported; Germans were deported to Siberia but never from Siberia. The two main areas of southwest Siberia where ethnic Germans settled are in Omsk Oblast and in Altay Kray (Figure 32). The first settlement in Omsk was established in 1893. By 1897, 3,315 Germans lived in Omsk Oblast and by 1926, there were 205 German settlements in the Oblast, with 34,617 settlers comprising 4.2% of the total population (Deutscher Nationaler Rayon Asovo/Omsk...1996, 4).



Figure 32. Early German Settlement Areas in Southwest Siberia.

Source: Karte der ehemaligen und heutigen siedlungsgebiete der Deutschen in der Sowjetunion (Stumpp 1962); Deutscher Nationaler Rayon Asovo/Omsk (Bundesministerium des Innern 1996); Geographische Zeitschrift (Klüter 1993).

The oldest German settlement in Altay Krai was also established in 1893. By the late 1920's, around the town of Halbstadt, there were 57 villages with 13,115 people, 96 percent of whom were Russian-Germans (Klaube and Köhler 1996, 6). In

1927, the Soviets incorporated the villages and granted them Rayon status. Within the Rayon, whose founders based its constitution on the Volga Republic's constitution, German settlers had their own government representatives, and the German language was given equal status with Russian in schools, commerce, etc. With the rise of Hitler in the 1930's, the Rayon was dissolved in 1937 but Russian-Germans remained in the area and were later joined by deportees arriving from other parts of the Soviet Union during World War II (Klüter 1993; Stumpp 1993).

In southwest Siberia the per capita income of Russian-German villages was two times higher than in neighboring Russian villages (Klüter 1993). By the 1980's, it was not uncommon to find Russian-German farms with sizable houses decorated with impressive flower gardens and having other amenities such as garages, saunas, a refrigerator, piano, and stone shelters built for their privately-owned farm animals (Kluter 1993; Stumpp 1993) (Figure 33).

In spite of their success of the past few decades, Russian-Germans continue to immigrate to Germany. Russian politicians at all levels have tried to keep "their" Germans home by offering them incentives to stay, but because of many complications, efforts thus far have not been very effective in slowing their migration. From 1989 to the end of 1996, 1,301,131 Russian-Germans migrated to Germany from Russia and the other countries of the newly formed Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and hundreds-of thousands more are "sitting on packed luggage" (Jach 1996, 33) comprising the largest contingent leaving the former Soviet Union since the reform movement began in the mid-1980's (CIS conference on



Figure 33. Russian-German Farmhouse in West Siberia (n.d.).

Source: The German Russians (Stumpp 1993). Used with permission of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.

refugees and migrants 1996). (Roughly half of all emigrants from Russia to non-CIS countries since 1989 are ethnic Germans. Information is not available regarding the ethnicity of emigrants leaving the other CIS countries) (International Organization for Migration 1996, 91) (Tables 6 and 7.)

North-South Migration

Because of massive deportations between 1936 and 1952, a 1959 Soviet census showed Russian-Germans scattered all over the Soviet Union, but after Soviet citizens were allowed freedom of movement in 1955 many Russian-Germans who had been deported to areas in northern Russia set out to join their families in Kazakhstan and Central Asia and were actually encouraged to do so by the Soviet

Table 6
Emigration From Russia to Non-CIS Countries, by Country
1989-1996 (thousand persons)

Country	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Germany	20,6	33,8	33,7	62,7	73,0	69,5	79,6	64,4
Israel	22,0	61,0	38,7	22,0	20,4	17,0	15,2	14,3
USA	0,7	2,3	11,0	13,2	14,9	13,8	10,7	12,3
Other	4,3	6,6	4,9	5,2	5,6	5,1	4,8	5,7
Total	47,6	103,7	88,3	103,7	113,9	105,4	110,3	96,7

Table 7
Emigration From Russia to Non-CIS Countries, by Ethnic Group
1993-1996 (percentage)

Ethnic Group	1993	1994	1995	1996
Germans	53.5	51.5	51.3	44.2
Jews	15.8	12.4	12.8	14.3
Russians	24.0	26.4	28.7	33.4
Others	6.7	9.7	7.2	8.1
Total Percent	100	100	100	100

Source: CIS Migration Report (1996). Used with permission of the Technical Cooperation Centre for Europe and Central Asia, IOM

government (Stumpp 1993).

Following Stalin's death in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev, the new communist party chief, wanted to make agriculture more productive so he could move more of the population from agriculture into the industrial sector. From 1953-1965 under what was called the "Virgin and Idle Lands" policy millions of hectares of grazing land in Kazakhstan, southwest Siberia, the Urals, the Volga region, and the north Caucasus were to be cultivated for growing cereal crops (Olcott 1995, 227). Khrushchev also wanted to see an increase in livestock production. His plan involved importing rural labor from other parts of the Soviet Union. Russian-Germans were sought after as dependable workers to work in kolkhozes, construction, etc. so it was not coincidence that Germans, as well as other Soviet citizens detained in work camps, were finally granted freedom of movement in 1955 as Khrushchev put his plan in motion (Olcott 1995). "Landless" Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarussians were also encouraged to migrate to Kazakhstan and Central Asia (Edwards 1993, 29).

Barely had the new settlers become established in Kazakhstan and Central Asia however when the Soviets decided to discontinue development there. Khrushchev's plan to increase wheat production in the region rarely met its goal. The Soviets could never supply enough machinery to harvest the grain and much of it was left to rot in the fields. Harsh weather conditions also contributed to the problems the Soviets had in producing vast quantities of wheat in Kazakhstan. After Khrushchev was removed from office in 1964, the Virgin and Idle Lands policy was

halted and much of the land cultivated to grow cereal crops was returned to grassland (Edwards 1993). The region fell into poverty and tensions began to escalate between the native Islamic people and the settlers. In the early 1980's, the number of people living outside their "home republics" or "autonomous regions" was somewhere between 54 and 65 million according to the United Nations (CIS conference on refugees and migrants 1996, 3). Of these, 34 million were Russians, Ukrainians and Belarussians living in the Republics. When the Soviet Union began to disintegrate, these people suddenly found themselves "faced with an uncertain future" (CIS conference on refugees and migrants 1996, 3) and the Slavs and others began to leave in vast numbers, especially after the start of the Afghan War in 1979 (Klüter 1993).

South-North Migration

Until the mid-1980's nearly all of the settlers who left Kazakhstan and Central Asia returned to Russia, but Russian-Germans were only a small percentage of those who migrated during this time. In 1988, however, as pressure to leave Kazakhstan and Central Asia intensified, many Russian-Germans also began to flee. Unlike other Soviet citizens who had settled in the region, Russian-Germans had another option than to return to Russia. Exercising their right under Article 116, they could immigrate to Germany if the Soviets would allow it. Russian-Germans started demanding the right to leave the Soviet Union and were at last given permission to go. Through an arrangement between the Soviet and German governments, Germany began evacuating Russian-Germans out of the Soviet Union.

A “Renaissance” in the Volga

At the same time, Russian-Germans living in Russia established an organization called *Wiedergeburt* (Renaissance) (Klüter 1993; Malchow 1993). The goal of the organization was to attract Russian-Germans leaving Kazakhstan and Central Asia to the former Volga Republic (as an alternative to migration to Germany) where around 45,000 Russian-Germans had already resettled after the 1960's. In April of 1990, 38 Volga German families also sent an appeal to the United Nations asking for the UN's assistance in restoring their “long neglected rights as human beings”, and asked for assistance in “re-establishing a viable, German-speaking environment” where they could preserve their language and their culture (Kloberdanz 1995, 277).

The Soviet government was willing to negotiate with Russian-Germans over a gradual re-establishment of the Volga Republic but the German government then intervened and tried to pressure the Soviet government into immediately re-establishing the Republic by arguing in terms of “compensating for injustices” done to Russian-Germans (Klüter 1993, 427). As was discussed in Chapter 3, their efforts failed. The Soviet government, negotiating directly with Russian-Germans, then offered to allow the rebuilding of some of the old German villages in the former Volga Republic that had been liquidated during World War II. Extensive plans were made to rebuild villages, including villages that extended outside the former Republic. According to the plan, the villages would eventually be granted the status of Okrug (district) and later given Republic status. Russian-dominated villages would

be excluded (Klüter 1993).

The German government rejected the plan, but did agree to finance the house-building project (Klüter 1993). The reason the German government was ineffective in its negotiations for the gradual re-establishment of the Volga Republic was that instead of sending Russian-speaking specialists experienced in negotiating in Soviet-related matters, the government put the Federal Administration Office (or Home Office) in charge, which in turn established the Office for Ethnic German Inquiries under the direction of Horst Waffenschmidt. Apparently, rather than going to the foreign ministry to find diplomats experienced in negotiating with the Soviets, Waffenschmidt hired the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (VDA) (Organization for Germanism Abroad), an outside agency that was founded around the turn of the century to provide ideological and cultural support for Germans living outside Germany (Klüter 1993). It is possible that Waffenschmidt tried to find Russian-speaking specialists in the foreign ministry to help his newly formed agency, but it must be considered that in 1989/90 Germany was itself in a state of emergency due to events in Central and Eastern Europe and the subsequent Reunification of Germany. Perhaps Russian specialists in the foreign ministry were too busy at the time to concern themselves with building houses in the former Volga Republic for Russian-Germans leaving Kazakhstan and the Central Asian Republics.

In any event, the VDA was given a huge budget to hire (German) contractors to build houses for Russian-Germans arriving in the Volga region from the south. The VDA started spending money wildly, not just in the Volga area, but wherever

Russian-Germans lived, including in the Central Asian Republics, even though it was evident the settlers would not stay there (Klüter 1993). To make matters worse, the VDA and its contractors calculated the cost to build the houses by Western standards. Because the Ruble is worth much less than the Mark, houses that the VDA should have paid contractors DM 15,000 to build, cost German taxpayers DM 220,000 each, leaving DM 205,000 per house in profit for the VDA and the contractors who exploited the organization (Klüter 1993, 6).

Massive Evacuations From Kazakhstan and the Republics

In the meantime, pressure to leave the Republics intensified and German migration from Kazakhstan and Central Asia to both Germany and to Russia began to increase dramatically. Civil war in Tadikistan caused a strong-out-migration so that today hardly any of the 32,000 known Russian-Germans counted in the 1989 Soviet census remain there (Die Situation der Deutschen...1996). In 1988 conflicts also erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Other former Soviet Republics such as Georgia, Moldova, Uzbekistan and Kirgyzia have also had inner-ethnic conflicts making Russian-Germans anxious about staying in these Republics (CIS conference on refugees and migrants 1996).

Cultural and economic pressure to leave southern Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan was also intense. Then, when the Republics decided to replace the Russian language with the national language (Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Tadjik or Turkmen) as the official language and required all citizens to learn the new language,

many more Russian-Germans decided they had had enough. They might as well go to Germany and learn German (Malchow 1993). At the same time, the economic and political situation in Russia had also reached the crisis stage so many Russian-Germans began to leave that country as well. Consequently, from 1989 through 1991, 393,404 Russian-Germans left for Germany from the Soviet Union (Info-Dienst 1996).

The Alternative

Not wanting “their” Germans to leave Russia, especially those living in West Siberia (who the government depends on to provide much of the foodstuff for the industrial cities in the rest of Siberia), the new Russian government negotiated with its German settlers to re-establish the German National Rayon (GNR) around Halbstadt in Altay Kray. The German government was not supportive of the Rayon initiative just like it was not in favor of the gradual re-establishment of the Volga Republic. In spite of the German government’s lack of cooperation, on July 1, 1991, Boris Yeltsin decreed the autonomous German National Rayon (incorporating sixteen Russian-German villages around Halbstadt) as “experimentally” re-established with the Rayon’s seat of government headquartered in the town of Halbstadt. Within the autonomous Rayon, encompassing 1,400 km², Russian-Germans once again have their own elected officials, and the German language has been granted the same status as Russian in schools, businesses, etc. (Klaube and Köhler 1996, 8).

Germany's Policy Regarding German Settlements in Russia
Since the Early 1990's

As thousands of Russian-Germans continued to pour into Germany every month and pressure was building to limit their migration to Germany, government leaders in Germany began to take more interest in the Rayon concept. Through negotiations with the Russian government and with the cooperation of Russian-German representatives it was decided that, for the economic benefit of both countries, authorities would try to channel the migration of Russian-Germans living in Kazakhstan and Central Asia to West Siberia to replace those who were immigrating to Germany from that region. To entice would-be emigrants to West Siberia, the plan included providing them with better living conditions by granting aid for economic, social and cultural development both within the newly re-established autonomous Rayon and in other traditional German settlement areas of West Siberia (Klüter 1993; Klaube and Köhler 1996).

In the early stages of the negotiations Germany's top priority was to provide humanitarian assistance and cultural support for Russian-Germans, but the Russian government would only agree to this if Germany was willing to invest in the economy of the region. Since 1991, Germany has become the third most active investor in Russia following the United States and Great Britain, but the policy of the German government is to concentrate its investments in traditional German settlement areas such as those in West Siberia, on the Volga, and more recently, around St. Petersburg, and in Kaliningrad (formerly part of East Prussia) (Rexrodt in Moscow...1997).

From 1990 through 1996 the German federal government spent over one billion Marks on direct assistance for Russian-Germans in the CIS (Die Situation der Deutschen... 1996, 9) (Figure 34). In 1997 the German government plans to spend another 140 million Marks to assist Russian-Germans in the CIS (Hilfen für Spätaussiedler aus dem Bundeshaushalt 1996). The Russian government is also contributing. In 1996, for instance, Russia pledged 103 billion Rubles for economic development in West Siberia alone (Info-Dienst July 1996, 21).

The German government has stated that the development of German “center-of-gravity settlement areas” (*siedlungsschwerpunkte*) in Russia have a high symbolic value for demonstrating to Russian-Germans in the CIS that they are not forgotten by Germany (Info-Dienst March 1996, 20). The settlement areas in Russia have other important functions too: (a) as regions for permanent German settlements in the

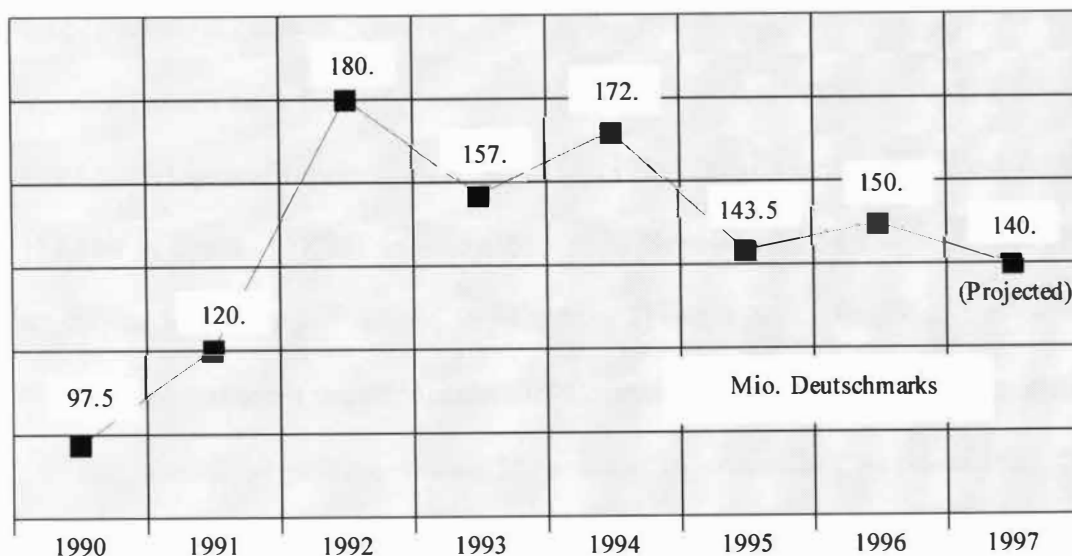


Figure 34. Federal Assistance for Russian-Germans in the Former Soviet Union.

Source: Hilfen für Spätaussiedler aus dem Bundeshaushalt (Bundesministerium des Innern 1996); Info-Dienst Feb. 1997.

Russian Federation; (b) as “waiting stations”, for example, in West Siberia where over 100,000 Russian-Germans have been staying to see what develops in Russia; (c) as transit center-of-gravity areas for immigration to Germany; (d) as places to give Russian-Germans the opportunity to work together; (e) and as demonstration that these projects benefit non-German neighbors in the region as well (Info-Dienst March, 1996, 20) (writer’s translation).

Ethnic German Migration to West Siberia Since 1989

Encompassing 675,000 km², West Siberia is about two times larger than Germany. It is also one of the most prosperous regions in all Russia despite the region’s extreme climate. At approximately 50° to 58° north latitude, West Siberia’s temperatures range from -16°C to -20°C in the winter and from 18°C to 25°C in the summer (which lasts for three weeks in the month of July) (Klüter 1993, 131). The 1989 Soviet census reported there were 371,399 Russian-Germans in West Siberia; 134,199 in Omsk, 127,731 in Altay, 61,479 in Novosibirsk, 54,254 in Krasnoyarsk, 47,900 in Kemervo and 47,556 in Orenburg (Frick 1996). In 1995, the German government estimated the population of Russian-Germans in West Siberia at 600,000 (an increase of 38 percent since 1989), many of whom are recent arrivals from Kazakhstan and Central Asia (Info-Dienst Sept. 1995, 3). The influx of new arrivals has caused tremendous stress on the infrastructure of the region and the Russian government is having a difficult time keeping up with population growth in West

Siberia. The German government is helping by providing generous economic assistance and credits for improvements to the infrastructure, to build new factories and create new jobs, to build new houses, and to provide cultural support for Russian-Germans throughout West Siberia.

Halbstadt's Development – 1991 - 1996

The Halbstadt Rayon, located in Altay Kray was the first post-Soviet German National Rayon (GNR) to be developed in West Siberia. The administrative, cultural and economic center of Altay is Barnaul, located about 35 km from Halbstadt, the center of the GNR. Altay Kray is three-fourths as large as Germany and borders on the south with China and Mongolia, and on the west with Kazakhstan, and lies in a geographic triangle between Omsk, Novosibirsk and Semipalatinsk (in northern Kazakhstan) (Deutscher Nationaler Rayon im Altaj-Gebiet 1994, 6) (Figure 35). Halbstadt Rayon will be celebrating its sixth anniversary as a “self-administrative corporate body” (*selbtsverwaltungskorperschaften*) on July 1, 1997 (Klaube and Köhler 1996; Die Situation der Deutschen...1996). According to Lew Korschonov, governor of the Altay, there are now around 100,000 Russian-Germans in the Kray with 20,700 living in the Rayon itself (Klaube and Köhler 1996, 8).

The Altay, dominated by agriculture, is primarily used to grow wheat, corn, maize and sunflowers. Livestock grazing is also prevalent. Because the Altay is the most important food supplier for the rest of Siberia, Korschonov says the local government is anxious to see that Russian-Germans remain in the area (Klaube and



Figure 35. Halbstadt and Omsk/Asovo German National Rayons in West Siberia.

Source: Klaube and Köhler 1996; Deutscher Nationaler Rayon im Altaj Gebiet (Bundesministerium des Innern 1994).

Köhler 1996). The German government is also anxious to see Russian-Germans stay where they are and between 1991 and 1995 invested 60 million Marks for the economic and cultural development of the Halbstadt Rayon (Klaube and Köhler 1996), 12).

The first concern for the self-sufficiency of the Rayon was to privatize the eleven collective farms around Halbstadt. By producing and marketing their own goods within the Rayon, the region is now able to avoid the shortcomings of the past

as government-controlled collective farms, such as shortages of goods, the failure of suppliers to appear, and the failure of payments made to the farms. With new farm equipment provided by economic aid, the new enterprises have now become successful enough to be able to finance their own economic and social infrastructure by setting aside 15% of their profits from surplus goods sold each year.

In addition to helping the settlers become more self-sufficient and market-oriented by the privatization of collective farms, the German government also provides all sorts of technical training which will help those looking for jobs in the region, and will enable those who plan to immigrate to Germany to be better prepared to find employment when they arrive there. Germany has also invested in the region's infrastructure by paving main roads, modernizing the telephone system, and by creating a centralized water system in Halbstadt. Germany has also provided funds for a new hospital complete with badly needed medical equipment and supplies, and ambulances. A matter of special concern for the German government is elderly Russian-Germans who were interned in work camps during World War II and are ill as a result. The German government is trying to create places in every village where they can receive care. It should be noted that not all citizens living in the Rayon are Russian-Germans but it is the policy of the Rayon to allow others, not of German descent, to also make use of the schools, library, hospital, and so on (Figure 36) (Klaube and Köhler 1996).

Halbstadt has also been endowed with a new building for the Rayon's representative government in addition to trade agencies, commercial banks, churches,



Figure 36. Recently Built Hospital and Nursing Home and New Catholic Church for the Halbstadt Rayon. The new hospital, built with German assistance, has been equipped with an urgently needed EKG appliance, sterilizer, ultrasound equipment and other medical supplies (above). Churches, such as the one shown (below), are also being built around Halbstadt.

Source: Deutschen Nationaler Rayon im Altaj-Gebiet (1996). Used with permission of the Bundesministerium des Innern.

kindergartens, schools, libraries and day-care centers equipped with cribs, toys, etc. Hundreds of new houses have also been built around Halbstadt and many older houses abandoned by emigrants that left for Germany have been modernized and given to new arrivals from the south (Figure 37).

German investment has also provided for the construction of new factories or the restoration of outdated factories and has provided new machinery (Figure 38). Germany is also helping to solve the logistical problems of moving commercial goods. In Barnaul, for instance, a new assembly plant is being built to install equipment in trucks to transport easily spoiled and breakable items.

The German government's motto regarding entrepreneurs looking for low interest loans is "help for those who help themselves (Klaube and Köhler 1996, 12) (writer's translation)." If one wants to open a bakery, restaurant, butcher shop, retail shop, or whatever, the funds are available. Several privately-owned and collective-type businesses have already been formed in the GNR (Figure 39).

The Asovo/Omsk District: Another "Experimental" Rayon

In a referendum in October 1991, 82.7% of the people voted for the establishment of another "experimental" Rayon in the Asovo/Omsk district of Omsk Oblast incorporating 103 German villages where today over 120,000 Russian-Germans live. Local citizens call the Rayon "the Island of Hope (Deutscher Nationaler Rayon Asovo/Omsk... 1996, 2) (writer's translation)."

Omsk Oblast, as in Kray Altay, produces wheat, potatoes and other



Figure 37. New Housing for Russian-Germans in the Halbstadt Rayon. German assistance provides for new housing for Russian-Germans (or remodeled housing), such as those shown in the photographs, built around the Halbstadt Rayon and in the Asovo/Omsk Rayon to house new arrivals from Kazakhstan and the Central Asian Republics.

Source: Deutscher Nationaler Rayon Halbstadt nach fünf Jahren (Klaube and Köhler 1996); Deutscher Nationaler Rayon im Altaj-Gebiet (1994). (1994). Used with permission of the Bundesministerium des Innern.

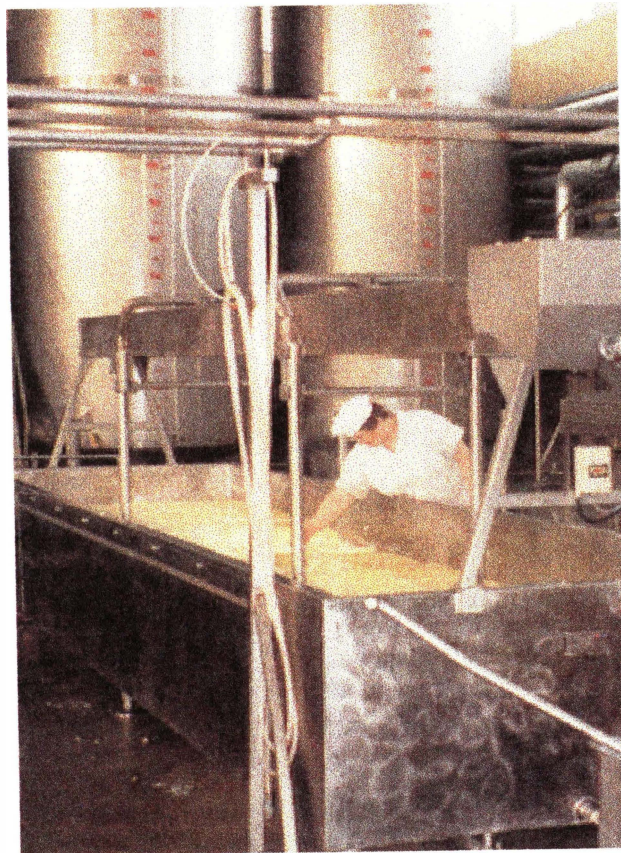


Figure 38. Dairy Equipment Provided with German Assistance. With financial assistance from Germany the Halbstadt Rayon receives new farm equipment and machinery such as the dairy equipment shown here. With the new equipment and forty employees, the dairy in the town of Grischkowka now produces around 30 tons of milk, 30 tons of butter and 60 tons of cheese per month which is sold around the Halbstadt Rayon.

Source: Deutscher Nationaler Rayon Halbstadt nach fünf Jahren (Klaube and Köhler 1996). Used with permission of the Bundesministerium des Innern, Bonn.

agricultural products, but the Oblast is also an important industrial center, particularly the city of Omsk. Omsk, along with Kemerovo (also in West Siberia), are two of the most important chemical industrial cities in West Siberia. These two cities also contain 60-80% of West Siberia's military-industrial complexes. Oil and coal are



Figure 39. Privately-owned Shop in the Halbstadt Rayon. With German assistance one Russian-German entrepreneur opened this shop in the Halbstadt Rayon in 1993. The shop sells shoes, clothing, videocassettes, chocolates, etc. There are now four privately owned shops and three collective businesses in the Halbstadt Rayon. The owner of this shop worries about the new competition.

Source: Deutscher Nationaler Rayon im Altaj-Gebiet in der Russischen Föderation (1994). Used with permission of the Bundesministerium des Innern, Bonn.

also important commodities in the region and there are several oil refineries in or near Omsk (Klüter 1993).

Unfortunately, West Siberia's industrial cities are very polluted as they are throughout the former Soviet Union. One of the priorities therefore is to make the region a healthier and more attractive place to live by installing a new water system for the Rayon and modernizing factories, etc. Much still needs to be done however and at exorbitant cost.

In addition to assisting with environmental clean up, Germany has invested in the region's infrastructure similarly to the way it has in the Halbstadt Rayon by providing funding in the form of credits to the Russian government or by private sources to pave roads, modernize the telephone system, construct administrative buildings, trade agencies, commercial banks, schools, a post office, etc. Other development projects around Asovo/Omsk include the building of new factories such as a new baby food plant for the production of dry cereal and fruit juices. A manufacturing plant for the production of cellulose-hygiene articles for women, hospitals, and pharmacies is also being built in Asovo as well as houseware, playtoy and auto accessory plants. New houses are also being built all around the Omsk Oblast and "*Container Siedlungen*" (container dwellings) (small metal housing units furnished with bunk beds) have been brought in to use as temporary shelters for new arrivals (Deutscher Nationaler Rayon Asovo/Omsk...1996, 8). German assistance is also providing for job retraining, technical support, etc.

Because it is important to Russian-Germans that they retain their cultural and linguistic identity with Germany, the German government has also built many cultural centers (*Klühhauser*) not just within the Rayons, but all over the CIS where Russian-Germans live. Figure 40 shows the cities and towns around which most cultural centers are located in the former Soviet Union. The centers provide a place where Russian-Germans can go to view German television programs via satellite TV, read German books, learn the German language, and attend cultural activities. For those who wish to immigrate to Germany, the cultural centers also provide the six-



Figure 40. Cultural Centers in the CIS, Georgia and the Baltics.

Source: Die Geteilte Heimat (von Moor 1994).

month language courses that Russian-Germans must take (if needed) prior to taking the language test required for exit-visas.

The VDA's New Role

The VDA has a role, albeit a more traditional role, by assisting the German government with the promotion of the German language and the organization of cultural activities in the centers (Figures 41-42). According to correspondence received from Hans Frick at the VDA's headquarters in St. Augustin, Germany, since

1990/91, the agency has been assigned to a series of projects for the cultural benefit of Russian-Germans. Two projects specifically noted by Herr Frick in his letter are “*Sprachassisten*” (Language Assistance) and “*Jungjournalisten*” (Young Journalists) (Frick 1996) (writer’s translation). Language assistance involves teaching German to anyone who needs or wants it. Many of those arriving from Kazakhstan and Central Asia, although they are mostly of German “sturdiness”, have assimilated into other societies that no longer required them to speak the mother tongue (Klaube and Köhler 1996, 18). Although they are willing to learn or relearn the German language, they need to be encouraged to do so. Cultural centers create the environment



Figure 41. Folk Dancing at a German Cultural Center in West Siberia. Cultural event for Russian-Germans at a German cultural center in the Halbstadt Rayon in West Siberia.

Source: Deutschen Nationaler Rayon im Altaj-Gebiet in der Russischen Föderation (1994). Used with permission of the Bundesministerium des Innern, Bonn.



Figure 42. Elderly Russian-Germans Feasting at a German Cultural Center in West Siberia. These women, recent arrivals from Kazakhstan and Central Asia, still cling to the old traditions.

Source: Deutscher Nationaler Rayon Halbstadt nach fünf Jahren (Klaube and Köhler (1996). Used with permission of the Bundesministerium des Innern, Bonn.

and therefore the incentive for learning the language (Figure 43).

The VDA's "Young Journalist" program is a pen-pal program designed to link Russian-German children with youngsters in Germany via letter writing. With the cooperation of young people in Germany, the program's aim is to help young Russian-Germans improve their writing style and organization skills (Frick 1996).

The German government says language testing is crucial for those who want to immigrate to Germany and plans to spend even more of its budget in 1997 to assist Russian-Germans in the CIS with language training. Some officials have suggested that a reward system should be established for students of the German language with



Figure 43. Russian-Germans Studying at Cultural Centers in West Siberia
 German cultural centers, such as the ones shown here, provide a place for would-be emigrants to learn the German language, receive job training and learn about the German culture before leaving for Germany.

Source: Deutscher Nationaler Rayon nach fünf Jahren (Klaube and Köhler 1996).
 Used with permission by the Bundesministerium des Innern, Bonn.

the guiding principle that as the German language ability improves, all the more sooner will one be bestowed with reception information for resettlement in Germany. The German government says that would-be emigrants must realize language knowledge is an essential element for successful integration in Germany. For those tragic cases involving the ill or infirm, the German government plans to have mobile language testing all around the CIS to reach those who cannot come to the centers for testing (Info-Dienst March 1996).

“Action 1000 Partnerships”

The government states that the crisis in West Siberia has not yet reached its high point, but indicates it will soon be over. There have already been many improvements in the region. But there are still many problems that need to be overcome. The biggest problem around West Siberia now is the rapid growth and the fluctuations in the number of people. By 1993, in Halbstadt alone, over 500 new houses were built, but because so many are now arriving from Kazakhstan and Central Asia, there is still a housing shortage. There is also a job shortage. The German National Rayons are also attracting many non-Germans, further adding to the strain on the infrastructure, job market and the housing situation (Klaube and Köhler 1996).

To encourage more investment in German settlement areas, the German government initiated a plan in 1996 called “Action 1000 Partnerships.” In a press release issued by The Office for Ethnic German Inquiries (*der Bundesregierung für*

Aussiedlerfragen) in March 1996, several examples of Russian-German partnerships were listed with the motto “*Gute Beispiele können Schule machen*” (“good examples school proficiency”) (Info-Dienst March 1996, 22-23) (writer’s translation). These are a few of the examples noted: (a) Business partnerships (joint-ventures) between German businesses and Russian partners such as in construction and environmental clean-up; (b) school partnerships between Germany and Russia; (c) partnerships between youth organizations in both countries; (d) partnership building organizations like the Rotary Club of Germany with the Rotary Club of Russia; (e) partnership of Russian-Germans in Germany with the German Rayons in West Siberia; (f) partnership between the German Red Cross and the Russian Red Cross; and (g) partnerships between churches such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hanover with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Omsk.

Kaliningrad Oblast: Maybe Not Such a Good Idea

Since the early 1990’s the German government has also been encouraging Russian-Germans to resettle in the Kaliningrad Oblast which is located on the Baltic Sea in an area that is separated from the rest of the Russian Federation (Figure 44). The Russian government is reluctant about German settlement in the Kaliningrad Oblast, however, because currently Kaliningrad provides the only port, other than the one at St. Petersburg, that allows access to the Baltic Sea for the Russian navy and merchant fleet. Germany, along with Lithuania and Poland, could conceivably “lay claim” to the Kaliningrad Oblast (Russian Observer... 1997, 1). Lithuanian



Figure 44. Kaliningrad Oblast.

Source: MapInfo 1997.

nationalists already consider the Oblast to be Lithuanian territory even though the majority of it never belonged to the country. According to OMRI, a Russian news service, Lithuania recently informed NATO that the country “should demand the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Oblast and initiate preparations to integrate the region into Lithuania while supporting ethnic Lithuanians and granting them Lithuanian citizenship (Russian Observer... 1997, 1).” The Lithuanian government has also suggested they would like to turn the Oblast into an independent state called

“Borussia (Russian Observer... 1997, 1).”

Meanwhile, Germany is encouraging Russian-Germans from other parts of the former Soviet Union to resettle in the Oblast. Much of Kaliningrad was once part of East Prussia but became part of the Soviet Union after World War II.

The German government’s argument for being in the area, besides the fact that it was once part of Germany, is that there are already ethnic Germans living there who are desperate and in urgent need of help. The German government reports it has been providing humanitarian aid and seedlings for family farms in the Kaliningrad area (Die Situation der Deutschen... 1996). OMRI, on the other hand, more recently reported that Germany is now the second largest investor following Poland and is buying a lot of real estate in the Oblast (Russian Observer... 1997, 1) (Figure 45).

Three new commercial ports are under construction in Leningrad Oblast (north of Kaliningrad) as part of Russia’s effort to reduce dependence on ports in neighboring Baltic countries such as in Kaliningrad Oblast. The first new port, located at Batereinaya Bay 47 miles from St. Petersburg on the Gulf of Finland, will begin operation at the end of 1998. Two other ports being developed in the region will be at Ust-Luga (78 miles southwest of St. Petersburg) and Primorsk (70 miles northwest of St. Petersburg) (Brennan 1997, 4).

St. Petersburg/Leningrad: A “Model Center” for Ethnic Germans

The German government is also encouraging would-be emigrants to settle in the St. Petersburg area where Russian-Germans have historic ties dating back to the



Figure 45. New German-Russian Cultural Center on the Outskirts of Kaliningrad. The center provides a place to learn the German language as well as computer courses. The Kaliningrad center, which also presents German films, dance groups, a chorus, etc. is open to all local citizens, not just ethnic Germans.

Source: Programm zu Unterstützung der deutschen Minderheit in Rußland. Used with permission of the Bundesministerium des Innern, Bonn.

seventeenth century when they were invited there by Peter the Great. The project to relocate more Russian-Germans in St. Petersburg and to promote their acceptance in the community is being managed by the newly formed “Russian-German Commission” which is comprised of representatives of the Russian Ministry for Nationality Inquires, regional politicians of the administrative districts of Leningrad and the city of St. Petersburg, Russian-German representatives, the state government of Baden-Württemberg and the German federal government (Die Situation der Deutschen... 1996, 12).

A German cultural center has been established in a “fossil” church to

accommodate new arrivals from other parts of the CIS (Programm zur Unterstützung ... n.d.) (Figure 46). To convey the idea of a community effort in the area around St. Petersburg, both Germans and non-Germans are welcomed at the center where people can learn the German language, attend theater and dance events, watch movies, etc. The center also provides clubs for young people and offer concerts and other leisure-time activities for teenagers. The Commission hopes the center in St. Petersburg will become a “model center” for the cultural development of Russian-Germans by promoting the co-existence of Germans and non-Germans in the area (Die Situation der Deutschen... 1996, 12; Programm zur Unterstützung... n.d.).



Figure 46. German Cultural Center in St. Petersburg. Located in downtown St. Petersburg, this “fossil” church was used to house an indoor swimming pool during the communist era but has recently been converted to a German cultural center made possible by a joint effort between the German and Russian governments.

Source: Programm zu Unterstützung der deutschen Minderheit in Rußland (n.d.).
Used with permission of the Bundesministerium des Innern, Bonn.

A New Town for Russian-Germans

Another area of Russia where Germany has more recently agreed to provide extensive aid for the creation of a Russian-German community is around the city of Bryansk, located near Russia's western border southwest of Moscow. The city, which already has an international airport, could become an important transportation hub for moving freight. The German government has agreed to provide credits for building an entire town to house 5,000 - 10,000 Russian-Germans who would probably go into farming or industrial work in the Bryansk area. One possible location for the German settlement is the town of Unecha which has an abandoned factory site that may become an assembly plant for Philips TV sets. Other plans in the area include a possible Mercedes-jeep assembly factory, and possible investment by the German government for modernizing a well-known horse-breeding farm so it can better compete with horse farms in other countries (Bykovsky 1997).

A Homeland on the Volga: A Long Way Off

Alas, in 1992 the German government finally aligned itself with the Russian government on the gradual re-establishment of the Volga Republic (Klüter 1993). The Volga region is now the largest recipient of German assistance in the Russian Federation. A "step-by-step" restoration of the Volga Republic agreement was reached on March 23, 1993, although with "mixed feelings", this time on the Russian side. An April 2, 1996 press release from the *Bundesministerium des Innern* (BMI) in Bonn, stated that there are now around 200,000 Russian-Germans living in the Volga

region. The governor of the region has asked Germany to continue providing assistance to further the economic development in the newly established Russian-German communities to which the German government responded by allocating 14 million Marks in 1996 for the purpose of building new cultural centers, promoting the German language and for job retraining (Info-Dienst April 1996, 8). New churches are also being built in Saratov, made possible by a joint effort between the Evangelical churches of Berlin, Brandenburg, and the German federal government (Info-Dienst April 1996).

Russian-Germans: Still on the Move

According to estimates reported by the German government in April 1996 there could be as many as two million ethnic Germans still living in the former Soviet Union. Around 900,000 Russian-Germans were estimated to be living in the Russian Federation, (650,000 in West Siberia and 200,000 in the Volga region). Another 650,000 were reported to be living in Kazakhstan (Die Situation der Deutschen... 1996). The Soviet census reported there were 2,038,603 living in the former Soviet Union in 1989. Between 1989 and the end of 1996 1,391,131 Russian-Germans migrated from the former Soviet Union to Germany. If the 1989 census were correct, there should only be around 636,000 left in the former Soviet Union, yet the German government estimates there could be as many as two million (Table 8).

It is next to impossible to determine the exact number of Russian-Germans and their whereabouts in the former Soviet Union at this time. First, more Russian-

Table 8

Estimated Population of Russian-Germans in the Former Soviet Union – 1996

Country of Origin	1989 Soviet Census	1996 Estimate by the German Government
Kazakstan	957,518	650,000
Russian Federation	842,295	900,000
Kirgyzia	101,309	30,000
Uzbekistan	39,809	40,000
Ukraine	37,849	40,000
Tadzhikistan	32,671	Unavailable
Baltics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania)	9,307	9,000
Moldova	7,335	Unavailable
Turkmenistan	4,434	Unavailable
Belarus	3,517	Unavailable
Georgia	1,546	2,000
Azerbaijan	748	Unavailable
Armenia	<u>265</u>	<u>Unavailable</u>
	2,038,603	1,671,000

Arrived in Germany from the Former Soviet Union 1989-1996 – 1,391,131

Source: Die Situation der Deutschen in den Staaten Ostmittel-Ost- und Südosteuropas (Bundesregierung für Aussiedlerfragen 1996).

Germans are “coming to their nationality” each month, so the number continues to rise (Die Situation der Deutschen...1996, 9) (writer’s translation). For example, if an ethnic German woman married a non-German man, chances are they would have registered their children as non-Germans in the 1989 Soviet census. If the family should decide to immigrate to Germany, the wife could simply change the ethnic status of her children and register them with the immigration office as ethnic Germans if she can prove her German ethnicity. As a spouse of an ethnic German, her husband also becomes eligible for immigration to Germany. Therefore, what was counted as one ethnic German (the wife) in the 1989 census, suddenly becomes three or four or five or six ethnic Germans, depending on the number of children in the family. According to German law, grandchildren would also be considered eligible but because of revisions to the immigration law in Germany in December 1992, only those born before January 1, 1993 would now be able to immigrate to Germany and receive entitlements as ethnic Germans.

Another reason it is not easy to determine the exact number of Russian-Germans still in the CIS and their whereabouts is that the migration is still ongoing. Most Russian-Germans who were living in Tadikistan, Turkmenistan, and some of the other Central Asian Republics have already gone to Germany or have migrated north to Kazakhstan, or the Russian Federation. For example, according to the 1989 Soviet census there were 39,809 Russian-Germans living in Uzbekistan (Frick 1996). Between 1989 and the end of 1996 around 32,000 Russian-Germans migrated to Germany from Uzbekistan (Info-Dienst August 1996; Jahrestatistik Aussiedler 1996)

which would, in theory, leave a balance of roughly 7,800 in the republic (although it is not known how many of the remaining 7,800 original Uzbek Russian-Germans may have migrated to Russia since 1989). The 1996 estimate places the number of Russian-Germans still in Uzbekistan at 40,000 which means that some might be recent arrivals from the other republics, or those who decided to reveal their German ethnicity since the 1989 Soviet census (Table 9 and Figure 47).

Similarly, the 1989 Soviet census reported 957,518 Russian-Germans living in Kazakhstan (Frick 1996). Between 1992-1996, 558,460 Russian-Germans migrated to Germany from Kazakhstan (Info-Dienst 1996; Jahrestatistik Aussiedler 1996). The number of Russian-German migrants from Kazakhstan to Germany from 1989-1991 is not available, although it can be assumed that Kazakh Russian-Germans made up a good share of the 393,404 arrivals in Germany from the Soviet Union during those years also. At least 100,000 (probably more) of Kazakhstan's Russian-Germans have also migrated to Russia. This would mean that nearly all of those counted in the 1989 census have already left Kazakhstan, yet it was reported in 1996 that there are still an estimated 650,000 Russian-Germans in Kazakhstan which again can be attributed to the rise in those claiming German ethnicity, and attributed to the arrival of Russian-Germans migrating from the Central Asian Republics.

The Future for Ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

The new Kazakh government, like the Russian government, has stated time and again that they wish "their" Germans would stay. Kazakh officials admit that the

Table 9

Ethnic German Population in Kazakhstan According to the 1989 Soviet Census

City	1989 Soviet Census
Tselinograd (today Aqmola) <i>Astana</i>	123,694
Karaganda	123,299
Kustanay	110,397
Pavlodar	95,342
Kokchetav	81,985
Dzhambul	70,150
Alma-Ata	61,277
Chimkent	44,526
Semipalatinsk	44,113
Other	<u>202,735</u>
	957,518

Source: Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland (Personal correspondence from Hans Frick 1996).

mass departure of Russian-Germans would be a considerable loss for the economy of the country (Die Situation der Deutschen... 1996). Germany's policy regarding Kazakhstan's Russian-Germans, until the early 1990's, was to assist all those who

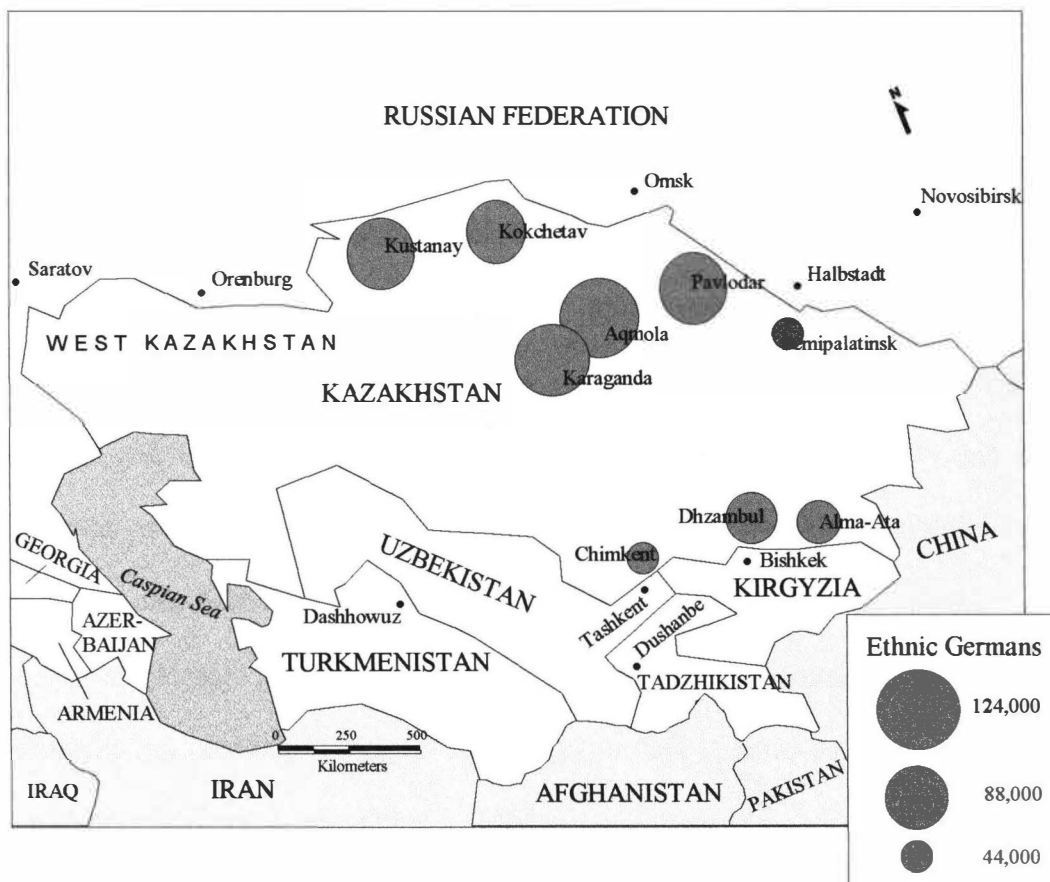


Figure 47. Cities in Kazakhstan With Substantial Ethnic German Population (According to the 1989 Soviet Census).

Source: Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland (Personal correspondence from Hans Frick 1996).

wished to immigrate to Germany. But since the mid-1990's German and Kazakh officials have been working together to try to encourage Russian-Germans to stay where they are. The two countries formed the "Germany-Kazakhstan Government Commission" that has met yearly to negotiate on how to improve the economic, social, and cultural situation of Russian-Germans in Kazakhstan (Die Situation der Deutschen... 1996, 13). The German government has agreed to finance projects in

the country such as oil extraction plants. German is also providing funding to build granaries, dairies, slaughter houses, butcher shops, bakeries, etc. throughout the northern region of Kazakhstan, especially in the territories of Kustanay, North Kazakhstan, Pavlodar and Semipalatinsk where large numbers of Russian-Germans live. In addition, the German government has offered an extensive humanitarian aid package to Kazakhstan concentrating on building hospitals, supplying medical equipment and instruments, and providing medical assistance for elderly and sick people who were interned in work camps during World War II. Several cultural centers have also been established in Russian-German settlement areas.

In exchange for assistance from the German government, the Kazakh government has pledged to support the economic and cultural development of the country's ethnic German population and has assured them of their right to retain their cultural identity as ethnic Germans. The agreement also contains the right for Kazakhstan's Russian-Germans who have already migrated to Germany to return to Kazakhstan if they want to. German business leaders were also present at the signing of the agreement. Kazakhstan's president said at the meeting that he hopes German businesses will be active in the region (Germany Kazakhstan Sign Agreement... 1996).

Despite efforts to keep them from leaving the country, Russian-Germans continue to leave Kazakhstan by the tens of thousands. First, Kazakhstan's Russian-Germans, as with other ethnic Germans, are being pulled to Germany by relatives and friends who have already settled there.

There are also several push factors. Many Russian-Germans are leaving Kazakhstan because they were forced to go there during the Stalin era. Once they were given permission to go to Germany in the late 1980's, the natural inclination for many was to flee the region.

Kazakhstan's rise in self-determination as an Islamic nation since the late 1980's has also been a factor contributing to Russian-German emigration from the country. Adding to the tension in the region is that there is high unemployment and inflation. Since Kazakhstan gained economic independence from the Soviet Union many of its industries, which were linked to industries in other parts of the Soviet Union, are no longer functional. In 1989, the country had inherited a "decaying but powerful" industrial and manufacturing base (Olcott 1995, 272). Decaying because most industry was not geared toward the manufacturing of commercial goods but rather toward the Soviet military. The country produced phosphate, rolled metal, radio cables, aircraft wiring, etc. Kazakhstan also had 50 military installations that produced nuclear reactor fuel, uranium ore, heavy machine guns, anti-ship missiles, torpedoes, biologic weapons, intercontinental ballistic missile support equipment, tactical missile launchers, artillery and armored vehicles for the Soviet military (Olcott 1995, 272).

The new Kazakh government is receptive to capitalism and has been actively seeking investors to start up new industries but all of this takes time. Western investors have found it very difficult to get established in the region and are nervous about investing in a country that is economically unstable. In the meantime many

people remain unemployed.

Another reason many Russian-Germans are anxious to leave Kazakhstan is because Semipalatinsk Oblast (in northern Kazakhstan) where many Russian-Germans and other minorities were resettled during the Stalin era, is plagued with severe environmental problems. The Oblast was victimized by the Soviets who frequently used the area as a nuclear test site. In all, nearly 500 nuclear tests occurred there between 1949 and 1989 (116 explosions in the atmosphere, the rest underground) (Edwards 1993, 36; Escalona 1992). Scientists report that many people living near the test site have developed weaker immune systems, referred to as "Semipalatinsk AIDS (Escalona 1992, 43)." High rates of cancerous tumors and leukemia, neuro-psychological disorders, impotency and other health problems have also been found in persons subjected to high doses of radiation poisoning in the region. There has also been a 150 percent increase in birth defects in villages downwind from the test sites. "The people were rabbits for experiments" the new Ecology Minister of Kazakhstan was quoted as saying. "It was a crime, ... it was facism (Edwards 1993, 36)."

Close to 500,000 people are believed to have been directly exposed to radiation poisoning before the testing was stopped in 1989 (Escalona 1992, 43). Another 100,000 have already died of radiation induced cancers. Altay Kray, downwind from the Semipalatinsk test site just over the border in West Siberia, has also been badly affected (Escalona 1992, 43; CIS conference on refugees and migrants 1996).

Russian-German migration to Germany from Uzbekistan also remains strong with about 4,000 leaving per year, the result of also having been forcefully deported there in earlier decades, and the result of the rise in nationalism and ethnic conflict.

The politics of the German government have been oriented, as elsewhere in the CIS since the mid-1990's, on the principle of encouraging Russian-Germans to stay in Uzbekistan. As a result of a series of meetings between the German and Uzbek governments in 1991-1993, Russian-Germans in Uzbekistan have been provided with a large humanitarian aid package. In 1996, another agreement was reached between the two governments for the establishment of four German cultural centers in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek government has also agreed to allow Uzbek Russian-Germans who have already left the country to return if they so desire (*Die Situation der Deutschen...* 1996).

Black Sea Germans Return to the Ukraine

German officials are also negotiating with the Ukrainian government to resettle Germans, who were deported from the area in 1941, around Odessa in the Black Sea region. There are presently around 40,000 ethnic Germans living in the Ukraine. To date, the German government has provided humanitarian assistance, cultural facilities, and housing. German assistance has also provided for improvements in the electric, gas and water systems of this traditional ethnic German settlement area (*Die Situation der Deutschen...* 1996, 14).

'Russian-Germans Threaten to Flee the Former Soviet Union

Whether or not the re-establishment of German National Rayons will be successful in keeping Russian-Germans in Russia in the long-term is unclear. Both the German and Russian governments have a "wait and see" attitude. Some Russian-Germans might be content to stay in Russia if they could be assured of economic, cultural and religious freedom. Others have no desire to leave, but around 700,000 Russian-Germans still in Russia are already on the wait list for immigration to Germany. Distrust of the government, the struggling Russian economy, the lack of jobs and housing, polluted air and water, extremely cold temperatures in West Siberia, and family ties in Germany are just some of the reasons Russian-Germans are anxious to leave. Many Russian-Germans who have returned to the Volga region believe their autonomous Republic will never become re-established and are also losing their patience. Others, fearful that if they do not go to Germany now, they may not be able to in the future. The political situation in Germany could change if Lafontaine and his allies in the SPD take power. The radical SPD faction has repeatedly called for limitations on the number of Russian-Germans coming to Germany and if they come to power, the door to Germany for Russian-Germans might be slammed shut.

In a discussion in Germany between Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Russian-Germans following the enactment of the Place of Residence Allocation Law in March 1996, Kohl was asked about the possibility that Germany may limit the number of Russian-Germans arriving in Germany. Kohl "unambiguously" stated that he is

against imposing limits on Russian-German immigration in spite of pressure to do so. Russian-Germans at the meeting stated that they would flee the CIS if they get the impression the door to Germany will close (Info-Dienst April 1996, 8).

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

In 1949, partly a result of German nationalism and partly out of concern for former German nationals and other German-speaking people detained in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, the West German government made a promise to ethnic Germans and their descendants. The government promised that they would be granted automatic citizenship in Germany upon request should the day come when they would be allowed to leave the countries in which they were being held. For decades ethnic Germans have trusted that Germany would honor its commitment.

The West German government made its promise under Article 116 of the country's post-war constitution because it felt obligated to help millions of former German nationals and other German-speaking people trapped in Central Europe who were suffering as a result of their German heritage. The right to citizenship was also extended to Russian-Germans, not so much because of their Germaneness as with those from Central Europe, but for other reasons. Some Russian-Germans managed to flee to Germany during World War II. They were granted German citizenship during the war but were later rounded up by the Soviets and shipped back to the Soviet Union where they were held against their will. The German government maintained

that they were German citizens and therefore included the right for them to return to Germany under Article 116 as well. For humanitarian reasons the West German government also extended the right to German citizenship to all Russian-Germans and their descendants and not just to those who were granted German citizenship during the war.

Many Russian-Germans, especially the older generation who remember the horrors of the Stalin days, are adamant about leaving the newly formed countries emerging from the ruins of the former Soviet Union because they distrust their governments and cannot forgive the way they were treated by the Soviets. Russian-Germans are descendants of Germans who migrated to Russia in the seventeenth century because they were invited to do so and because they were fleeing oppression in Germany at the time. They became very successful and contributed greatly to the increase in agricultural production, which in turn made it possible for more citizens to enter the industrial sector of the economy. The settlers were quiet, hard-working people who just wanted to live in peace in their new homeland, but their success led many Russians to be jealous and suspicious of them. The rise of nationalism in Germany prior to World War I was further justification for the Russian government to treat its German settlers with contempt. It was during this time that some Russian-Germans fled Russia and settled in the New World but the majority chose to stay, thinking they could prove their loyalty to their adopted homeland.

The situation continued to worsen for Russian-Germans who opted not to leave Russia. They were accused of treason during World War I and again during

World War II although it has never been proven that they were disloyal. Perhaps if they had assimilated into Russian society rather than retain their cultural identity with Germany, the situation would have turned out differently. But early Soviet policy encouraged minorities to retain their ethnic ties until the Stalin era when, one by one, their rights were revoked.

Eventually the settlers lost everything for which they had worked. They were uprooted from their homes and deported to concentration camps in isolated regions where they were forced to remain for a decade after World War II ended. Although they were finally allowed (conditional) freedom of movement within the Soviet Union, the majority were forced to remain against their will until the Soviet Union began to collapse in the late 1980's when they were at last granted the right to freely emigrate.

Gorbachev's policies of Glasnost (openness) and Perestroika (reconstruction) in the mid-1980's gave Russian-Germans, as well as millions of other Soviet citizens, a chance to air their grievances without fear of reprisal. The Soviets also began to relax their strict emigration policies. Some Russian-Germans demanded the re-establishment of the Volga Republic and, exercising their new right to emigrate, threatened to leave the Soviet Union if their demands were not met. The West German government intervened on their behalf but was unsuccessful in persuading the Soviets to re-establish the former Republic. As nationalism and self-determination reverberated throughout the Soviet Union, old grievances erupted into all-out conflict in some areas. The situation was extremely tense, especially in

southern Russia, Kazakhstan, and throughout Central Asia. Fearing the situation might worsen, and fearing the Soviets might change their minds and not let them go, many Russian-Germans began applying for emigration visas setting off a chain reaction of migrants to West Germany.

At the same time, countries in Central Europe were having their own democratic revolutions and by November 1989 West Germans were suddenly faced with the daunting task of absorbing the former DDR and its millions of citizens. With the opening of borders by Germany's neighbors to the east, ethnic Germans and asylum seekers from all over Central Europe also began arriving in West Germany by the hundreds of thousands.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall, which signified the end of the communist era in Europe and the end of a divided Germany, was a very emotional time for most German citizens. The whole country was caught up in the euphoria of a united Germany and the idea that the German people could all come together again under the Federal Republic, including not just East Germans but also ethnic Germans who had lived behind the Iron Curtain for decades.

For many years following World War II, Article 116 proved beneficial both to West Germany and to ethnic Germans who managed to flee Central Europe and the Soviet Union during the Cold War days, and, as one in four Germans can claim ethnicity in Central or Eastern Europe, it was an issue of conscience to assist those who had been left behind. But public opinion quickly changed when the realization set in as to the exorbitant cost of Reunification and the difficult challenge for

Germany in the years ahead. The country now had 16.5 million East Germans to integrate into the West German economy. Consequently, the arrival of ethnic Germans was suddenly viewed by many as a liability, especially since it seemed there was no end in sight to the number of ethnic Germans (particularly Russian-Germans) who might come to Germany. Under extreme political pressure, the government took measures to slow the migration of ethnic Germans to Germany by introducing a series of new immigration restrictions. The country was not trying to stop the flow of migration altogether; after all, Germany had made a promise to ethnic Germans to let them come to Germany. But out of economic and political necessity, the migration to Germany had to be made manageable.

Until the Ethnic Germans Admissions Act of July 1990 was implemented the majority of ethnic German immigrants arriving in Germany came from Central Europe, but after the new law came into effect the migration shifted and more began arriving from the former Soviet Union. This is because the new law made it more difficult for Polish-Germans, and others from Central Europe who could easily come over the border to Germany, by requiring that they stay in their countries of origin while their applications are being processed rather than come to Germany as tourists (or coming illegally) and then applying for citizenship. The government also worked out a deal with Poland to keep Polish-Germans there by offering a hefty financial assistance package to Poland and by offering Polish-Germans dual citizenship.

Germany's leaders also hoped to persuade some Russian-Germans to stay in the Soviet Union by offering them financial assistance and humanitarian aid and by

intervening in their behalf to re-establish their homeland in the former Volga Republic. Some critics suggest Germany did not act quickly enough to assist Russian-Germans and that if the government had been successful in negotiating with the Soviets in the early stages, there would not be so many Russian-Germans coming to Germany today. However, the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe took government leaders by surprise and officials were bogged down with many serious issues and not just the migration of ethnic Germans.

Even though the Ethnic Germans Admissions Act was effective in slowing the overall migration of ethnic Germans, as more and more Russian-Germans poured into Germany, taxpayers became infuriated. East Germans were angry because they felt the money should be going to help them. West Germans were angry because their standard of living was decreasing and their taxes were increasing, and most all Germans, including other ethnic Germans, viewed the new immigrants as a threat to the job and housing markets. Asylum seekers arriving in Germany also became scapegoats and blamed for Germany's economic problems. Both ethnic Germans and asylum seekers were discriminated against by some and the country experienced a surge in violence against foreigners, particularly in the east German states.

The ethnic German question became an explosive issue among politicians, especially after it was reported in 1992 that there were far more ethnic Germans in the former Soviet Union and Central Europe than was previously thought. While the Social Democrats would like to keep ethnic Germans out, the Christian Democratic Union believes they should be allowed the "right to return." Both sides have

compelling arguments. Why, the Social Democrats ask, should the country give ethnic Germans, especially Russian-Germans, the right to vote and entitlements such as old-age pensions, etc. upon arrival in Germany when long-time Turkish guest workers and asylum seekers are not granted the same privileges.

On the other hand, those in favor of the “right to return” for ethnic Germans, remind the opposition that Germany is obligated to assist those who want to come to Germany because the constitution promised them the right to German citizenship in 1949 and the immigrants expect the promise to be kept. Ethnic Germans themselves also had to remind the German people that if it were not for Germany’s aggressive policies in the 1930’s and 1940’s they never would have suffered so. But the Social Democrats continued to pressure the opposition and in late 1992 the parliament modified its immigration policy once again. The government announced that the return of ethnic Germans was solely a “late consequence of World War II” and no longer made sense. The Post-War Settlement Act of December 1992, an amendment to the Federal Expellee Law of 1953, redefines who is eligible for citizenship in Germany by stating that only ethnic Germans born before January 1, 1993 may now be eligible for citizenship in Germany. The amendment finally gave the migration of ethnic Germans a sense of closure, which is a relief for German taxpayers, and for state and local governments in charge of integrating the immigrants into society.

The German government cannot solely be blamed for changing the rules regarding its decades-old promise of the “right to return” for ethnic Germans and their descendants. Part of the problem is due to the actions of the immigrants

themselves. By settling in closely-knit communities rather than going to areas of the country that are less populated, they have contributed to high unemployment in some areas and have caused a strain on the housing market, particularly in the western industrial states. Living in ghettos also hinders the integration of ethnic Germans because they mingle among themselves and do not socialize with the general public.

The migration of ethnic Germans to Germany does have some positive aspects however. The majority of those arriving in Germany are young people, and since Germany's native population has been decreasing since the 1970's, young ethnic Germans could offset a labor shortage in the future. Further, after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, many of the former East Germany's young people fled for the west leaving a deficit of workers in the eastern states. As a result, ethnic Germans are now viewed positively both as laborers and as taxpayers in the eastern states.

The language barrier is another reason the German government felt the necessity to make the country's immigration laws more stringent. While most ethnic Germans think of themselves as German, the majority of those arriving in Germany in the early 1990's (predominantly from the former Soviet Union) could not speak the language making it very difficult and costly to integrate them into society. To alleviate this problem, in 1992 the government also included as part of the Post-War Settlement Act that ethnic Germans must take a six-month language course and pass a language test prior to coming to Germany. The new language requirement has been effective in preparing would-be emigrants before their arrival in Germany. But for those who came in the early 1990's the language barrier remains problematic and the

government continues to spend a great deal of money on language training and on providing for the immigrants while they learn the language.

Another obstacle to the successful integration of ethnic Germans into Germany's economy is that many of the immigrants cannot find employment. Factory workers, agricultural workers, and miners are over-represented and face competition with East Germans, guest workers and other ethnic Germans for jobs. Around 6 % of those in the working-age category have no job skills at all, and some seem to have misrepresented themselves as having particular skills. Even those with vocational skills have a hard time finding employment in Germany. Because of differences in training their qualifications do not meet western standards. However, since the government had a chance to organize, it has done much to assist ethnic Germans by extensively promoting on-the-job training programs to help them get a new start. The German government has also initiated job-training programs for ethnic Germans in Russia and elsewhere to better prepare them before arriving in Germany.

Also contributing to the integration problem are the many cultural differences, not only between ethnic Germans and the German population, but also among the ethnic German minorities themselves. Consequently, each group has to be treated differently. Previous studies conducted in Germany on the integration of ethnic Germans shows that it takes three generations for them to become fully assimilated. Russian-Germans are especially difficult to integrate because, unlike those from Central Europe, Russian-Germans have had no close ties with their homeland for over

two hundreds years.

The annual number of ethnic Germans arriving in Germany has continued to decrease since 1996 because of additional restrictions making it more difficult for them to come to Germany. In 1996, the number of ethnic Germans arriving in Germany fell to 177,000 (172,000 from the former Soviet Union), or around 43,000 less than the allotted quota of 220,000. (In 1997 it is expected that immigration to Germany will fall even further to around 140,000 or less.) Although the migration of ethnic Germans continues to decrease, the majority of German citizens would like to see the migration to Germany stopped completely.

In an effort to negate growing resentment toward the immigrants, in March of 1996, the German government modified the 1989 Place of Residence Allocation Law. The 1989 law, designed to relieve pressure on some of the more overcrowded areas, required that new arrivals settle in certain transitional shelters (all of which were in the west German states) based on a quota system. The 1996 amendment requires that a certain percentage of all new arrivals must now settle in the eastern states for at least two years or lose their entitlements. The new law has had a positive effect on the distribution of ethnic Germans in Germany as more are now settling in the eastern states. The government hopes that by persuading some ethnic Germans to settle in the eastern states it will relieve the burden on some of the more crowded states in the west. It can be assumed that as more settle in the eastern states, they will serve as a pull factor for other ethnic German immigrants to settle there.

Policy changes in Russia and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union have also

attributed to the decrease in Russian-German migration to Germany in recent years. After decades of treating its ethnic German population harshly and unfairly, the Russian government now would like them to stay in Russia and has worked in cooperation with the German government and with Russian-Germans themselves to encourage would-be emigrants not to leave. The Russian government is particularly anxious to see its ethnic German population stay in West Siberia because the region grows food for the rest of Siberia. There have already been severe food shortages in Siberia and the loss of many of the region's skilled agriculturists is only aggravating the problem. But much of the Russian-German population living in the region still wants to leave. Life is not easy in West Siberia. Harsh weather conditions most of the year and the region's remoteness makes living there extremely difficult and takes a toll on one's physical and psychological well being. Further, many Russian-Germans have relatives and friends already living in Germany and would like to join them. To replace those immigrating to Germany from the region the Russian and German governments have encouraged other Russian-Germans from Kazakhstan and Central Asia to migrate to West Siberia rather than go to Germany.

The infusion of hard currency from Germany and the joint cooperation between the two governments to re-establish German National Rayons in West Siberia have been positive factors in keeping some Russian-Germans in West Siberia. Improvements to the infrastructure along with the addition of new factories, hospitals, housing, schools, commercial banks, retail shops, etc. has boosted the local economy and provides many opportunities for ambitious young people who have opted to stay

in West Siberia. German investment in the region benefits other citizens in the area as well, not just the Russian-German population.

German cultural centers are also beneficial because they provide a place for Russian-Germans to re-establish long-lost connections with the German culture and provide German language training. Learning the language not only helps would-be emigrants prepare for their arrival in Germany, but for those who plan to stay in Russia, learning the German language makes it easier for Russian-Germans to establish business relations with German business people who are interested in investing in the region.

For those who do not want to live in West Siberia, there are other areas of the Russian Federation where ethnic Germans are being encouraged to settle such as around St. Petersburg, Kaliningrad Oblast and other pockets of European Russia where ethnic Germans traditionally settled. Tens of thousands of Russian-Germans have also resettled in the Volga region. While the re-establishment of the former Autonomous Republic of Volga Germans probably will not be fully realized for some years to come, German investment in the region is strong and there are many opportunities for Russian-Germans there as well. Some Russian-Germans (and Ukrainian-Germans) who were deported from the Black Sea region during World War II are also returning to their homelands in the southern Russia and Ukraine.

One problem for ethnic Germans returning to their original settlement areas in European Russia and the Ukraine is that they still face discrimination. Russians and Ukrainians experienced extensive casualties defending their territory when the Nazis

invaded the Soviet Union during World War II. Consequently, many people still harbor a great deal of ill will toward anyone “German.” Whether local citizens will put the past behind them and accept ethnic Germans into the community will probably depend on how much money Germany is willing to invest in these regions and whether or not local citizens will also benefit from German investments.

Kazakhstan is also sorry to see its Germans go and is working in cooperation with the German government and with Russian-Germans to keep at least some of its Russian-German population in the newly formed country. Economic instability, high unemployment and severe environmental problems are all push factors causing many of the Russian-German population to leave the country in spite of efforts to persuade them to stay.

That Russian-Germans want the assurance the door to Germany will remain open means they still do not feel secure about staying in the former Soviet Union even though there have been improvements in the area of human rights and their standard of living in recent years. A major crisis in the Russian Federation or Kazakhstan could set off a panic situation and possibly trigger an exodus to Germany of the estimated 1-2 million Russian-Germans still remaining in the former Soviet Union.

Suggestions for Further Study

The intent of this thesis was to investigate the contemporary migration of Russian-Germans and to provide an overview of the situation. As this thesis is

primarily an overview, the possibilities for future study regarding Russian-Germans are wide open and the suggestions noted below are only a few of the areas in which further research is needed.

The “right to return” for ethnic Germans was accepted in Germany until the late 1980’s, but since Reunification the immigration of ethnic Germans, particularly Russian-Germans, has been viewed negatively as a drain on the economy. However, this viewpoint could shift again depending on how quickly the new Germany can rebound from the integration of the East German states into the West German economy, and depending on whether the German government can persuade more Russian-Germans (and other ethnic Germans) to settle in the eastern states and thereby relieve pressure on the already over-crowded western states. The study of legal developments in Germany directly affecting ethnic Germans would make an interesting topic for those involved in political or migration geography and for those interested in human rights issues.

There have been and will continue to be many studies in Germany regarding the possibilities and difficulties of integrating Russian-Germans (and other ethnic Germans). However, this issue deserves attention by American researchers as well because Germany is one of America’s most avid trading partners in Western Europe and we should be aware of important events that affect the country both politically and economically.

Further, Germany is not only one of our most important trading partners in Western Europe, but is also one of America’s biggest competitors in the Russian

market, and one of the most successful. One of the reasons for their success may be because there are hundreds of thousands of Russian-Germans living in Russia who are learning to speak German and culturally identify with Germany. Many Russian-Germans are now working in cooperation with German business people to establish joint ventures (partnerships) in Russia. This certainly gives the Germans an edge over American businesses, many of which are floundering, as they try to get their foot in the door in the growing Russian market economy. Germany's success in the Russian market and its link to ethnic Germans in Russia would make an interesting subject for further investigation in the field of economic or business geography.

In addition to the migratory movement of Russian-Germans, it has already been mentioned that there are also many other former Soviet citizens on the move, (although the majority of them are migrating within the former Soviet Republics as opposed to an international migration as with Russian-Germans). Because of forced migrations during the Stalin era and because of the rise of nationalism in the former Soviet Republics, there are millions of people migrating from one republic to another as they return to their ancestral homelands. As mass migrations are known to be one of the major causes of instability, the movement of people occurring in the former Soviet Union today should continue to be a subject of intensive investigation.

Regarding the internal migration of Russian-Germans specifically, there are many other areas that also warrant investigation. For those interested in environmental issues, one area of research might be to investigate the seriousness of soil and water contamination in Northern Kazakhstan and West Siberia due to fall-out

from nuclear testing done by the Soviets up to the late 1980's in Semipalatinsk. Are the German National Rayons, such as Halbstadt or Omsk/Asovo in highly affected areas, and if so, what is being done about it?

A great deal of research also needs to be done regarding Russian-Germans who have resettled in the former Volga Republic, the Black Sea region and other areas of European Russia. One reason would be to determine if local citizens are accepting them or if Russian-Germans are facing discrimination because of old grievances. Do the Russians in the communities look at the injection of German capital in the area as a positive action or as a threat? The development of an entire town for Russian-Germans near Bryansk on Russia's southwestern border could also be an interesting topic.

Kaliningrad Oblast is another area that should be a subject of further investigation. As Germany, Poland and Lithuania could all "lay claim" to the Oblast, and as it is home to one of the most important ports in the Baltic, the region is worth scrutiny as a potential hot spot. Some Russians seem to be concerned that Russian-Germans are resettling in the Kaliningrad Oblast. Also, as Lithuanians have recently stated to NATO that they would like to incorporate the Oblast into Lithuanian territory, it is not known how they feel about the return of Russian-Germans to the region.

Extensive research also needs to be done to determine the number of Russian-Germans still in the former Soviet Union and their whereabouts. At this time, the number of Russian-Germans is nearly impossible to determine because, as was

explained in Chapter Five, the migration is still ongoing. Further, more and more Russian-Germans continue to re-claim their German ethnicity making it difficult to count them with any degree of accuracy. At the present time, the German government is only able to provide estimates. As the migration is now winding down, and as more Russian-Germans settle permanently in Germany or certain areas of the Russian Federation, it will become easier to track them and finally put an end to the mystery of how many former Soviet citizens are of German ethnicity.

More research is also needed regarding the spatial distribution of Russian-Germans in Kazakhstan and the possible development of a German autonomous region in the northeastern part of the country. How successful the Kazakh government will be in persuading some Russian-Germans to stay in the country is unclear. The effects on local economies in Kazakhstan due to strong out-migration of Russian-Germans from the country would also be an interesting topic.

Finally, judging by the reaction this writer has had from various people with whom I have discussed my research, there seems to be an interest in Russian-Germans and their migration to Germany. I believe that the story of Russian-Germans, beginning with their migration to Russia in the seventeenth century, is worthy of a documentary or perhaps a movie. There have already been documentaries produced in Germany about Russian-Germans and at least one historic movie entitled *Flüchtlinge (Refugees)*, produced in Germany in the 1930's (involving a group of Volga Germans who had been deported to Central Asia during the Stalin era but managed to escape the Soviet Union to China with the help of soldiers

stationed on the Chinese/Soviet border). However, to my knowledge, there have not been any documentaries or movies produced in the English language about Russian-Germans.

A confidential interview with one ethnic German woman who described her ordeal of fleeing to Germany as the Soviets advanced through Central Europe during World War II sent chills up my spine. As she was only ten years old when she and her siblings (orphaned during the war) were forced to flee their homeland, I was amazed with what remarkable detail she could remember this terrifying experience. Her story, which in itself could be the basis of a biography or a novel, is only one of thousands of stories yet to be uncovered.

Appendix A

Asylum Seekers Arriving in the EU – 1991-1993

Asylum Seekers Arriving in the EU – 1991-1993

Country	1991	1992	1993
Belgium	15,318	17,754	22,309
Denmark	4,609	11,450	6,121
France	46,784	27,586	16,507
Germany*	256,112	438,191	322,599
Greece	2,672	1,950	827
Great Britain	44,745	24,610	22,350
Ireland	50	35	65
Italy	23,317	2,650	1,075
Luxemburg	150	3,429	381
Netherlands	21,616	17,618	35,399
Portugal	240	439	2,091
Spain	8,139	12,650	5,778
Total	423,752	558,362	435,502
% Arriving in Germany	60%	78%	74%

*The number of asylum seekers arriving in Germany in 1989 was 121,318
and in 1990 was 193,063

Source: Info-Dienst (Aug. 1994; Oct. 1994)

Appendix B

1993 Amendment to Article 16

1993 Amendment to Article 16

Article 16 of Germany's Basic Law, written in 1949, simply states that, "persons persecuted on political grounds shall enjoy the right of asylum if, that is, they are recognized by the authorities as being truly in need of asylum (Foreigners... 1994, 1)." As a result of Germany's loosely written asylum law, the country was obliged to grant any asylum seeker a preliminary right to stay while his or her case was pending. This also meant the government had to provide for the person during this time which was often for several years, especially after 1988 when the number of asylum seekers rose so dramatically and a huge backlog of cases piles up.

During the 1970's an average of 15,600 persons applied for asylum in West Germany per year. From 1980 through 1988 the average number of asylum seekers rose to around 64,000 annually. In 1989/90 while East and West Germany were undergoing Reunification, the numbers applying for asylum were 121,318 and 193,063 respectively. In 1991 there were another 423,752 applicants for asylum and by 1992 the number soared to 558,362. (Refer to Appendix A). In all, 1,731,997 asylum seekers arrived in Germany from 1989 through 1993, the majority of whom were arriving from Romania, rump Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Turkey. Outside of Europe, the largest groups of asylum seekers came from Algeria and Vietnam (Foreigners...1994).

What concerned Germany the most, and the reason the government amended Article 16 in 1993, was that many of the people applying for asylum in the late

1980's and early 1990's had no legitimate claim to it; they were not escaping political persecution but rather were coming to Germany solely for economic reasons. Consequently, on July 1, 1993, "after years of wrangling among political parties and in the face of steeply increasing numbers of asylum seekers coupled with rising violence against them" Germany finally amended Article 16 (Foreigners...1994, 2). The new legislation still retains the constitutional guarantee of protection against political persecution but excludes those coming to the country for economic reasons. The new amendment also speeds up administrative procedures and set up a two-tier system of "safe third states" around Germany and "safe states of origin (Foreigners...1994, 3)" "Safe third states are the EU member states in which the application of the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees and the European Human Rights Convention is guaranteed (Foreigners...1994, 3)." In addition to the EU members, they include Finland, Norway, Austria, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the Czech Republic (Foreigners...1994,3; das neue Asylrecht, 9). If an asylum seeker enters Germany from any of these countries they can be immediately rejected. If an asylum seeker comes from a "safe state of origin", countries deemed by the government as stable and that observe human rights, the asylum seeker will also be rejected. These countries include Bulgaria, Gambia, Ghana, Poland, Romania, Senegal, the Slovak Republic and Hungary (Foreigners...1994; das neue Asylrecht, 10).

An asylum seeker can also be rejected if his or her claim is considered "manifestly unsound" which includes any claim that is unsubstantiated

(Foreigners...1994,3). Other grounds for rejection include providing false information about one's identity or nationality. (Not rejected from seeking temporary asylum in Germany after the amendment to Article 16 went into effect are a large number of refugees (*Flüchtlinge*) who had also sought refuge in Germany in the early 1990's. Refugees are persons who have not yet applied for asylum, or are not eligible for asylum, such as war refugees from the former Yugoslavia. In 1992 there were 1.5 million refugees living in Germany, 400,000 of who were from the former Yugoslavia. Others came from Romania, Iran, Hungary, Sri Lanka and the former Soviet Union. Refugees, especially war refugees, are under no pressure to leave Germany (Foreigners in Germany...1994, 3-4).)

After the new legislation went into effect in July 1993, the number of asylum seekers dropped sharply. In 1993, the total number of application was 322,842, a 26.4 percent decrease from 1992. In the first half of 1993, before the law came into effect, the number of applicants was 224,342, but in the second half of the year was only 98,500. By 1994 the number had dropped to 71,532 (das Bundesministerium des Innern, August 1995). In the first four months of 1997, 36,952 persons applied for asylum in Germany (Weniger Aussiedler... 1997, 6).

Appendix C

Terminology Commonly Used to Describe Ethnic Germans

Terminology Commonly Used in Germany to Describe Ethnic Germans

German Word	Literal Translation	Definition
<i>Asylbewerber</i>	Asylum seeker	Usually refers to non-German asylum seekers but sometimes used to describe ethnic Germans
<i>Auslandsdeutscher</i>	Foreign German	Ethnic German
<i>Aussiedler</i>	Out-settler	Refers strictly to ethnic Germans
<i>Deutschstämmigen - Sowjetbürger</i>	German Soviet citizen	Soviet (or Russian) German
<i>Die Fremden Deutsche</i>	(the) foreign Germans	Ethnic Germans
<i>Einwanderer</i>	Immigrant	Immigrant
<i>Flüchtlinge</i>	Refugee	Usually refers to non-German refugees but sometimes used to describe ethnic Germans
<i>Heimatvertriebener</i>	Home-Expellees	Expellees who left their homelands in Central Europe before January 1, 1993
<i>Rußlanddeutsche</i>	Russian-German	Russian-German
<i>Spätaussiedler</i>	Late out-settler	Refers strictly to ethnic Germans arriving in Germany after the amendment to the Post-War Settlement Act of 12.31.92

<i>Sowjetdeutsche</i>	Soviet German	Soviet (or Russian) German
<i>Sowjetzonenflüchtlinge</i>	Soviet-zone refugee	Former German national (<i>Staatsangehörige</i>) or ethnic German (<i>Volkszugehörige</i>) who escaped from the Soviet zone of East Berlin before July 1, 1990
<i>Staatsangehörige</i>	of German nationality	Refers to former German nationals living in territory lost by Germany during World War II
<i>Übersiedler</i>	Over-settler	Usually refers to East Germans but sometimes used to describe ethnic Germans, particularly those from Central Europe
<i>Umsiedler</i>	Resettler, evacuee	Resettler, evacuee
<i>Vertriebene</i>	Expellee	Ethnic German expellees
<i>Volksdeutsche</i>	Ethnic German	Ethnic German
<i>Volkszugehörige</i>	of German ethnicity	Ethnic Germans usually identified by German folk cultural traits or characteristics such as religion, language, etc.

Source: Bundesgesetzblatt 1993; Blahusch 1992 (and gathered from many other sources too numerous to mention)

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