

PROBLEMS OF ETHNIC GERMANS IN THE CIS REPUBLICS

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C E R T I F I C A T E

This Dissertation entitled "Problems of Ethnic Germans in the CIS Republics", is certified to be the bonafied research work of Miss Kavita Hindwan for the Degree of the Master of Philosophy. It has not been previously submitted for any other Degree of this or any other University.

We recommend this Dissertation to be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy.

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CONTENTS

	<u>Page Nos.</u>
PREFACE	i - iv
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1 - 19
CHAPTER II WORLD WAR II AND STALIN'S DEPORTATION policy	20 - 48
CHAPTER III STATUS OF ETHNIC GERMANS IN KAZAKHSTAN	49 - 67
CHAPTER IV FROM PERESTROIKA TO YELTSIN	68 - 94
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION	95 - 97
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	98 - 104

PREFACE

Among the minorities of Russia and other CIS Republics today the Germans are one of the most prominent ethnic minorities. They had been studied until recently little, either within or outside the former USSR. But they attracted increasing attention from western and CIS observers and publicists during the past decade.

Most of the two million Germans in the former USSR are descendants of colonists invited from Germany in the late 18th and early 19th centuries by Catherine the Great and Alexander I. to settle on the newly acquired lands in the South of Russia. A small number trace their ancestry back to other groups of Germans who came into the empire at various times as a result of territorial annexations or settlement by various rulers dating back to Ivan IV. World War II brought many additional Germans into the then USSR as a result of border changes and the capture of enemy soldiers and civilians. Most of them were later repatriated to West Germany, but some of them chose to stay back.

These former Germans can be divided into two basic groups, i.e., the Volga Germans and the Black Sea Germans. The Volga Germans arrived in Russia from 1763 onward and settled along the lower reaches of the Volga River in agricultural communities which they founded in the steppes. The Black Sea Germans arrived in the early 19th century and settled along the northern littoral of the Black Sea in both agricultural villages and towns and cities.

After initial hard-ships of taming a virgin and often violent frontier during the first century following their arrival in Russia, the Germans flourished and grew in numbers with the passage of time. The success of the Germans was due to their legendary deligence and skill as farmers and artisans and to special favours they were granted, such as, economic concessions, exemption from military service, and the right to observe their traditional social, cultural and religious practices.

However, their fate took a turn during the years of the 19th century, when they lost their privileged status as a result of the reforms of Alexander II and experienced economic setbacks due to growing anti-Germans prejudice. Consequently thousands emigrated to the New World, settling in the United States, Canada and South America. The Germans who remained behind, suffered successive tragedies in World War I, the Revolution of 1917, the civil war and famine that followed, the forced collectivization of agriculture in the 1930s and the stalinist terror.

During the 1920s there was a short period of relief when a Volga German Autonomous Republic and several autonomous districts were created by the Soviet government in pursuance of Lenin's nationalities policy. But World War II destroyed the historic German way of life in the former USSR. When Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, Stalin accused the Soviet Germans of disloyalty and ordered them to be deported to

the east to prevent collaboration with the invaders. Six hundred thousand Volga Germans were confined under inhuman conditions in forced labour camps. The autonomous units were dissolved, their property was confiscated and their churches and schools were forced to be closed. The Black Sea Germans were overrun by the invaders before they could be deported.

But the conditions of the ethnic Germans improved during the detenté-period. Moscow granted them an amnesty, which permitted them to leave the camps and resettle in the southwestern Siberia and Central Asiatic Republics. In 1964 these Germans were officially rehabilitated but they were not permitted to return to their former homes. Since the relaxation of internal political controls by Gorbachev there has been a drift of Germans back to their former homes in the Volga and Black Sea regions, the Baltic states, and the Moldavian SSR. However, at present these Germans are at a crossroad

The study discusses the changes in the legal and constitutional status of the Germans in the CIS Republics of the former USSR. It also examines the changes in their socio-economic life in the period following disintegration of the USSR. The growing demand of the Germans for the restoration of their autonomous state formation as well as the impact of their campaign on Russia-relations with Germany is also covered in the study.

The study follows a historical and analytical approach to the problem. It is largely based on the policy statements

of the Soviet and CIS leaders and write-ups in the CIS and German press about the conditions of German minorities in CIS and their demands for autonomy.

I record my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor Devender Kaushik who assisted me in writing this dissertation. Without his cooperation and able supervision the realisation of this work would have been impossible

New Delhi

Date: 18th July 1994.

Kavita
(Kavita Hindwan)

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Among the non-indigenous inhabitants of Siberia and Central Asian Republics of the former USSR the ethnic Germans are one of the most interesting and important ethnic minorities. Until recently they had been studied only little either within or outside the former USSR. But during the past decade they have attracted increasing attention from western and Russian authors. Today a limited number of studies dealing with various aspects of the life of Russian Germans are available.

Most of the present-day two million Russian Germans in the former USSR are descendants of colonists invited from Germany in the late 18th and early 19th centuries by Catherine the Great and Alexander I to settle on newly acquired lands in the south of Russia. A small number trace their ancestry back to other groups of Germans who came into the empire at various times as a result of territorial annexations like the Baltic Germans or settlement by various rulers dating back to Ivan IV. World War II brought many additional Germans into the former USSR as a result of border changes and the capture of enemy soldiers and civilians. Most of them were later repatriated to West Germany, but some remained in the former Soviet Union. Today the Russian government does not distinguish among different types of Germans but refers to them all as Nemtsy. The following table summarizes the various origins of ethnic Germans in the former USSR.

Table A Origin of Germans in the Russian Empire & the USSR 16th-20th Centuries

<u>I. INVITED SETTLERS/ COLONISTS</u>	<u>II OCCUPANTS OF AREAS ANNEXED TO 1914*</u>	<u>III OCCUPANTS OF AREAS ANNEXED AFTER SEPT 1939</u>	<u>DEPORTEES</u>
1. Urban settlers invited by Ivan IV and his successors 2. Agricultural settlers invited by predecessors of Catherine II 3. Agricultural colonists invited by Catherine II and Alexander I	1. Baltic Germans 2. Bessarabian Germans 3. Volhynian Germans 4. Polish-Lithuanian Germans	1. Galician Germans 2. Carpatha-Ukrainian Germans 3. Memel (Klaipeda) Germans 4. East Prussian Germans	1. Wartime and post war deportees from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania & Yugoslavia 2. Deportees and kidnap victims from Soviet-occupied Germany & Austria 3. Prisoners of War

* These territories were lost in 1918-21 until World War II when they were reannexed, their German inhabitants had either been transferred to Germany or were retaken under categories III and IV above

Source: Data taken from Central Asian Survey, 1993, P.72.

Though the differences among the Germans have been blurred by time, one distinction on the origins of their ancestors and the circumstances of settlement in Russia divided most Russian-Germans into two basic groups by which they still identify themselves. One is the Volga Germans, who arrived in Russia from 1763 onward and settled along the lower reaches of the Volga River in agricultural communities they founded in the steppe. The Russian government during that period colonized the Lower Volga with the Tatar and Mordvinian settlers forcibly removed from the Middle and Upper Volga. Together with the Russians these peoples laid the foundation for the economic and cultural development of the Lower Volga. In the second half of the 18th century villages of German colonists sprang up along both the banks of the Volga, around Saratov and farther South. To develop the vast steppes more rapidly the government of Catherine II had issued a manifesto in 1763 inviting foreigners to settle in Russia. In response to this invitation more than 20,000 settlers came from France, Sweden and particularly from Germany, where the peasantry had been ruined by the Seven Years' War and settled on the Volga.

The other basic group is that of the Black sea Germans who arrived in early 19th century and settled along the northern littoral of the Black sea in both agricultural villages and towns and cities. Smaller numbers of other settlers also immigrated from Germany to the Caucasus region, Bessarabia and western Siberia, but the Volga and Black Sea Germans were the two most numerous groups.

In 1950 there were still over four million Germans in Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union. Between 1950 and 1960, over 450,000 of these were allowed to leave and join their families in the former Federal Republic. Official Soviet data show 1,427,000 ethnic Germans in 1939 and 1,620,000 in 1959. An inquiry of the third German Federal Legislature estimated that the former Soviet 1959 census figure of 1,620,000 includes 400,000 Germans from areas which did not belong to the former Soviet Union in 1937.¹

Before World War I the ethnic German minorities in East Europe and Russia, excluding those in the Memel and Danzig territories, numbered approximately 8,300,000. The German population east of the Oder-Neisse line now numbers over four million. Over one million of them were living in the former provinces of East Weimar-Germany. Most of the others, the ethnic Germans, of course no longer live in the same contiguous rural settlement areas which they occupied and owned before.¹

Varying estimates of the toll exacted from East and ethnic Germans have been provided but there was agreement that it was very great indeed. A recent Federal German report, based on a critical selection and comparison of official German, American, and East European statistics, authenticates the misfortunes of all but one of the expelled groups as shown in the table B.

1. Karl Stump, "Die heutigen Wohngebiete and berufliche Aufgliederung der Deutschen in der Sowjetunion," Heimat der Deutschen aus Russland, (Stuttgart, 1959) pp.5-15

TABLE- B DIMINUTION OF EAST & ETHNIC GERMANS (EXCLUDING GERMANS FROM THE SOVIET UNION)

<u>Germans Present 1939-45</u> <u>German Population</u>	<u>Rich</u> <u>Germans</u> <u>oder-Neisse</u> <u>Territories¹</u>	<u>Sudeten</u> <u>Germans</u> <u>Czechos-</u> <u>lovakia</u>	<u>Ethnic</u> <u>Germans</u> <u>East-</u> <u>Europes²</u>	<u>Total</u>
May 1939.....	9,575,200	3,477,000	3,946,300	16,998,500
Plus National Growth to End of War.....	382,000	156,000	108,400	646,400
Subtotal	9,957,200	3,633,000	4,054,700	17,644,900
Less War Casualties ³	667,500	180,000	252,000	1,099,500
Total German Population at End of War	9,289,700	3,453,700	3,802,700	16,545,400
GERMANS ACCORDED FOR 1945,1950				
Number Removed ⁴	6,817,000	2,921,400	1,865,000	11,603,400
Number Retained ⁵	1,134,000	258,700	1,324,300	2,717,000
Total Germans Accounted for	7,951,000	3,180,100	3,189,300	14,320,400
Germans not Accounted for 1945-1950	1,338,700	272,900	613,400	2,225,000

1. East Prussia, East Pomerania, East Brandenburg & Silesia
2. Baltic Area
3. Civilians and Armed Forces
4. To the FRG and West Berlin 7,900,000 (68%); to the Soviet Occupied Zone 3,200,000 (27%); to Austria and other Western countries 500,000 (5%)
5. Including POW's and other detained Germans

SOURCE: Report taken from Schoenberg's: Germans from the East, 1970, p.35.

By 1944-45 a total of approximately 16,500,000 Germans were living in the areas affected by the mass exodus, excluding only the former USSR. From the end of the war to 1950 over 11,500,000 of these people had actually fled or were expelled. In 1950 more than 2,500,000 were known to have remained in or near their homes. Some of the deportees were still being detained by the Russians. In 1950 about 2,200,000 people were not accounted for and many of them probably perished during the exodus.^{2 1}

Relatively the heaviest human toll was exacted from the ethnic Germans in Yugoslavia, more than one fourth of whom were not found, and from the ethnic Germans in the Baltic areas more than one fifth of whom were unaccounted for. In both these areas treatment of Germans had been especially ruthless at the hands of the Yugoslavs and Russians respectively. Data now available on the German minority group in Russia are still insufficient to allow a full estimate.

Apart from concern for material welfare, the attitude of Germans from Russia reflects the tragic experience of the uprooting, the losses of lives sustained in the course of the flight and expulsions, and the break-up and separation of families, enforced since the end of the war, "Release the members of our families - our wives, our husbands, and our children" is the plea made by Germans from Russia. The very name of their central press organ, people on the Road conveys their sense of transience and

2. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, (New York, Perma-books 1952)
p. 515.

hints of their awareness that most of their compatriots left behind have been dispersed further East. The year 1962 marked the 200th anniversary of the first German agricultural colonies in Russia, and special pleas were made by Germans from Russia urging restoration of basic human rights for over 1,800,000 compatriots in the former Soviet Union.³

After the initial hardships of taming a virgin and often violent frontier, for the first century following their arrival in Russia the Germans flourished and grew in numbers from the original 100,000 settlers to nearly two and a half million on the eve of World War I. Table C shows their population levels at intervals from 1897, when the first comprehensive census was taken, to 1989, the fluctuations reflecting territorial changes, deaths in wars and other disasters, and natural population change over time.

The success of the Germans was due to their legendary diligence and skill as farmers and artisans and to special favours they were granted, including economic concessions, exemption from military service, and the right to observe their traditional social, cultural, and religious practices. As a result, the Germans remained apart from the surrounding Russian and Asian inhabitants and retained their ethnic distinctiveness until the present

3. Volk auf dem Weg, Stuttgart, No. 6. June 1955, p.8.

Table C German Population of Russia and the former USSR,
1897 - 1989

<u>Year</u>	<u>Numbers of Germans</u>
1897	1,790,400
1914	2,416,000
1926	1,238,600
1939	1,424,000
1941	1,553,100
1945	1,270,000
1959	1,619,000
1970	1,846,300
1979	1,936,200
1989	2,035,800

Source: Central Asian Survey, January 1993, p. 74

The Germans lived close to the soil in their villages and in ethnocentric communities in the towns and cities. They were deeply pious, and their social life revolved around their churches and religious calenders. Two-thirds to three-fourths of them were Evangelical Lutheran and 15% to 20% Raman Catholic, depending upon time and population changes. A small numbers were Mennorities or belonged to other protestantsects. Many Germans were literate, but they had parochial interests. As their lives centred on their churches, the German clergy served not only as spiritual leaders but also as the intelligenetsia of the Russian German Population

After flourishing for a century following their arrival in Russia, the Germans' fortune declined in the last years of the 19th century when they lost their privileged status during the reforms of Alexander II and experienced economic setbacks and growing anti-German prejudices. As a result, thousands emigrated to the New World, settling in the United States, Canada and South America. The majority however, remained behind and suffered successive tragedies in World War I, the Revolution of 1917, the civil war and famine that followed, the forced collectivization of agriculture in the 1930's, and the Stalinist terror.

There was a brief hiatus during the 1920 s when a showcase Volga German Autonomous Republic and several autonomous districts were created by the Soviet government to advertise Lenin's nationalities policy and win favour with Weimar Germany. For a time a vigorous German cultural and religious life flourished in the autonomous units, which maintained 400 lower schools and hundreds of church schools, five institutions of advanced learning, a national theatre, 25 newspapers and periodicals, and a book publishing house. Fourteen German deputies sat in the national legislature at one time, and Germans administered and governed themselves in their autonomous units, albeit under the guidance of the Communist Party, in which Germans held membership and responsible posts.

The Black Sea Germans were overrun by the invaders before they too could be deported, and 350,000 of them were evacuated to Poland and incorporated into the Third Reich by the Nazis. After the War all but 100,000 of them were forcibly repatriated to the USSR

by the allied armies during 'Operation Keelhaul' and they were deported to the camps in the east. Those who were not repatriated eventually made their way to West Germany and were absorbed into the Federal Republic.

World War II thus totally uprooted the Russian Germans and forcibly transplanted them east of the Urals Mountains. Moreover, half a million of them perished in the camps, the heaviest toll falling on the men. Although termination of the war ended the pretext for their deportation, the Russian government kept them confined in the camps for another decade before they were released in 1955 when the first chancellor of post-war West Germany, Konrad Adenauer, interceded on their behalf. Moscow granted the Germans an amnesty, which permitted them to leave the camps and resettle in southwestern Siberia and the Central Asian Republics but prohibited them from returning to their former homes, property and lives. Survivors of the camps took up jobs in agriculture and industry east of the Urals, where there was a demand for labour and where the majority of them live today.

In 1964 the Germans were officially rehabilitated, that is, exonerated of wartime crimes, but they were still not permitted to return to their former homes or seek compensation for losses during the war. Since then their conditions have steadily improved, particularly their economic status, for their productive and diligent labour is highly valued and well rewarded by the former Soviet government. They also began to re-enter political life on the local regional levels, but only a few of them attained high positions

in the party or government. At the same time, they continued to experience prejudice and discrimination from the Russian population and officials because of their hatred of all things ' German ' stemming from the war. As a result, some Russian Germans sought to lose their ethnic identity and merge into former Soviet society, while others reasserted their national consciousness more resolutely, some of them even joining the dissident movements. Still others sought to leave the USSR by emigrating to West Germany.

In this way, then, the Russian Germans were transformed during and after World War II from a predominantly European Russian population to a dispersed national minority living east of the Urals Mountains in South Western Siberia and the Central Asian Republics. This demographic is shift illustrated in the Tables D. and E. Table D shows the number of ethnic Germans living primarily west of the Urals in 1897, 1914, and 1926, It has also been illustrated that a small eastward drift of Germans to Siberia between 1897 and 1926 had already occurred before World War II, but in the latter year percentage of Germans living east of the Urals was only 10.9% of the total number of Germans in the USSR. Table D with the help of the data for 1959, 1970 and 1979 shows how the results of World War II and its aftermath reversed the proportions of Germans living in European and Asiatic Russia. Similar data for 1989 have not yet been released by the former Soviet government at the time of writing, but will probably show only little change in the geographic distribution of Russian Germans in 1979. ⁴

4. Sidney Heitman, "The Soviet-Germans", Central Asian Survey
(London, 1993) p.75-76.

TABLE D GERMANS IN RUSSIA AND THE USSR, 1897, 1914, 1926 *

<u>Region</u>	<u>1897</u>	<u>1914</u>	<u>1926</u>
Total German population	1,790,400	2,426,000	1,238,600
Along the volga	390,800	600,000	439,100
Black Sea, Ukraine	377,800	520,000	378,000
North Caucasus and Transcaucasus	56,000	100,000	93,900
		21,000	25,300
St. Petersburgs/Leningrad	50,800	22,000	30,500
Town dwellers	155,800	106,000	74,400
Volhynia	171,300	200,000	52,000
Baltic provinces	165,600	165,000	↑
Bessarabia	no	80,000	↑
Siberia/Asiatic Russia	15,000 (0.8%)	102,000 (4.2%)	135,800 (10.9%)

Source: Data taken from Adam Giesinger's, From Catherine to Khrushchev, 1974, p. 35.

* Figures are rounded

↑ Not part of Soviet territory in 1926.

TABLE E SOVIET GERMAN DISTRIBUTION, 1959, 1970, 1979

<u>Republic</u>	<u>1959</u>	(%)	<u>1970</u>	(%)	<u>1979</u>	(%)
Total Germans	1,619,655	100.0	1,846,317	100.0	1,936,214	100.0
RSFSR	820,091	50.6	761,888	41.4	790,762	40.9
Kazakh SSR	658,698	40.7	858,077	46.5	900.207	46.5
Kirgiz SSR	39,915	2.0	89.834	4.9	101.057	5.2
Tadzhik SSR	32,588	2.0	37.712	2.0	38.853	2.0
Uzbek SSR	18,000	1.1	-	-	-	-
other republics	50,363	3.1	98,806	5.3	105,335	5.4
West of Urals	-	-	165,237	8.9	-	-
East of Urals	-	-	1,681,089	91.1	-	-

Source : Official census report taken from Central Asian Survey, January 1993, p. 75.

Since the relaxation of internal political controls by Gorbachev it has to be noted that in recent years there had been a drift of Germans back to their former homes in the Volga and Black Sea regions, the Baltic states, and the Moldavian SSR, but precise figures for this migration are not available. The emigration of Russian Germans to West Germany is far more significant than this movement. Since the middle 1950s, more than 266,000 Germans have emigrated from the former USSR along with 391,000 Jews, 78,000 Armenians, and thousands of Evangelical and Protestant Christians, for a total of more than 750,000 persons. These figures refer only to legal emigrants and do not include thousands of others, such as persons repatriated to their native countries, expellees, exiles, dissidents, partners of bi-national marriages, and prisoners and spies exchanged for their counterparts in the West. As the emigration of Russian Germans has assumed increasing political significance in recent years, it merits examination.

RUSSIAN GERMAN EMIGRATION

The origins of Russian German emigration from the former USSR go back to the early post-war years. As a result of the massive population upheavals and territorial changes during and after the war, there were in the former USSR in 1945 besides the Russian Germans hundreds of thousands of German prisoners of war and ethnic Germans in the Baltic region, Polish territory, and Bessarabia. Between the end of the war and 1955 most of the prisoners of war and ethnic Germans in the annexed

territories were transferred to West Germany as part of the general post-war settlements. No Russian Germans were involved in these transfers, for they were still confined in the special camps in the east.

In 1955 they were amnestied, as it was seen, and upon their release, 200,000 of them sought to emigrate to West Germany but were rebuffed by the former Soviet government. Most of the petitioners were Black Sea Germans who had been forcibly returned to the former Soviet Union after the war and now sought to join relatives who had remained in the West.

Though they were unable to emigrate under pressure from the Federal Republic, a small number of elderly, infirm, and very young Russian Germans were permitted to leave for West Germany between 1955 and 1964 for the purpose of family reunification, the only basis for emigration that the former Soviet government recognized. Following the 1964 rehabilitation decree, representatives of the former Soviet and West German Red Cross organizations met in Vienna in 1965 to consider special hardship cases of divided families, and it was agreed that 40,000 selected Russian Germans would be permitted to emigrate to the West. In fact only a few thousand were eventually allowed to leave, again mainly elderly or infirm persons of no value to the former Soviet state and potential liabilities as pensioners. In 1968, with relations between the former USSR and the West at a low point, the Soviet government declared the compassionate family reunification agreement ' completed and per-emptorily slowed the exodus to a more trickle as shown in the Table E

TABLE F RUSSIAN GERMAN EMIGRATION 1951-89

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TO FRG</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TO ERG</u>	<u>TO GDR</u>
1951.	1,803	1971	1,145	
1952	107	1972	3,420	
1953	0	1973	4,493	
1954	18	1974	6,541	
1955	152	1975	5,985	
1956	1,003	1976	9,704	
1957	898	1977	9,274	
1958	4,052	1978	8,455	
1959	5,557	1979	7,226	
1960	3,261	1980	6,954	1,000
1961	334	1981	3,773	
1962	889	1982	2,071	
1963	200	1983	1,447	
1964	231	1984	910	
1965	365	1985	406	10,000
1966	1,243	1986	931	
1967	1,079	1987	14,488	
1968	594	1988	47,572	
1969	310	1989	98,134	
1970	342	1990	140,000	

Source : Volk auf dem Weg (Stuttgart), 2. February 1984, p. 6.

In 1970 two sets of events raised the question of Russian German emigration again. First, Chancellor Willy Brandt, who succeeded Kiesinger in 1969, inaugurated a new Ostpolitik, the forerunner of detente. Brandt used the new relationship with the former USSR to press for, among other things, freer emigration for Russian Germans, motivated not only by humanitarian considerations but also by political pressure in the former FRG by supporters of the Germans in the former USSR, including various religious, nationalist, emigre and conservative political organization. The second advancement was the rise of a new movement among the Russian Germans themselves. When the Black Sea Germans were rebuffed in their bid to emigrate to the West, they resigned themselves to their fate and either assimilated into former Soviet society or merged with the more numerous and culturally persistent Volga Germans. The Volga Germans, in turn, after being refused a request to restore their autonomous republic in 1965, began to evolve in three directions. Some, like the Black Sea Germans, merged into the general population. Others reasserted their ethnic identity and resisted the government's efforts to Russify and assimilate them. Still others turned to emigration.

The decision of the Volga Germans to emigrate from the former USSR created a new problem. However until 1970, the former Soviet government had reluctantly permitted several thousand Black Sea Germans to emigrate to West Germany on the sole grounds that it recognized - compassionate family reunification. It rejected in principle the freedom of its citizens

to leave the former Soviet Union at will, despite a number of international agreements it had signed guaranteeing this right since the Volga Germans had been deported to the east early in the war and had no family members in West Germany, they did not qualify to emigrate in the opinion of the former soviet authorities.

External events intervened to create a favourable climate for the Valga German's bid to emigrate. With the thaw brought about by Ostpolitik and detente, Khrushchev's successors were anxious to mend fences with the West and to court Germany under a friendly Chancellor Willy Brandt. In 1972, a treaty was concluded between former West Germany and the USSR, which normalized relations in Eastern Europe and provided for increased trade, which both countries needed. When the pact came up for ratification in the Bundestag, where it faced opposition from unreconciled West German conservatives and anti-Soviet hardliners, the former Soviet government tried to strengthen Brandt's hand by opening wide the gates of emigration. Thousands of Russian Germans, many of them now Volga Germans with no claim to family reunification, were permitted to leave for West-Germany this time it was not just the elderly and infirm, but entire families. Whereas in 1970 only 342 Russian Germans had been permitted to emigrate, in 1971 the figure rose to 1,145 in 1972 to 3,420, in 1973 to 4,493, and in the following year to 6,541, reaching a peak in 1976 with 9,704. Between 1971 and the end of 1979, 56,000 Russian Germans emigrated from the former USSR to former West Germany, a tenfold increase over the total of 5600 for the perceding decade as shown in Table F.

After 1980 German emigration declined, but by the end of 1986 a total of 106,000 Germans had left the former Soviet Union since the war, the vast majority of 95,000 for former West Germany, the rest 11,000 for former East Germany. The latter chose presumably German Democratic Republic as they either had relatives there or hoped it might be easier to re-emigrate later to the West. In 1987 emigration levels rose again under the new policies of glasnost and perestroika, and in 1988 and 1989 German emigration attained record levels of 47,572 and 98,134, respectively. A large number of those who have sought to leave since 1987 have been relatives of earlier emigrants seeking to rejoin their families in the former West Germany rather than discontented Germans as during the decade of the 1970s. During the first months of 1990 this high level continued, fuelled not only by the desire to join relatives in the West but increasingly by anxieties over the declining economic conditions in the former USSR and a fear that West Germany might limit access to the country because of the large number of other German immigrants flooding the Federal Republic from Eastern Europe and the (G D R)

Yet inspite of regular rounds of talks between Helmut Kohl and the Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Yeltsin's visit to Bonn in 1991 the conditions of Russian Germans have not noticeably improved as was expected and their future remains quite uncertain.

CHAPTER II

WORLD WAR II AND STALIN'S DEPORTATION POLICY

The 20th century has appropriately been called the "century of the Homeless Man. "The total number of displaced persons is startling. Before 1939 approximately 30 million people were forced to leave their homes. During World War II nearly forty million civilians were shifted from one place to another, and since then an additional sixty million persons have been affected. Thus, in half a century more than one hundred and thirty million people have been uprooted and scattered throughout more than forty different countries. About fifty million of them have been displaced as a result of divisions, annexations, or other boundary changes and territorial rearrangements.¹

Parochial nationalism and racism continue to aggravate the misfortunes of large numbers of people dislocated by two World Wars and subsequent political upheavals. Whether or not groups of displaced persons have become economically and socially integrated into their now homelands, they have often continued to be a source of great internal instability and international friction representing major political and social flashpoints.²

Migrations of Germans from the East have been all but halted only since 1961. While the emigres were achieving a large measure of economic and social integration into West German society, the political aspirations of the East German leadership were more clearly emerging, and a number of treaties dealing with both economic and political aspects of their influx were published.

1. Hans W. Schoenberg, Germans from the East (The Hague, 1970) p.1.

2. Ibid., p.3.

The majority of these were premature, however, and therefore generally inadequate and limited in scope. They are now, for the most part, out-of-date.

The study consists of two main parts; an account of the population movement itself and an account of the subsequent history of the expellee group. The first part begins by examining events before and during World War II leading directly to flights and expulsions of Germans from their homes. It documents their fortunes during this migration, describes their reception in occupied postwar Germany, and reports on their re-settlement and assimilation into the FRG. The second part surveys the political activities of these Germans, reviews the origin and development of their emigre organisations, and discusses the ideas and aims of their leaders. The study covers a period from the last months of World War II in Europe, when the mass transfer of Germans began to the summer of 1961, when the government of Communist East Germany, then called the German Democratic Republic closed the last gap in the Iron Curtain by building the Berlin Wall.

In the after month of World War II over 18 million Germans were driven from the part of Germany east of what is presently called the Oder-Neisse line or from their homes elsewhere in East Europe. This displacement constitutes the largest forced migration across national boundaries in modern European history and together with the subsequent division of Germany represents part of a major historical process.

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Contemporary forced migrations were preceded by the spread of expressions of parochial, nationalist intolerance in the nineteenth century that often made it impossible for individuals, families, or groups having different thoughts and ideas to continue living in their homelands. The emergence of new totalitarian state after 1917 gave rise to considerably larger political flights. Increasing nationalist intolerance provoked hundreds of thousands of regime opponents, including Russians and other East Europeans, Germans, and Spaniards to migrate. Nationalist discrimination was not just limited to non-conformists governments eventually promoted policies designed to effect the total removal of alien minorities on the grounds of actual or presumed opposition to their power.

After World War I many Western statesmen viewed the fate of minorities with growing concern. Their efforts to reorganize European populations move often tended to create new centers of friction rather than alleviate human hardships and resolve political problems. Boundaries were redrawn around some ethnic groups, other minorities were moved across them, and remaining alien groups, were assured a measure of cultural autonomy and a certain international protection. Emigration and naturalization practices were refined and plebiscitary privileges as well as the right of individual option were granted. Nevertheless, the European population pattern was too complex to achieve favourable ethnographic conditions a system of national states. Strong nationalist feelings hindered the emergency of any general

spirit of and under such dictators as Hitler and Stalin there developed a mania for power and a disregard for people reminiscent of earlier attitudes in societies where conquests, eradication, or enslavement of aliens was regarded as inevitable and practical.

Mass flights and forcible resettlements of millions of non-Germans began all over Europe as a consequence of the literal and figurative German blitz during World War II. As the self-styled Germans master race gained control of larger areas of Europe, more millions of people were uprooted. Hitler's mass deportations, especially from Russia and Poland, to assist his war effort by boosting the German industrial and agricultural labour force surpassed in numbers and ruthlessness any similar contemporary practice.

Similarly, the Stalin era in the former Soviet Union was characterized by deportations of millions of people. Reverting to czarist practices, Soviet leaders uprooted and removed above five million Russian-minorities to Siberia and Central Asia during the political purges before the outbreak of World War II. One recalls with special bitterness the tragic years of Stalinist repression. Lawlessness and highhandedness did not bypass a single republic, a single people. The mass arrests carried out in the past, the terrible suffering in the camps and unfortunate women, old people and children in resettlement zones continue to appeal to human conscience and outrage its moral sense

3. "Stalin's Ethnic Deportations called Eriminal", Current Digest of Soviet Press, Vol. 41, no.48, 1989, p.13

The barbarous actions of the Stalinist regime included the expulsion of the Balkars, the Ingush, the Turks, the Crimean Tatars, the Germans and the Chechens from their native areas during World War II. The policy of forcible resettlement effected the fates of Koreans, Greeks and Kurds and other people. Between 1939 and 1941 and, again, between 1944 and 1945 more than one and a half million Baltic and Southeast Europeans were deported, and subsequently transplanted and dispersed even larger numbers of their own people.

Transplantations and dispersions of people were common in Czarist Russia. The imperial government would move allegedly hostile groups of landowners from territories added to its domain to the interior or to remote borderlands. The first such forced migrations occurred during the reign of Ivan III (1462-1505)

The Hitler-Stalin agreements concluded after 1939 on reciprocal minority exchanges in East Europe and also the Potsdam Protocol of August 1945 on expulsion of East Germans were patterned after earlier treaties on migration and exchanges of Balkan minorities. Most of these wartime migrations were forced, and some were carried out under extremely harsh conditions.

There was a brief hiatus during the 1920s when a showcase Volga German Autonomous Republic and several autonomous districts were created by the former Soviet government to advertise Lenin's nationalities policy and win favour with Weimar Germany. For a time a vigorous German cultural and religious life flourished in the autonomous units, which maintained 400 lower schools and

hundreds of church schools, a national theater, 25 newspapers and periodicals and a book publishing house. But World War II or Stalin's deportation policy ended this hiatus and destroyed the historic German way of life in the former USSR. When Nazi Germany attacked the former Soviet Union in 1941, Stalin falsely accused the Russian Germans of disloyalty and ordered their deportation to the east to prevent collaboration with the invaders. Six hundred thousand Volga Germans were brutally dispatched to Siberia to grow grains. There they were confined under inhuman conditions in forced labour camps. A few experiences of these deportees will be discussed later in this chapter. Their autonomous units were dissolved, their property confiscated, and their churches and schools closed. The German clergy were also sent into exile, where most of them died, depriving the Germans of their intellectual and spiritual leaders.

The Black Sea Germans were overrun by the invaders before they could be deported, and 350,000 of them were evacuated to Poland and incorporated into the Third Reich by the Nazis. After the war all but 100,000 of them were forcibly repatriated to the USSR by the allied armies during 'Operation Keelhaul' and they too were deported to the camps in the east. Those who were not repatriated eventually made their way to West Germany and were absorbed into the former Federal Republic.⁴ World War II thus totally uprooted the Russian Germans and forcibly transplanted them east of the Ural Mountains.

4. Sidney Heitman, "The Soviet Germans", Central Asian Survey, 1990, p. 74.

Moreover, half a million of them perished in the camps, the heaviest toll falling on the men. Though the end of the war did away with the pretext for their deportation, the then Soviet government headed by Stalin kept them confined in the camps for another decade before they were released in 1955 when the first chancellor of post-war West Germany, Konrad Adenauer, interceded on their behalf. Moscow granted these Germans an amnesty, which permitted them to leave the camps and resettle in south western Siberia and the Central Asian Soviet Republic but prohibited them from returning to their former homes, property and lives.

In 1945, German cities lay in ruins with Hitler's policy of aggression meeting its doomsday. Hitler's war and his inhuman dictatorship had caused a worldwide groundswell of anti-German sentiments. First the Volga Germans lost their adopted territory, then the lively network of German schools, associations and churches was almost totally destroyed and finally, the German minorities that had been living for centuries in Central and Eastern Europe were subjected to immeasurable suffering.

There are still areas with a heavy concentration of Germans, and it is possible to create their national territorial limits. The Russian Germans are struggling to reestablish the Volga Autonomous Republic and national areas are necessary to provide in the long run with a proper environment for setting up German publishing houses and teacher's college and German-language television programme.

But even in these areas, Germans live closely together with other nationalities and will continue to do so. A career-minded member of an ethnic minority whether the field be science, industry, administration or politics, requires an intimate knowledge of the dominant language as well as the habits of the majority. The Germans in Russia, despite some problems, are good Germans and at the same time good Russians.

The termination World War II did not end forced migrations in East Europe. In order to fill the gaps created by expulsions of East Germans and vacation of territories subsequently transferred to East European states, communist governments resettled about nine and a half million of their people.

The uprooting and resettlement of Ethnic Germans was designed to avenge and eradicate forever fascist ambitions and to solve once and for all the problem of German minorities in Russia and the other East European countries. Towards this end the former Soviet Union and the countries of East Europe acted jointly to eliminate the German-speaking populations from their national territories.

Forced migrations of these Germans affected mostly individuals and families who had lived in East Europe for many generations. Proliferation of German settlements in the East markedly slowed down in the fifteenth century due to wars and strife in Central and East Europe. After the divisions of Poland in 1772, 1773 and 1775 and the subsequent decline of

Russia, the Habsburg rulers encouraged Germans to move to Galicia and the Bukovina. Catherine II and subsequent Russian rulers sponsored the settlement of farmers, mostly from North Germany, near St Petersburg, in Volhynia, the Volga steppes, the Ukraine, the Crimea and the caucasian provinces. Small numbers of German farmers continued to settle in Russian areas during the nineteenth century without the encouragement of state sponsorship, but major eastward migrations of Germans had ceased.

World War I and its aftermath brought unrest to virtually all inhabitants of Eastern Europe. After the defeat of Russia, the expansionist plans of the Central Powers were clearly revealed. The peace treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest, concluded in February and March of 1918 respectively, and the supplementary Agreements of Berlin, formalized in August of the same year, contained German imperial blueprints for a "New Order" in the East German political and economic influence, thus extended for to the East, was to be strengthened by the presence of numerous German settlers in the Ukraine, and around the Black Sea⁵

Many Germans in Volhynia and the Autonomous Sociatist Republic of Volga Germans established by the former Soviet Union fled or were deported. Hitler and his followers poured oil onto the fires smouldering amidst East European populations and minorities by proclaiming the biological superiority of all Germans

5. Hans. W. Schoenberg, *op.cit.* ~~no. 1~~, p.14.

as members of an alleged "Germanic Aryan" race. His declared aim was a new Greater German state that would embrace all persons of German blood by expanding its borders eastward and westward.⁶

Resettlement of original German minorities from the East within the area thus expanded was achieved to a large extent between 1939 & 1942 on the basis of agreements with the former Soviet Union and lesser Northeast European States. These agreements affected over 300,000 ethnic Germans settlers east of the German-Soviet demarcation line- in the Baltic area, former Eastern Poland, and Bessarabia and northern Bukovina, as well as about 150,000 Germans in areas west of that line- in the vicinity of Lublin, and in Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia.

In four years, from 1938 through 1941, the German Reich had successfully expanded eastward. The German population in its Eastern domain had increased from about ten million to nearly twenty-two million. About 3,400,000 Germans were still left outside the Reich, Primarily in Southeast Europe where many did not participate in the resettlement schemes, but also in Russia where many were removed even further east by the former Soviet government. With the advance of German forces into Russia and in the total population of, East and ethnic Germans added to the Axis power, including Germans in former Austria was over twenty-four million.

Indigenous population in Russia proper, White Russia, the Ukraine, and the Caucasian provinces were to be kept at

6. Ibid., p.17.

the lowest possible economic and cultural levels by a German administration. All alien inhabitants were to be evacuated from the Crimea and replaced by Germans who were to ensure control of the Black Sea and secure the Russian mainland for economic exploitation by Germany.

By 1942-43 the total population of the East German provinces and the East European countries was approximately seventeen million as shown in Table A. These were in addition approximately 400,000 ethnic Germans who were the first to be involved in the exodus. Their fate was actually decided in August 1941 when the former Soviet government dissolved the autonomous Volga German Republic in the face of the German attack and just as they had done on a smaller scale in 1919- ordered the deportation of close to 600,000 Germans from the Volga Steppes, the Crimea, the Caucasus, and the Black Sea areas to Siberia and Central Asia. Of those not deported in 1941 about 3,50,000 were evacuated to the West by the German armies retreating from Russia in 1943. In turn, most of them were captured by the Soviet armies and subsequently deported to the east.

Aside from a small number of Germans in the Baltic areas and sizeable groups east of the Vistula in Central Poland, the two million ethnic Germans in South east Europe were the next to be affected by the advance of the Red Army. Beginning in August 1944 about 500,000 of them fled or were evacuated by German authorities. Most of the Germans in Yugoslavia remained,

but in early 1945. Some 140,000 of them were deported by the former Soviets to work in Ukrainian labor camps.⁷

The Russian offensive of January 1945 in the northern and central parts of the front was so sudden and forceful that earlier evacuations of Germans proved to be relatively unimportant. The Soviet forces brought chaos to the remaining fourteen million East and ethnic Germans, of whom nearly two million of these refugees were taken over by the Russians and, on the termination of hostilities, attempted to return to their homes. Over 200,000 were promptly deported to Soviet labour camps in the northern part of Russia proper, in the Ural mountains the Caucasus and even as far off as Turkmenia. Most of other millions who had remained were driven from their homes, which were expropriated by the newly established national governments. Thousands were arrested or detained and many were convicted of Nazi crimes or otherwise punished for membership in Nazi organizations.⁸ Many lived in ghettos and labour camps or else were imprisoned to await the final phase of the exodus—the expulsion.

During these involuntary migrations, deportations and detentions the Germans incurred considerable hardships inflicted by former Soviet and other East European peoples. Such behaviour was frequently regarded as a form of retributive punishment for earlier Nazi deeds. For many of the victims it represented an exercise in revenge that was both arbitrary and unmerited.

7. Theoder Schieder, Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost und Mitteleuropa, (Bonn, 1953) pp. 34 E- 44 E.

8. Ibid., p. 81.

The elimination of German minorities was the principal aim of the Polish and Czech leaders, at least since the time that Germany had involved their countries in 1939. A similar anti-German policy was advocated by Communist Polish leaders in the former Soviet Union after Stalin had broken relations with the Polish exiles in London.

Both the desire of many East European statesmen to eliminate potentially dangerous German minorities and to punish the Germans collectively for their misdeeds is understandable. Upon viewing films of German devastations and atrocities in Russia, Benes said that "all these things could not be forgotten and for all of them there had to be a reckoning,"⁹ "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Stalin spoke to Truman of "taking revenge... for the injuries the Germans had caused... over the course of centuries."¹⁰ The incredible breakdown of discipline in many Red Army units in their encounter with German civilians can conceivably be explained in terms of revenge.

Official reports during 1941-42, as well as prose and poetry by such noted literary figures as Boris Pasternak, Konstantin Simonov, and Ilya Ehrenburg reflected despair and anguish at the sufferings inflicted on the Russian and preached a hatred of the Germans that tended to increase toward the end of the war as more of Russia was liberated.¹¹ Revenge of Nazi war crimes probably originated with Soviet guerilla forces

9. Hans. W. Schoenberg, op. cit. n. 1., P.28.

10. Ibid.

11. Alexander Weoth, Russia at War, 1941-45, (New York, 1964)PP.963-

whose persecution to the hands of German occupation was ruthless.

Eisenhower, when he flew across Russia to visit Zhukov in Moscow in 1945, remarked that "all this devastation would have embittered any peoples it would have been completely astonishing if the Russians had not had a more direct and personal vindictiveness toward the Germans. Proud of their victories, the Russians always remembered with bitterness their cost."¹² And later, during the occupation clay pointed out that if they had been no German aggression, the expelled problem would not exist

By 1944-45 a total of approximately 16,500,000 Germans were living in the areas affected by the mass exodus, excluding only the former Soviet Union. From the end of the war to 1950 over 11,500,000 of these people had actually fled or were expelled. In 1950 more than 2,500,000 were known to have remained in or near their homes. Some of the deportees were still being detained by the Russians. In 1950 about 2,200,000 people were not accounted for and many of them probably perished during the exodus. By the end of 1950 there are indications that the number of persons of German origin in the former Soviet Union was between 1,600,000 and 1,700,000, which was the largest Western minority in the former Soviet Union.

The masses of expellees arriving in the Federal Republic after the war fell into three different groups: (1) Reichdeutsche or German citizens from the provinces immediately east of the

12. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, (New York, 1952) p.516.

Oder-Neisse line that were part of Germany on December 31, 1937; (2) Sudetendeutsche oder Germans from the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia who became German citizens in 1938; and (3) Volksdeutsche, or ethnic Germans who had lived in and in many cases had been citizens of East European countries as shown in Table A. Transfers of ethnic Germans and evacuation of East German nationals planned by the Nazi government affected less than a million persons. Subsequent arrivals due to flight and expulsion amounted to 4,800,000

For about 15 years-until August 1961, when the Berlin Wall all but prevented further crossings - migration of German refugees from the communist part of Germany further increased the numbers of East German expellees present or arriving that period in the former Federal Republic of Germany and West Berlin. Their arrival in large numbers materially affected the social, economic and political development of both parts of Germany and demands attention. The mass migration through the figurative. Iron Curtain that was drawn across the middle of Germany has no precedent in European history except for the last division of Poland, which prompted flights and mass deportations from both sides of the line of demarcation between 1939 & 1945.

It will be recalled that ethnic Germans number about one fifth of all expellee in former West Germany and that many initially belonged to groups resettled under the Hitler-Stalin agreements. Since they were not actually expelled after 1945, they did not possess the same rights as other expellees.

These migrants from Communist Germany consisted of two groups termed as " Soviet Zone Immigrant " (aus der Soviet besetzungszone Zugewanderte) and " Soviet Zone Refugees " (Sowjetzonen-flüchtlinge), a distinction originally made on the basis of whether or not the person arriving was actually forced to leave to escape political persecution. The former group is now referred to as " Germans from the Soviet Occupied Zone " (Deutsche aus der SBZ).¹³ The former West German census in June 1961 counted over 3 million people who had fled from communist East Germany of that period to West Germany or West Berlin as shown in Table given below.

EXPELLEES AND GERMANS FROM COMMUNIST GERMANY (AS OF JUNE 1961)

EXPELLEES

	<u>Total in West Germany</u>	<u>Thereof from the Soviet Zone</u>
MALE	4,233,000	1,264,000
FEMALE	<u>4,723,000</u>	<u>1,502,000</u>
TOTAL	8,956,000	2,766,000

REFUGEES FROM THE SOVIET ZONE

	<u>Total in West Germany</u>	<u>Thereof Recognized Refugees</u>
MALE	1,500,000	4,37,000
FEMALE	<u>1,599,000</u>	<u>4,10,000</u>
TOTAL	3,099,000	8,47,000

EXPELLES AND REFUGEES

	<u>Total in West Germany</u>	<u>Thereof from the Soviet Zone</u>
MALE	5,733,000	2,764,000
FEMALE	<u>6,322,000</u>	<u>3,101,000</u>
TOTAL	12,055,000	5,865,000

Source: (Data from Statistisches Bundesamt, Vorberichte für die Volkzählung 1961.)

13. Hans. W. Schoenberg, op.cit., ~~n.1~~, pp.52-54-F

An 1961 total of Germans, both expellees and Soviet Zone refugees, involuntarily transferred from the East was over 12,000,000. This represented more than 21% of the entire West German population.

The Hitler- Stalin agreements on German minorities in Eastern Europe led to a migration into Germany of about two million people. Between 1918 and 1925 transfers of East Germans and others returning from former German economy & integration measures inaugurated by the Weimar government - partly in fulfillment of obligations under the Versailles Treaty - served as a precedent for similar provisions made by the Hitler government. Though inadequate for meeting growing problems of war damages to civilians and bearing traces of political and radical discrimination, these were continued throughout World War II.

Apart from concern for material welfare, the attitude of Germans from Russia reflects the tragic experience of the uprooting, the losses of lives sustained in the course of the flight and expulsions, and the breakup and separation of families, enforced since the end of the war. "Release the members of our families, our wives, our husbands, and our children "¹⁴ is the plea made by Germans from Russia. The year 1962 marked the 200th anniversary of the first German agricultural colonies in Russia and special pleas were made by Germans from Russia urging restoration of basic human rights for over 1,500, 000 compatriots in former Soviet Union denied the freedom of movement guaranteed to their ancestor.

14. Volk auf dem Weg, Stuttgart, June, 1955, p.8.

The market mechanism of National Economic Policy, delicate from the start, was seriously disrupted. Throughout the 1920s, with the disappearance of private estates and the sharp decline of enclosed private peasant holdings, a much smaller proportion of agricultural output had been marketed than before the war. Investment in improved techniques had been minimal, and few peasants produced a surplus so great that they could be relied upon to sell it at artificially depressed prices. When in the autumn of 1927, therefore, the peasants, especially ethnic minorities were deprived of incentive to market their grain, the state purchasing agencies could not nearly meet their requirements. Determined that this peasant recalcitrance should not jeopardize industrial growth, Stalin instituted 'extraordinary measures', forcibly requisitioning grain in Siberia and the Urals. Although there was protest against this step, Stalin refused all their demands. This commitment to forced industrialization had gathered irresistible momentum.¹⁵

The German invasion, launched at dawn on Sunday 1941, caught the Red Army almost fatally unprepared and the Soviet Union of that time suffered catastrophic defeats. This disastrous start can be traced to Stalin's firm conviction that Hitler would respect the terms of the Nazi-Soviet pact at least until 1942. Far from preparing for in-depth defence, former Soviet strategy was based upon the rash assumption that in the event of war the Red army would be in a position to move rapidly on to the offensive. No preparations were made for the evacuation

15. Edward Action, Russia, (London, 1986) p.216.

of population or plant from the industrially developed western regions. The growing alarm of front-line commanders was met by firm orders to avoid reacting to any 'provocation' from the Germans.¹⁶ The aftermath of the World War II was very bad for the German minorities in the former Soviet Union as they were driven out in the first weeks of 1945.

Hitler imposed his will on his generals in arbitrary and fanatical fashion, forbidding vital strategic withdrawals and wantonly dividing German forces between conflicting goals. Equally costly was the political price of Nazi racist doctrine. The army was ordered to give no quarter to the subjugated slavs: far from playing upon minority nationalist and peasant discontent with former Soviet rule, the Untermenschen were treated with a savage brutality perfectly designed to rally even the most disaffected elements behind Stalin. Nor was Germany free to concentrate solely upon the Russian foe.¹⁷

There were some instances of disaffection, notably in the newly annexed western areas and the Caucasus where the Germans did condescend to carry support among local minority nationalities; and some 800,000 Prisoner of Wars, demoralized to the point of endurance, consented to serve along side the Germans under the captured General Vlasov. But the overwhelming majority identified whole-heartedly with the struggle against the hated Nazis.

16. op.cit. n.11., p.254.

17. Edward Action, op.cit. n.11., p.254.

Hitler's adventure had aroused a sense of moral outrage, of national indignation which bears comparison with the impact of the holocaust upon Jewish consciousness. It guaranteed, as censorship alone never could, overwhelming and uncritical popular support for every demarche of post-war Soviet foreign policy. With the crushing of Germany, even the diplomatic protection Russia could offer had lost its attraction. In most eastern European countries, moreover, there was a deeply rooted tradition of hostility to Russian power which the unruly and sometimes bestial behaviour of the Red Army did nothing to counterbalance.

There were the long-established western areas of the former Soviet Union which had been cut off from Moscow. In the Ukraine, Nazi occupation had stimulated local nationalism, weakened the collective farm-system, and left a number of scattered partisan groups who resisted the reimposition of Moscow's authority. In 1941 Stalin had already ordered the mass deportation of the Volga-Germans on the assumption that, left in a vulnerable area, they would throw in their lot with Hitler.ⁱ In fact, although the Germans had sought with the help of emigre leaders to rouse them against the former Soviet Union, few had betrayed their country and many had served honorably in the Red Army. Yet the moment the Germans had been driven out, no less than 1 million were uprooted en masse and sent penniless to Central Asia, the Urals, and Siberia. Even party officials belonging to the 'perished peoples' were despatched- though they did escape the murderous conditions in which the rank and file were faced to travel.¹⁸

18. Edward Action, *op. cit.* n. 11, p. 273.

Within a decade Khrushchev was to admit that such brutal and indiscriminate punishment of whole nations defied not only the principles of Marxism - Leninism but common sense. The same might be said of the treatment meted out to POWs returning from German captivity. They suffered from the authorities assumption that foreign contact, however involuntary, implied unreliability, guilt, and possibly treason.

The particular from that Zhiđanovschina took was conditioned by the legacy of the war and the impact of the emergent Cold War. Popular patriotic fervour and anti - Germanism mingled with official suspicion of the corrupting influence of the individualism and relative influence of the West. Cultural exchanges of every kind were broken off. It became illegal to marry a foreigner. Intellectuals who implicitly or explicitly showed respect for things Western were mercilessly denounced for cosmopolitanism.

REPORT ON THE SUFFERINGS OF RUSSIAN GERMANS

This part of the chapter will be dealing with the report given by a few eyewitnesses who suffered during the period of Stalin's forced deportation.

On 5 Sept 1940 the treaty about the emigration of Germans from Bessarabia and from northern Bukowina was welcomed by native Germans. The history of these Russian Germans is quite varied and rich. Annelies Ginter in (the book) ' 40 Jahre nach Flucht und Vertreibung, Dusseldorf, 1985 wrote about the events of war period i.e 1941 which was very tough for Russian Germans. A few statements depict this situation.

"Die schlimmste Erfahrung war für uns, wo wir nach Sibirien gebracht wurden. Von zu Hause, vom Hof, von wo wir geboren - wir haben keine andere Heimat gehabt und nicht gewusst, obwohl wir von jeher nicht sehr reich gewesen sind, und dann in dem kalten Sibirien, nackt und bloss"

"One of the surviving eyewitnesses says: "The worst of our experiences was when we were brought to Siberia from the place or home where we were born. We did not have any native-land and we did not even know if we would be at all prosperous one day. Moreover, we had to bear awful cold of Siberia,"¹⁹

We, the family with children who did not want to desert their land were brought together to the north. There I was with 5 children and the mother. They had reached there after north Asmaran which is near the pole. There they were transported to river Jenissei. There was not any shelter, only the mudhuts. My mother had narrated the morning-scene that when they got up there was heavy snow and none could stand there. The people ran here and there and many of them died of that bitter cold.

I was told that my brother was brought by some one in 1941. He had finished the university and was 23 years and was picked up and sent to custody with a whole row of other students. I had never again heard about him. In 1948 I got an information about him by chance through an acquaintance, that he died of hunger, the long winter and bitter cold.

19. Hans-Ulrich Engel: 40 Jahre nach Flucht und Vertreibung, Kavita Hindwan, trans. (Dusseldorf, 1985), p.39.

One must live. Although the war stopped in 1945 for us the war was not over yet. It went further for us. We were to be delivered."²⁰

These Russian Germans wanted the freedom from military custody during the difficult years of first World War, revolution and collectivization under Stalin. However, the attack of Germany Army against former Soviet Union during World War resulted a big toll of Ethnic Germans. The Middle Asia from the cities and villages. According to statistics more than 400,000 men, women and children died during this period. But about the suffering and hunger only those could report who themselves had undergone all that. How could these Germans survive in such an inhuman condition? A Russian German lady speaks to this question:

"Der Lebens-und Leidensweg von Generationen Deutscher in Russland ist ohne deren Deutschtum gar nicht denkbar. Gleich nach der Sehnsucht der Christen nach dem Paradies steht die Vorstellung vom Heimatland Deutschland."

" The way of living and suffering of these Germans in Russia from generations is unbelievable without their Germanism. The idea of native-German land stands for the longing of christians going to Paradise."²¹

First of all 45,000 Crimean Germans were deported to Central Asia within a short period of time. The Volga Germans were

20. Ibid., pp 39-40.

21. Hans Ulrich Engel, op. cit. ~~19~~, p. 41.

followed by them. They all were punished for giving the active protection to fascist aggression. Also the Germans from Volhynia and Siberia, who were transported to Poland or Germany before 1941 did not have good luck. Innumerable of them were attacked and brought back by retreating Soviet troops not to the place they were promised to i.e. old native places, rather to unending distant place behind the Urals. A survivor of this deportation remembers:

" Kasachstan ist doch gross. Das sind Gegenden, wo es sehr heiss ist und Gegenden, wo es furchtbar kalt ist. Gerade in der Gegendim Wald arbeiten."

" Kazakhstan is quite vast. There were places where it is very hot and a few places where it is extremely cold. The surrounding where we were surviving was so dusty that one could hardly open the eyes and when in winter there was a storm, one could not see anything even at a small distance. There were cases when there was no fountain and pipelines in many places. There were a few fountains where they had tied ropes and one had to struggle a lot for water in case of a storm. And we also lived in Taiga where the temperature was 62-42°C below zero. And in that cold we had to still work in the forest."²²

The weather change was especially very bad in Württemberg. Most of men were separated from their families for long period and were forced to work in coal-mines and hills. Most of the time they never heard from their own people.

22. Hans Ulrich Engel, op. cit. ~~19~~, p.42.

The women who had small children worked in Kholkhoz. Women without children and unmarried girls were taken to camps to work under inhuman conditions. A woman- reports:

" Ich kam in ein Lager,dann fortgeschleppt. I came to camp through barbed wires. It was a difficult task. Every evening one came to home and narrated how the people were dying. Women were also undergoing the same process. Our neighbours say: today we had seen this one and that one.. It was assumed that the deads were to be burried but we could not bury them. They were covered by snow. It was not far away from the forest and later one day they were eaten up by the wolves.²³

The Germans who were in Ukranian Village were hopeful that they would be freed by the German troops because there the war going to be over. An eyewitness speaks to this point:

" Wir, wurden am 5nach Sibirien"
Translation : " On 5 June 1945 we were brought back because the Germans were already near. One could hear them and then we were on the way to Siberia the whole month. The whole day we went forwards and at night the train was sent back because of the fear of front. One saw the light in the sky and heard the shooting. For 29 days we were on the way. We were allowed to carry 50 Kg along on the way for the family, the whole family. It included bread, some clothes and the meat. That was all, 50 Kg. was not much. Our fathers were already there, in July the father and the brothers became 50 years old and were already deported. We were consoled, if one questioned "where we are

going to ? Then one told, " They are going to their fathers". They all were deported back to Swerdlowsk and we naturally came back to Siberia."²⁴

About the hunger problem one can have a proper idea from the following report by another eyewitness: "Ein Bruder kam zuruck,ist verschwunden."

A brother of 15 years old came back, where he was abducted. Someone had given him a few things like, bread herring and some sugar for his journey of 5 days. But these things were exhausted very soon. Many of these people had eaten up that on the first day itself and most of them died in the train. But my brother had a friend who was very strict and for this reason of his being strict one had assumed that he could be alive. My brother took foodstuff and bread from this friend and gave back his share. During that period there was hardly any train to Siberia. In case if it went, it went from station to station. And it was only from Swerdlowsk to that place where we were living i.e 1000 km wide. Perhaps only two months had passed by and then they were again hungry and for this reason went out of the train, worked and begged. My brother was taken away by deportation army with his friend. The friend was brought back on the second day and my brother is lost till today. Either he is being taken away somewhere else or probably he has died of hunger in Taiga. He is lost.²⁵

24. Ibid.

25. Hans Ulrich Engel, op.cit.n.19, p.46

A Volga German who was still very young got a order that he must join the people who were going to be transferred to this native-village. He reports as following:

"Unter den Menschennach Deutschland kommen."

Now there was an uncertain feeling among the people. My grandmother, who had spoken on the way to Siberia said:, It is a great thing that now we are again same. "Among the Volga Germans there was a hope because we all were brought together at once. There is a plan that we should go to Germany. But as there was nothing to do in the west, because the Front was strong one takes us to the East and South, perhaps over China so that we can go to Germany."²⁶

Just after a three weeks of transportation by cattlegagon these Volga Germans felt that they were being deceived.

A report by an eyewitness says:

"Den Zug haben sieganz allein"
Translation they stopped a train but three-four wagons breaking loose, went ahead. It was a common occurrence on all small stations. All of them were taken out of the train and horses were loaded by disloading them on the pretext that a family was coming to that area.²⁷

As the war came to an end in 1945, the sufferings of these Russian Germans had hardly declined. A lady-teacher reports:

26. Ibid., p.47.

27. Hans Ulrich Engel, op.cit. n.19,p.48

" Ganz besonders ist.....als Lehrer arbeiten.

"Translation Especially I would like to talk about the year 1947 when the war was already over. I myself had worked during the war as a fulltime German-teacher. I had to leave the school in 1947. I went to Nowosibirsk and all Germans were prohibited to work any more as teachers."²⁸

Most of the churches were closed down during war-time. After sometime i.e. during 1960's the life of these Russian Germans began to normalise, as they had earned more and so there was less problem of hunger. One could have a cow and a pig. Finally, the life was bearable and one could protect oneself still some more years later these Germans could go to the former FRG to meet their relatives.

Do you think that these oppressed Russian Germans who underwent such hardships during deportation, hated the people responsible for their pathetic conditions ?

A Russian German lady answered this question showing objectivity. She did not blame the Russians for their suffering. She never hated Russians but hated Communism only. She further stated that there were good and bad people in every country whether it is Russian, Germany, Ukraine or any other country. Thus, she did not hold Russians responsible for the sufferings of the during deportation.

The deportation policy of Stalin was a reflection of his revenge on Hitler's aggression. No doubt the Russian Germans

had to undergo severe conditions. They had to work under inhuman conditions in distant places like Siberia, Urals and Kazakhstan where there was hardly any material civilization around. Many of them got separated from their families and even lost their lives. But when the sufferers were asked for their views, it was seen that this action of Stalin was perceived as a normal human act of revenge.

CHAPTER III

STATUS OF ETHNIC GERMANS IN KAZAKHSTAN

Aftermath of the World War was very bad for the Ethnic Germans. Most of the several million members of this ethnic group in the former Soviet Union were poorly treated. They were deported under terrible conditions in 1941. The men were segregated from their families and sent to the Gulag as soldiers of a working army. Only a few of them could return to their relatives. Even after the treason verdict against the Germans in the former Soviet Union had been dropped during the Khrushchev period, They were still subject to many restrictions, for example, the ban on the return to their native territories. This fostered their desire for a life in freedom in Germany as the country from which their forefathers had come a long time ago. After the disintegration of the former USSR the ethnic Germans in Russia are confronted with further challenges. Many of them in the meantime settled down in Kazakhstan. Irrespective of the efforts by many state leadership, for example, specifically, those by the Kazakh president Nazarbaev, which seek to establish good relations among the country's nationalities, there are some xenophobic tendencies which are growing in Central Asia. Although these are primarily directed against Russians, even other Europeans and thus the Germans too suffer on account of this psychosis. The former Federal Republic of Germany always declared that it was willing to integrate Germans from other countries into its territory but is at the

same time interested in keeping the exodus of Germans from the former Soviet Union as limited as possible. For this reason, the German government has offered assistance to enable the Russian Germans to stay in their settlement areas.

The German government agreed to an obligation for the welfare of the ethnic Germans in the then USSR under Aden-aur, the architect of Economic Miracle in Germany, at the request especially of the welfare and cultural associations for Germans born in the eastern area of the former Reich and of expellee associations. The assistance from Bonn was necessarily limited to insistence on possibilities to travel out of the country as long as ideological demands of the former Soviet leadership and their claim that it was a purely internal matter made any support by relatives of the German ethnic group in the former USSR impossible. A further hinderance to an improvement of the situation of the ethnic Germans in the former Soviet Union was that this group had no mandatories or elected representatives of their own before March 1989. The German Government thus lacked a contact.

With Nazi Germany's invasion of the former USSR in 1941 a settlement of the German ethnic group in Russia which had lasted almost two centuries came to an end. It changed completely in structural and regional terms. The chief German settlement area, as opposed to the per-war period, is no longer in the west of the former USSR but in western Siberia and northern

Kazakhstan. The 1989 census shows that more citizens of German origin in all 957,518 - lived in Kazakhstan than in Russia including Siberia numbering 841,295.¹

After the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, the ethnic German question has advanced from a bilateral affair to a matter discussed between several parties, since it now affects a number of successor states. In addition to this, three German rally movements have emerged since 1989. Their aims are the restoration of the Volga Republic which existed until 1941 and the creation of comparable autonomous areas.

Not all Germans apparently had the courage to state their nationality to the former Soviet authorities which explains their number remaining the same in 1989 census. No one knows exactly, therefore, how many people really could take advantage of their right to travel to Germany. In the case of Russia, the magnitude of the problem of economic loss of all Germans would hardly be consequent to migration of ethnic Germans was not as large as in the case of Kazakhstan with a total population of just under 17 million inhabitants as estimated by 1991 census. Almost all the ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan are reported to be wanting to leave their homes to either settle down on Russian, Ukrainian or German territory.

1. Bulletin des Press-und Informationsamtes Bundesregierung
(Bonn) 1992, P.957.

RETROSPECT: GERMAN -- SETTLEMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN

The ethnic Germans from Russia moved to Kazakhstan in three stages. After they already heeded the call of Express Catherine II to come to Russia in the mid- 18th century, they first settled down in Kazakhstan in 1871. Over 110 German settlements had been established in the northwestern territories of Kazakhstan at the beginning of the 20th century.² The German colonies were good in the fields of agriculture and crafts. Moreover, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 not only had far-reaching implications for the Kazakh and Russian population, but also for the descendants of German emigrants. The Bolsheviks deprived the big landowners and livestock traders of their livelihood.

It affected the most developed regions, including the German settlements. Many ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan were forced to return to the Volga or the Ukraine because of Social unrest and political uncertainty. The ratio was so that one in four Germans left his/her Kazakh home. During the hard years between 1921 and 1930, the compulsory collectivization in this region also deprived the Germans of the possibility of independent initiative in the agricultural sector. Finally, all smallholder farms were dissolved. The previous farmers were asked to join a large kolkhoz or a commune. In 1931/32, the first trains with expropriated large landowners and smallholders from the Volga region arrived in Kazakhstan. This influx of de-kulakized German farmers from the Black Sea and Volga regions had disastrous effects on the country's already catastrophic

2. Ibid, p.959.

supply situation. The people who were expelled from their homes in the people who were expelled from their homes in the west were settled in the barren steppes of central and southern Kazakhstan.

However, the worst blow for the Russian Germans were the deportations after the German invasion of the former USSR. The Volga Germans were accused of spying, collaborating with the German aggressor, and preparing acts of sabotage in the Deportation Decree of 28 August 1941. The first trains with deportees already arrived in Kazakhstan at the beginning of September 1941. After arriving in Kazakhstan these ethnic Germans were placed under special supervision. They were not at all allowed to leave their allocated special settlements and had to report to the commander responsible once a month. This provision affected 394,000 members of the German ethnic group in Kazakhstan and a total of 949, 829 in the whole of the former Soviet Union.³ The use of the German language was strictly forbidden. There were no opportunities of attending school, and there was persecution for religious activities and the churches were closed down.

After German - Soviet negotiations on the repatriation of German civilians and prisoners of war began in the autumn of 1955, the ethnic Germans in Russia were exempted from the special supervision through a decree of the Supreme Soviet of the former Soviet Union dated 13 December 1955.⁴ Nevertheless they could not return to their former homes and assert claims to

3. Markus Wolf, "No future for the Ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan", Aussenpolitik (Hamburg), vol.44,no.2(1993), P.155.

4. Ibid., P. 156.

lost property as they were prohibited to do all that . After the end of the previous restrictions a pronounced internal migration started. After the war, only a few members of the ethnic group made an effort, despite the existing administrative obstacles, to leave the settlement areas to which they had been deported, i.e.the Urals and Siberia to live in the less inhospitable regions with better soil and much better job prospects. After the annulment of the 1941 special regime many German resettlers moved to southern and eastern Kazakhstan.

It was not possible for the Germans until the middle of the 1960's to give a public call for a restoration of their former autonomy. Their wish was rejected by the former Soviet central government. However, during this period, these ethnic Germans experienced a modest cultural upswing. The following was achieved in Kazakhstan:

- (i) the introduction of lessons in the German language and the recognition of German as a subject to be taught in schools;
- (ii) the establishment of a department for the instruction of mother-tongue teachers;
- (iii) the setting up of the German-language daily newspaper Freundschaft (since 1991 : Deutsche Allgemeine) in Zelinograd with a circulation of initially 5,000 and finally 20,000 copies, and
- (vi) improvements in many social fields thanks to a simultaneous economic upswing.⁵

There were many other developments as well. For example, the previously banned activities of the religious community in

Kazakhstan, southern Siberia and in the Altai region was also able to develop modestly. Irrespective of all the progress, the social status and level of education of the Germans remained at a low level. In 1970, only 0.9 per cent of all ethnic Germans had a degree.⁶ After many years of oppression, brutal deportation, compulsory collectivisation and a constant ban on the German language, this was hardly surprising. It was a fact that the ethnic Germans in the former USSR, especially in rural areas were regarded as former prisoners of war who stayed behind made it even more complicated for them to fight for their rights as an organised ethnic group.

GRADUAL SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

One could see a gradual change in the former Soviet attitude towards the ethnic Germans living in their country. They were regarded as a vital economic factor. This was also applicable in Kazakhstan. The central committees of the Communist party in both the former Soviet Union as a whole and in particular in Kazakhstan claimed to be keen on an improvement of the ideological mass activities among the Russian Germans population in the republic. This had implications for the emancipatory efforts of the ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan. Committed personalities among them tried to induce the Kazakh government to resolve existing problems. Under CPSU General Secretary Andropov, the first official recognition of the economic achievements of the Russian Germans was issued at the Union level. In 1983 on the 66th anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution,

6. Ibid.

Andropov described the Germans living in the country as an economic factor of the socialist system when acknowledging their contribution towards the reconstruction of the economy after the war and the development of the virgin land in Kazakhstan.⁷

This recognition, however, came too late. At that time, the emigration of Germans to the former Federal Republic of Germany was rapidly rising. In the years 1983-86, more and more members of the older generation, whose memory of their Volga-German homes, the pre-war period in the caucasus or in the Ukraine, was still very much alive submitted applications to the local authorities for exit permits, of course without receiving a reply. The former emigration ban had already been lifted under Brezhnev. The Russian Germans in Kazakhstan were first able to partially benefit from the exit permits in 1986. During the first years, 1030 Germans were allowed to leave the country, and 13,000 more followed due to petitions.⁸ The exodus occasionally triggered negative reactions in the country. Some regional party Secretaries declared that the Germans had been fed and educated by their Soviet homeland. After having afforded them refuge and liberated them from their National-Socialist past they had recovered and were now leaving the country. Many of the instructions intended for the Interior Ministry organs responsible for exit permits were designed to stem the increasingly rising flow of German emigrants from the former Soviet Union after 1987. The Kazakh branch of the ethnic

7. Süddeutsche Zeitung, 11 January 1984, p.10.

8. Bulletin des Press- und Informations amtes der Bundesregierung (Bonn) August 1989, pp:712 ff.

German union association Wiedergeburt⁹ (Rebirth) made repeated efforts since it was founded in March 1989 to convince the former Soviet government of the requirement for radical measures to increase the level of education of the German section of the population. There were demands, for the foundation of schools with extended mother-tongue German lessons, the creation of more departments in higher education institutions to study the literature and history of the Russian Germans, better condition for the preservation of German identity, programmes with German-language radio and television programmes, and the setting up of meeting places and clubs as measures to counteract the pressure of emigration. There was even a call for national districts with an ethnic German majority inside Kazakhstan.

ETHNIC GERMANS IN INDEPENDENT KAZAKHSTAN

The origin of the Germans in Kazakhstan can be traced to the descendants of the German emigrants from Hesse, Bavaria, the Palatinate and the Rhineland as the biggest ethnic groups in the Kazakh multi-national state. Since the 1926 census, for the first times the Kazakhs again formed the largest share of the population (39.7 per cent) which is ahead of the Russians (37 per cent), the Germans (5.7 per cent), and the Ulcrainians (5.4 per cent).¹⁰

A section for International Relations was set up in February 1988 inside the propaganda and Mass political Education

9. Ibid.

10. Markus Wolf, op.cit., P. 159.

Activities Department of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Kazakhstan and entrusted with the task of assessing the state of cultural life and further education or advanced training for the minorities on the territory of Kazakhstan and of introducing measures to preserve the various ethnic identities through the provision of the funds required.¹¹ This institution, however, only concentrated on statistical activities and failed to carry out any practical measures. In addition, the staff in this section dissociated itself from the activities of the numerous national associations, commissions and committees. The Section was dissolved after two years. The interest of the Kazakh state and party leadership in the problems of the ethnic minorities had faded away. The committees for the preservation of the respective national cultural heritage set up by the German, Czech, Korean, Uigurian, Jewish, Greek and a further four ethnic groups were abandoned to their fate. The state associations were increasingly restrictive towards the ethnic Germans. They deprived the German ethnic group as opposed to the numerous pressure groups of the Kazakhs of the hitherto provided financial support. This affected the German radio in Alma-Ata, the German language daily newspaper, German population in Alma-Ata, and the German, language television service of the Kazakh television station with its weekly magazine programme 'Guten-Abend!'.¹²

The editors of the German-language newspaper Freundschaft¹³ took the cause of the Germans into their own hands.

11. Ibid.

12. Markus, Wolf, op.cit., 159.

13. Ibid.

They directly addressed the failures of the Communist Party's policy towards the German minority and demanded greater media diversity in the fields of the press, radio and television. The result was that the authorities agreed to the introduction of a German-language television programme and to even consider the prospect of financing it. In March 1989, it was launched with a 40-minute broadcast per week in radio and television. As no funds were given for the project in the last five-year plan, the Russia Germans in Kazakhstan agreed to pay part of the annual budget.

The reaction to the magazine programme Guten Abend, was quite good as it influenced a large audience by the extensive mail from listeners. This mail was sent to the editorial office from all parts of Kazakhstan, the Altai region, northern Uzbekistan and many areas in Russia as far as Orenburg. The surveys were also conducted in this field and they showed that German-language programmes reached quite a large audience. Its initiators wanted to improve the quality of the German-language programmes and for this they established contact with representatives of West German channels. After initial rounds of talk in October 1989, the West-deutscher Rundfunk (WDR) gifted a complete set of studio equipment in Alma-Ata. The most important topics of the magazine programme Guten Abend in 1990 were the difficulties the German minority in Kazakhstan was undergoing and the integration problems of ethnic German immigrants living in Germany.¹⁴

14. Bulletin des press-und Informationsamts der Bundesregierung, November 1989, p 751.

It was already assumed at that time that one in three ethnic Germans wanted to leave Kazakhstan as soon as possible. In spite of this the Kazakh government did very little to make life easier for the ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan. The leadership in Alma-Ata tended to move in the other direction. The number of teachers of the mother tongue and of students for the German Department of the corresponding university in Kokchetav was reduced. German was dropped as a subject in the old German communities of Romanovka, Rozhdestveka, Krasnoiarika, Iermentau and Pavlovka in the region of Zelinograd and in the Thaelmann, Rozovka and Uспенka settlements in the region of Pavlodar.¹⁵ The reason often given was that Kazakh was to become the official language in Kazakhstan. Even the aid for national education was often too low to maintain the standard of German lessons at school and at university at their previous level, especially since more money was invested in educational facilities for Kazakh children and youth. The Kazakhisation often directly took place at the expense of the German minority. Wherever a German school class with German lessons for ethnic Germans or a German group in a Kindergarten was closed, they were soon replaced by corresponding Kazakh institutions. Through the foundation of German schools and higher education institutions in areas with a dense German population, through the promotion of mother-tongue lessons in Kindergarten and, last but not least through the symbolic support of German interests, the situation was somewhat improved.

15. Markus, Wolf, op. cit., p.160.

There are only two kindergarten groups and two project classes with extended German lessons for the 14,000 ethnic Germans living in the Kazakh capital. The similar proportions exist in rural areas.

When Kazakhstan was still a republic of the former Soviet union, President Nursultan Nazarbaev openly rejected efforts by the Germans in the country to gain political autonomy. This had an influence on the conditions in Kazakh television. The studio equipment the Westdeutsches Radio, WDR presented to the programme Guten Abend! as a gift was more and more frequently requisitioned for non-German programmes.¹⁶ This led to considerable conflicts and more recently, also to the reduction of grant for the German-language programme. The management of the Kazakh television exerted a growing influence on programming. It wanted fewer reports from Germany and more on the ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan. The reason being if the viewers only saw pictures from Germany on television they would find it difficult surmount the natural desire to leave the country. The purpose of the programme was to prevent this. Although the programme's editors concentrated on the problems emigrants have with integration in the former Federal Republic of Germany, this was not recognised as an argument explaining the main issue. Every time something was shown on Germany and this was viewed as advertising for emigration and the programme was either dropped or replaced by something else. Pressure was also put on German editors by delaying their already authorised official visits at the last moment or anytime.

16. Markus, Wolf, op.cit., p. 159.

There were also restrictions on the ethnic Germans at the economic level. Their relatives hardly had trouble when it came to being promoted to the level of a director of some insignificant kolkhoz or sevkhos. However, they hardly stood an opportunity of moving to higher posts. Kazakhs were frequently preferred for promotions to the top level of a region or district, but not members of the ethnic Germans. In spite of large-scale migration of these Germans from Kazakhstan, the conditions there have hardly changed for the better. Till today, the connections between former socialist or Soviet cadres are almost always decisive. The democratic opposition movements have no financial resources and do not represent a power factor to be taken seriously. The Germans have to lower their sights, when it comes to fostering their culture, without receiving any kind of compensation. The fact that one in five of the ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan registered Russian as his mother tongue in the census was cited by the Kazakh government as an argument against the autonomy demand.¹⁷

One can understand the motive behind of discrimination the authorities towards the ethnic Germans. The leadership in Alma-Ata is scared of the threat to the territorial integrity of the multinational Kazakh state if it concedes territorial-ethnic striving for autonomy. This concern can be noticed in many of the interviews given by President Nazarbaev. He has repeatedly emphasised that national districts on Kazakh area

17. Ibid, p. 159.

are not up for discussion. Kazakhstan must remain integrated as a whole. It was for the Germans themselves to ensure the preservation of their identity in the country. This view is the negation of the history of the recently attained Kazakh independence. It does not improve the condition of Russian Germans. If compared with the Soviet period, ethnic Germans are expected to accept a considerable loss of status, to an extent unknown in the slav successor states, the Ukraine and Russia. It is hardly astonishing that 225,000 ethnic Germans from Kazakhstan filed emigration applications in Germany in 1991 alone. These ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan are no longer in favour of remaining in the country as an acceptable alternative to emigration. In 1992, 114,382 Germans from Kazakhstan resettled in the Federal Republic of Germany with no more than 194,596 Germans the successor states of the Soviet Union including Georgia but excluding the Baltic states as a whole.¹⁸

No more than 200,000 ethnic Germans emigrants from the former Soviet Union were to be taken in by the Federal Republic of Germany in any one year according to the War-Induced losses Act of 21 December 1992. In this tendency continues, this would mean that the question of these Russian Germans in Kazakhstan will have been resolved through emigration in seven years.¹⁹ During the Bundestag hearing on the situation of German minorities in Eastern Europe in December 1992, the representatives of the biggest rally movements, Heinrich Groth and Hugo Wormsbecher,

18. Markus, Wolf, op.cit., p.160.

19. Ibid.

described the prospect of a restoration of the Volga Republic as an illusion. In the meantime, Groth's Wiedergeburt has moved away from its earlier "Volga Republic or Mass Exodus" stance. The reason given was that the War-Induced losses Act adopted by the Bundestag in December (which keeps open the option of resettlement to Germany) had been received with great satisfaction by the ethnic Germans in Russia.²⁰

In 1993, for the relief measures for ethnic Germans in the former USSR and in the rest of Eastern Europe, the German government provided DM 250 million. Now that a financing of the Volga Republic within the frame-work of the new Ethnic Germans in Russia " Fund seems guaranteed, the Russian President has formally decreed its restoration. though it is still a long way to its ultimate establishment.²¹ This move was preceded by agreements in the form of a bilateral German-Kazakh declaration on 22 September 1992 on the protection on minorities and ethnic groups and, above all, on economic and security problems. In the same way, both sides attach particular importance to the development of mutually beneficial economic cooperation. Germany declared that it was willing to support Kazakhstan in the organisation of its market economy system and to back the process of reform during the transition to the market economy.²² This was a clear reflection of the Kazakh interest in German aid and German investments.

20. Markus Wolf, n.3, p.160.

21. Suddeutsche Zeitung, 21. January 1993.

22. Bulletin. des press-und Informationsamtes Bundesregierung, 1992, pp.975 ff.

For the German sides efforts focussed on legally safeguarding the status of the Ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan. An important passage in the declaration runs as follows.

Both sides also acknowledge the contribution of the German population towards the development of today's Republic of Kazakhstan and reaffirm in accordance with their legal system their common interest in preserving the livelihood and ensuring the possibilities of development of the Kazakh citizens of German origin, as for every citizen of Kazakhstan irrespective of their right to emigrate for themselves and their children in their homeland Kazakhstan. Germany and Kazakhstan agree that the Kazakh citizens of German origin and the German citizens of Kazakh origin in the Federal Republic of Germany should be able to foster their language culture and national traditions and freely practice their religion in accordance with their free decision.²³

The 'Joint Declaration' took into account almost all international human rights norms. However, the Copenhagen CSCE Human Rights Convention was not included, which incorporates the collective rights of the ethnic minorities into protection. Although there is a general reference to the rights of national minorities, the ethnic Germans from Kazakhstan are not expressly mentioned. It is to be feared, therefore, that the declaration is no more than a proclamation of good intentions and not the granting of concrete rights. Nevertheless, this document is

23. Bulletin des Press-und Informations-amtes der Bundesregierung
30 september 1992, pp. 975 ff.

an important starting-point for the future varied cooperation between the two states.²⁴ there are already positive approaches. The advancement of a private economy in Kazakhstan has enabled the creation of several business associations and companies run by Germans. These enterprises have already direct contacts with western firms. It is clear that ethnic Germans who are involved in activities here will hardly have plans to emigrate. Because of the business connections of their firm to western countries they have an almost unlimited freedom to travel. As the statistics show, there are roughly 10,000 persons in this group. These are, mainly directors of agricultural and industrial enterprises approximately 10 percent of all plant directors, leading specialists in companies, civil service officials, and well-to-do farmers and workers.²⁵

The majority of the ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan, however, are facing other problems. The very basis of their existence is at stake. Market economy structures have yet to be created in Kazakhstan and are not yet well developed. Even a small aid here can help a great deal towards preventing a mass exodus which would not be the best solution for anyone. As in Russia and the Ukraine, Germany could also support firms in Kazakhstan which provide existential and development chances for ethnic Germans. Such help would be important, even though a territorial autonomy for the German ethnic group is not under discussion because of the country's special situation. The problems which

24. "Das Dokument vom Kopenhagener KSZE- Treffen ueber die menschliche Dimension vom 29.6.1990", in Europa Archiv, 15/1990, pp. 380-394.

25. Neues Leben, 11 November 1992, p.2.

the ethnic Germans are facing in Kazakhstan are specifically Kazakh problems and must be resolved in a different way than the German Question in Russia. It is doubtful if the migration of ethnic Germans from Kazakhstan, Russia or Ukraine would help them really to improve their status as the question of achieving territorial autonomy in these republics is still far from resolved.

CHAPTER IV

FROM PERESTROIKA TO YELTSIN

The changes that took place in the former USSR after Gorbachev's accession to power had a profound effect on the emigration of Jews and Germans from the former Soviet Union. The fundamental transformation of the political landscape in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 is an astounding historical phenomenon which triggered the unification of Germany in 1990 and the disintegration of the former Soviet Union in 1991.

Table I shows the annual number of emigrants by nationality since 1985.

Table - I

Year	Jews	%	Germans	%	Armenians	%	Total
1985	1,140	50.5	870	38.5	248	11.0	2,258
1986	914	43.7	931	44.5	247	11.8	2,092
1987	8,143	31.4	14,488	55.9	3,296	12.7	25,927
1988	19,365	24.9	47,572	61.1	10,864	14.0	77,801
1989	9,579	33.1	18,990	65.6	374	1.3	28,943
Total	39,141	28.6	82,851	60.5	15,029	10.9	137,021

Source : Soviet Jewish Affairs, Vol.19, no. 2, 1989, p. 17.

The above table shows that Soviet emigration has undergone three important changes since 1985. The first change is a dramatic increase in the number of emigrants permitted to leave after a period of restricted movement prior to 1987. The second is a reversal of the proportions of Jews and Germans who comprised the emigrant quotas until now. The third is a change in the direction of Jewish emigration or, more precisely, the acceleration of a trend already underway by 1985.

During the first two years since Gorbachev came to power German emigration continued the decline that began in the early 1980s. In 1986 the total number of emigrants barely exceeded 2,000 compared to the tens of thousands of emigrants annually during the preceding decade. In 1987 this decline was suddenly reversed. In that year the number of emigrants leaped more than tenfold to nearly 26,000 persons, and in 1988 a record number of 77,801 emigrants left the former USSR, exceeding the previous peak year of 1979, when 67,068 persons were permitted to emigrate.¹

Since 1948 Jewish emigrants have exceeded Germans by an average ratio of two-to-one. Jews accounted for approximately 60% of all Soviet emigrants until 1986, Germans 30%. In 1986 this ratio began to change. In that year an almost equal number of Jews and Germans left the former Soviet Union and, in 1988, Jews comprised less than one-fourth of all emigrants while Germans accounted for more than two-thirds of the total. Not only did Germans outnumber Jews, but the level of German emigration in 1988 exceeded 47,500 persons, higher than any previous year. Since 1985 the emigrated Russian Germans continued to resettle mainly in former West Germany.²

German motives for leaving changed after 1985, though most of them continued to resettle in the former Federal Republic of Germany as before. Prior to 1985, German emigrants had

1. Sidney Heitman, "Soviet Emigration under Gorbachev", Soviet Jewish Affairs (London), Vol.19,no.2, Summer 1989, p. 18.

2. Ibid, p. 20.

been either persons with relatives in the West from whom they had been separated during and after World War II or individuals with no families in West Germany, such as the Volga Germans who were permitted to emigrate nonetheless during the 1970 s under Detente period. When emigration revived again in 1987 after several years of restricted movement during the early 1980s. Germans who were permitted to leave were mainly individuals seeking to complete the earlier process of emigration. That means they consisted of elderly parents, children, and young men with military commitments to fulfil who had remained behind when their families had emigrated earlier without them. Around half a million Germans had already emigrated by 1989.

SOVIET EMIGRATION POLICY AFTER 1985

Similar to emigrants' motives for leaving, Soviet emigration policy too showed continuity and change since 1985. During his first two years in power, Gorbachev continued the restrictive policies he inherited and for which he was in large measure responsible as a power behind the scenes during the short terms of Andropov and chernenko. These measures included limits on emigration by Germans and Jews. From 1987 onwards, however, Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika gained momentum and he pursued good relations with the west. These policies in turn eased requirements for emigration and resulted in an increase in the number of emigrant

This changed policy was three-pronged approach to emigration characterized by contradictions and inconsistencies. One step

was the liberalization of emigration needs. Many Germans who did not meet the strict legal criteria for emigration were allowed to leave. Emigration process was simplified and streamlined and many of them were allowed to depart for the West. At the same time many individuals were arbitrarily refused permission to leave and often without being given a reason. Poor relatives who were unable to obtain a written agreement to their emigration from family members who remained behind were not allowed to leave, making them virtual prisoners. While following these two contradictory policies, the former Soviet authorities resorted to a third step, that of seeking to discoverge emigration by eliminating the causes of Germans and Jewish disaffection. Concessions to the Germans included an end to anti-German propaganda i.e. the easing of restrictions on religious observances, and the expansion of German language instruction in schools, publications, and radio and television programming. It also included the easing of travel conditions for Germans to visit relatives in the former Federal Republic of Germany and consideration of the restoration of an autonomous German political administrative unit similar to one that existed before World War II.

Factors external to the former USSR have invariably played an important role in the evolution of the third Emigration³. Chief among them are the policies and actions of the United States, West Germany vis a vis the former Soviet Union. Since the inception of the exodus in 1948 these two states have consistently

3. Sidney Heitman, "The Third Soviet Emigration", Soviet Jewish Affairs, vol. 18, no. 2, summer 1988, p. 17.

pressed for maximum levels of emigration for jews and Germans by various means, including diplomatic pressure & the granting of favours and concessions to the former USSR.

The conceivable effect of the law on German emigration was difficult to assess. Until 1988 the German exodus was fuelled by several factors like lingering resentment over their brutal treatment during and after World War II and a fear that repression could return, dissatisfaction with available opportunities to preserve German cultural, religious, and linguistic traditions; and the lure of a better life in the FRG. Moreover, West Germany of that time maintained an open door to all ethnic German immigrants from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Permission to leave was granted by the former Soviet authorities mainly to citizens who could prove a close relationship to family members in former West Germany whom they want to join and this was a major control on numbers of emigrants. Under the new law, all who wished to leave and could provide evidence of acceptance in the country of destination were able to do so at will.⁴

In West Germany there was a reaction against the unrestricted immigration of refugees from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. A rising xenophobia, growing economic problems and unemployment, and environmental and security concerns resulted in local electoral reverses for the government of chancellor

4. Sidney Heitman, "A Soviet Draft Law on Emigration", Soviet Jewish Affairs, vol. 19, no. 3, Summer 1989, p. 33.

Helmut Kohl. To gether support in the coming federal elections Kohl shifted policies, including reversal of previous West Germany's traditional hospitality to refugees. If he had retained the old, policy of hospitability immigrants almost all Russian Germans would have chosen to resettle mainly in West Germany. During the first eight months of 1989, 58,863 Russian Germans migrated to west Germany.⁵

From the beginning Gorbachev's policies in Central and Eastern Europe were contradictory. On one hand he gave communist countries greater independence, but on the other hand, he prevailed on them to adopt his reforms. Relations with Eastern Europe were subordinated to cooperation with the West and were influenced by vision of the future of human civilization.

During his first vist to the former FRG between 12th and 15th June 1989, Gorbachev finally declared that new chapter would be opened in Soviet-West German relations. In a joint declaration with chancellor Kohl he again professed his support for free elections and the right of self-determination for all peoples.

5. Ibid, p. 35.

Table 2 shows the phase of German-emigration between 1970-1991.

Table 2 Emigration of Principal ethnic groups

Year	Jews	Germans	Armenians	Total
1970	1046	342	--	1,388
1971	14,300	1,145	--	15,445
1972	31,478	3,420	170	35,068
1973	34,922	4,635	421	39,534
1974	20,181	6,683	622	27,526
1975	13,139	6,127	1,036	20,302
1976	14,138	9,846	4,050	28,034
1977	17,159	9,416	3,165	29,740
1978	30,594	8,597	2,557	41,748
1979	51,547	7,368	8,153	67,068
1980	21,471	7,096	13,909	42,476
1981	9,860	8,153	4,337	22,350
1982	2,700	4,461	769	7,930
1983	1,320	3,127	439	4,886
1984	903	1,960	200	3,063
1985	1,140	980	248	2,368
1986	-	753	-	-
1987	8,000	14,488	-	-
1988	19,000	47,572	11,000	-
1989	71,000	98,134	20,000	-
1990	200,000	145,000	50,60,000	-
1991	-	147,320	-	-

Source: Data taken from Ethnic and Racial Studies, vol. 16,no.3, 1993, p. 484.

The free emigration was not approved until May 1991, and implementation was postponed until 1 January 1993. Since then, the body approving the law, the Supreme Soviet of the former USSR has disappeared. It left the present legal status unclear. The numbers emigrating from the territory of the former Soviet Union have been steadily rising. These growing numbers have continued to be dominated by Germans and Jews, the two leading ethnic groups. Absolute numbers were rather higher, except in the 1970s when there was no stress from Germany. By 1985 less than half as many Germans as Jews had emigrated over the postwar period. Since 1985 the outmigration of Germans had soared, reaching 147,000 in 1991.⁶

GERMAN POLICY

Germany has remained central to Soviet Union's relations with the West and its experience is fundamental to an understanding of the nature of current migrations and their likely development. Thus, it has to be said that data on inflows, even for Germany are still grossly inadequate. In the last couple of years major changes have occurred in German policy towards immigrants, ethnic Germans and other. New agreements have been forged with the countries to the east for access to the German labour market, which encompass new guest-worker agreements, regulations on frontier workers and quota increases for contract work. These can be seen as ways of canalizing and thus controlling pressure for immigrations including joint responsibility

6. F.W. Carter and J. salt, "International migration between East and West in Europe", Ethnic and Racial Studies (London), vol. 16, no.3, July 1993, p.487.

between the German and Eastern European government. They are also intended to provide training for labour immigrants from the East to give them qualifications upon their return home.

German policy towards these emigrants or Aussiedler changed dramatically during 1990. Beginning in the 1970s, with a series of bilateral treaties, policy was to gain freedom of exit for ethnic Germans in the Warsaw pact countries. From the late 1970s onwards these treaties had a substantial impact on inflows of ethnic Germans. From mid- 1990 policy towards ethnic Germans was reoriented. Priority was given to improve the economic, social and political situation of ethnic German minorities in their former Soviet Union and other East European home countries. This process was enforced by changes in administrative methods and financial regulations that made the move to Germany more difficult.

The changed attitude towards ethnic Germans was followed from the late 1980s, and especially since 1990, by a new and more flexible guest-worker policy. The German government entered into contracts with Russia and other East European countries to open up three channels by which East Europeans and Russians might gain temporary rotational access to the German labour market. During 1991 about 200,000 foreign workers were benefitted. About 120,000 entered as seasonal workers. A further 80,000 entered under the work-contracts had been signed under this scheme.⁷

7. Bulletin des Press-und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung (Bonn), Sept 1992, pp 974 ff.

EMIGRATION - POTENTIAL FROM THE FORMER USSR

The break up of the former USSR into independent republics was fully recognised in legal form at the end of 1991. In the preceding year or so, the rapid change of once-rigid political stabilities and the measurable increase in actual out-migration gave rise to considerable and persistent. Speculation in western countries about the likelihood of very large-scale future out-migration from the former Soviet Union and its successor states.

By early 1991 some official former Soviet sources estimated the possibilities of upto 5-700,000 emigrants over the next two or three years i.e. till now. One might expect the outflows of Germans to remain high. The German population has expressed a desire to leave, roughly 500,000. It is possible that fewer Russian Germans would wish to go, now to their former Autonomous Volga Republic, disabanded by Stalin in World War II. This region has to be reestablished. Germany is ready to give financial help to do so, which is cheaper than trying to absorb huge numbers of returning Russian Germans. However, only 20,000 Germans now live in the area of the former Volga Republic and there is the strongest opposition from the Russians who have replaced the exiles over the last half century.⁸

RUSSIAN- GERMAN RELATIONS.

After the August Coup, Russian wavering on Volga Germans issue has become a keypoint of Russian Foreign policy. According to E.A. Shevardnadze, Russia's relations with Germany are

8. Ibid, p.980.

a central and special issue of its history. In 1980s relations between the former USSR and the FRG began to play a decisive role in East-West relations on the European continent. Without the constructive talk between the two countries, no progress would have been made at the Stockholm Conference on Security and Disarmament. There would have been no Treaty on Medium-Short Range Missiles and no treaty on Conventional Armed forces in Europe and the unification of Germany would not have occurred. Soviet-German relations seemed to reach their peak in late 1990 and early 1991. The history of contacts between the former USSR and the Federal Republic had undoubtedly never had such intensity, scope and Goodwill. It seemed that no force could disrupt the forward development of bilateral cooperation. But then the coup struck. The August coup and its defeat had far-reaching consequences for former Soviet-German relations.

The state of Russian-German relations has also been affected adversely by the Russian leadership's vacillation in solving the problem of reestablishing an autonomous German entity in the Volga region, some thing that Ukrainian President Kravchuk was quick to exploit by inviting hundreds of thousands of Russian Germans to settle in the Crimea and southern Ukraine in the hope of intercepting some of the German money that the Federal Republic's government has appropriated to resolve the German Question in the former USSR. In addition, as of February 15, Ukrainian authorities lifted all formalities on travel by FRG Citizens to Ukraine. In turn, this hastened the issue of the

Russian President's decree on reestablishing German settlements in Saratov and Volgograd Provinces as a move to improve the situation in Russian-German relations.⁹

Table 3 and 4 depict the number of Urban & Rural Ethnic Germans in Ukraine in 1926.

Table 3 Urban and Rural Population of the Ukrainian SSR on 17 Dec. 1926

<u>No. of Nationality</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Rural</u>
Ukrainians	23,218,860	2,536,499	20,682,361
Russians	2,677,166	1,343,689	1,333,477
Jews	1,574,391	1,218,615	355,766
Poles	476,435	98,747	377,688
Germans	393,924	34,253	359,671
Others	678,971	141,730	537,231
All Groups	29,019,747	5,373,533	23,646,194

Source : Soviet Studies, vol.41, no.4, October 1989, p. 578

9. George Liber, "Urban growth and ethnic changes in the Ukrainian SSR, 1923-1933," Soviet Studies (Glasgow), vol.41, no.4, October 1989, p.574.

Table 4 Literacy & Native Language literacy in Ukrainian SSR

Nationality	Total Population	Literatur Population	Native-lang- uage Literates
Ukrainians	23,218,860	9,628,040	6,468,799
Russians	2,677,166	1,486,452	1,419,444
Jews	1,574,391	1,102,227	668,985
Poles	476,435	228,798	141,954
Germans	393,924	260,901	245,885

Source: Ibid., p. 583

Even A. Kazyrev's and A. Shokhin's visit to Germany in January 1992 and Malleman's one-day trip to Moscow in February 1992 are no more than modest attempts simply to keep the boat of Russian - German Cooperation afloat.

It is not hard to expect that the United Germany will be extremely interested in having a permanent partner with an extraordinarily vast market and a steady need for foreign investment. Meanwhile, the support that Germany is providing to the Russians and all citizens of the former USSR is quite substantial German aid to the former Soviet Union, and its successors is estimated at 75 billion marks, and that does not include shipments of free humanitarian aid worth several million marks in the winter of 1990-91 and 1991-92

The Jan. 3, 1992 statement of the Saratov Province Council of the Russia Public Political Organisation as published in Izvestia said.

10. Current Digest of Post Soviet Press (Ohio), Vol. 44, no. 2, February (1992), p. 30.

Political adventurers have set an unrealistic objective for the German people. Their past in Russia and the USSR confers no rights to a national state entity. Your forefathers were immigrants. They came to Russia in order to survive. The Russian people are friendly and forbearing. But these national Russian characteristics can not be shamelessly exploited. Russians will be able to stand up for themselves. Your leaders have undertaken an unscrupulous game. They are not averse to selling a piece of Russianland for German marks. We recognize and support your right. We respect Soviet Germans and are aware of the tragedy of their historical fact.¹¹

The newly adopted law on the rehabilitation of peoples subjected to repression in the former USSR during 1941-44 directly applies to the Germans who officially number at least 3 million and at least 4 million when family members are included.¹²

Actually, Catherine the Great issued decrees inviting Germans from Germany, Switzerland and France to come to Russia and settle in Ukraine, the central regions of the country and the lands on the left bank of the Volga, which were uninhabited at the time. The Germans turned them into fields, meadows and orchards. Therefore, it is wrong to say that they come to survive, but to bring life to unproductive virgin land.

None has told the people in Saratov and Volgograd who refuse to agree to the restoration of a German autonomous entity on the Volga that the number of those who do agree is incomparably

11. Ibid, p.31.

12. Ibid.

greater. The lie about the referendum held on the territory of the former Volga German Republic is obvious. The voters were told in the election of 1991 about the terms under which an autonomous unit would be restored, that there was no intention of making German the mandatory languages for everyone, of official business, the courts and the schools, and that the German government is prepared to provide new roads, enterprises, cultural centres and housing not only for the future German population of the republic but also for Russians and Ukrainians who live there.

Instead the people of Saratov and Volgograd were fed by persistent lies to the effect that the Germans would come and drive the locals out as only German would be used in the schools, that there would not be any Russian newspapers and that even post-office forms would be in German. Moreover, there was not any mention of the fact that the Volga German Republic included cantons populated mainly by Russians, in which education, the press and theatrical productions were to be solely in Russian, or that the Germans long ago made a commitment to retain the existing component Deputies in all local Russians, merely adding on a certain number of Germans in proportion to the increase in the German population, which incidentally, will never become predominant.¹³

The first congress of the Russian Germans which was to be held on March 1992 was postponed to October and some extremely

13. Hartmut Koschyk, "Russland-deutsche vor neuer perspektive", Deutsch-land Union Dienst (Bonn), 28 January, 1993, p.8.

significant changes occurred within the German movement itself. Two groups were formed, a hard-line group led by Grout, and a moderate one known as homeland, with an organizing committee headed by Academician B. Raushenbakh. It was this committee which postponed the March congress and held the October one.¹⁴

The Germans were assured that they could come back and that there would not be any obstacle in their way, that they could take up residence and find jobs. But these Germans were not in favour of abandoning what they had acquired like homes, private plots and jobs as they thought that there was no guarantee of their being de-autonomized again. Therefore, they were not agreed to go some-where else. Moreover, there was not a single real German school or higher educational institution. Till now there is no firm decision in the Russian government regarding a German autonomous entity.

It was not hard to guess why no decision was being made. Russia was waiting for economic aid from the former Federal Republic. The FRG wanted a German autonomous unit to be established on Russian territory and was prepared to undertake development projects in the republic without delay. But these efforts could not begin until there was political and social stability. And stability is created by the authorities and by public information campaigns through direct dialogue with the public and direct action by government bodies. However, it appeared that real power in the region continued to be wielded by

14. Ibid.

Partocrats as before. If this situation continues for another two or three years, the Germans will hardly see a state entity of their own in Russia.

YELTSIN'S VISIT

On Jan. 8, 1991 Russian President Boris Yeltsin flew to Saratov Province. This trip was directly linked with the promise he had made during his visit to Germany, to finally settle the question of restoring an autonomous unit for Russian Germans. Lt. Col. Alexander Kichikhin, a staff member of the KGB believed that the visit was doomed to fail because there was no specialists on this problem among the president's closest advisers. As a result, Yeltsin and his team could accept well-organized protest actions by the local population easily. In Kichikhin's opinion, for the Russian Germans statement that following the restoration of an autonomous entity they would have specialists carry out a land management study meant that Kuznestov had to answer the question dealing with the 4.3 billion rubles that were allocated for land reclamation and improvement in the region over the past 17 years.¹⁵

The Marx District Standing Commission on the Problem of a Russian German Autonomous Unit, which threatened to blow up bridges over the Volga, remove the highways if the government dared return the Germans to their little homeland, did not include a single worker or collective farmer. Having despaired of seeing justice done, the Russian citizens of German origin or Russian

15. Current Digest of the post Soviet Press, op.cit., p.33.

Germans set up an Emigration Committee in mid-December 1992. According to 1989 census, there were 2 million Germans. And if one takes into account mixed marriages and Russian relatives who will probably want to be reunited with those who emigrated to Germany, the Germans departure, Kichikhin estimated could deprive the country of 5 million to 6 million people.¹⁶

One of the main goals of Yeltsin's visit to Saratov was also to see how the economic and land reforms were progressing. Moreover, the problem of re-creating a German autonomous republic in the Volga region was as well at the center of attention. Explaining his position, Boris Yeltsin stressed that an autonomous unit could be reestablished only in those areas where concentrations of Russian Germans make up at least 90% of the population. Place populated by people of other nationalities who did not want to be part of such an entity would not be included in the autonomous unit.

It is no secret to anyone that Yeltsin's visit to the Volga region was an attempt to link domestic and foreign policy, not only to clarify the essence of the new direction in the economy, but also to conduct reconnaissance in the areas where a Volga German republic likely to be restored. The problem of the Russian Germans acquiring their own promised land in the vast expanses of the fatherland turned into a sore spot in Russian-German relations, some-thing like a new Kurile Islands issue. It was not just a matter of restoring historical justice. The authorities in Bonn, who offer protection to all ethnic Germans no matter where they may be, experienced everincreasing difficulties in absorbing their compatriots who longed to return to the Vaterland or fatherland.

16. Ibid, p.34.

At present more than 2 million of the 80 million reunited Germans are without jobs. And the economic prospects of Germany do not look bright. Meanwhile, the assimilation of Russian Germans requires significant social outlays against the backdrop of the xenophobia that is gripping Germany. And if former West Germans often looked at their East Germans relatives as foreigners, it is easy to imagine the tender feelings of the natives toward repatriates from the former USSR.¹⁷ It is not astonishing that Bonn would prefer to attach Russian Germans to their newer historical homeland and to provide credits for settling them within the borders that existed at the time of Catherine the Great.

Yeltsin's task of attaching the republic to the Volga region became even more complicated. In a situation already charged with tension by the freeing of prices, it was easy for patriots in Saratov to play on local xenophobia and the anti-German sentiments that were implanted in recent years by party structures. This was not the most appropriate moment for solving the problems of the Germans, but it was impossible to delay it any longer. The flow of pleas to the former FRG's embassy in Moscow requesting emigration grew rapidly.

Yeltsin started getting acquainted with the Saratov area in Lipovka, a village in the Volga steppes. He met with workers at the Osinovsky State farm. Sometimes ago this unprofitable farm had virtually no prospects for the future. But today,

17. Ibid.

after becoming a joint stock company it looks to the future with confidence. At Osinovsky, families of Germans, Russians and many other nationalities work side by side. This area was once part of the former German autonomous republic. Unfortunately, someone finds it very profitable to solve the nationality problem. Yeltsin talked to local residents regarding their problems.¹⁸

Yeltsin stressed that there was no question that historical justice must be done with respect to a person illegally subjected to repression. In his opinion, everyone who lived there should feel comfortable working on Volga soil. People could acquire land as private property and pass it on to their heirs. He stated further that people should become the true masters of the land, which was the objective of the Russian reforms. German families could unhesitatingly return to their native Volga region, and could make their homes there. The main thing was to get the economy in order so that life-style of the people would improve.

The main purpose of Yeltsin's working visit, as he repeatedly stressed, was to make a special effort to see how things were going at the local level as prices were freed and privatization was launched in Russia. His visit was not all that serene, however. His own bodyguards had trouble protecting him from the people in front of the provincial Soviet. These people were either demonstrating their love and affection or bringing their troubles and hopes a little closer to the sovereign's ear. There were also some stressful discussions of the subject of re-creating a German autonomous unit in the Volga region. In response to which Yeltsin declared :

18. CDSP, n. 10, p. 35.

There won't be an autonomous unit in any place that does not have a high concentration of Germans among the population, so that they form the over-whelming majority. As President, I guarantee you that. It is another that there is an empty military firing range in Volgograd province and that Marshal Shaposhnikov is giving it up. There, perhaps, some kind of national district or province could exist in the future. But only when 90% of the population there is German.¹⁹

It is hard to assume how the Germans are reacting to this unexpected salution to the problem. But it is for sure that they would prefer leaving their homeland rather than develop the land of the firing range.

Yeltsin's speech to residents of Saratov province gave a dual impression. Especially, the part of it that touched on the possibility of restoring a German autonomous entity in the Volga region. The Russian Germans were offered to opportunity to resettle on the area of a former military firing range in Volgograd Province, which is 300,000 hectares in size, that was vacated by artillery and missile units of the former Soviet Army.²⁰

But the saddest thing of all that was not in Russian President's televised comments regarding the German autonomous unit but in the words that were uttered by him. According to some well-informed German sources, the Russian Germans were told they could begin by cleaning up and cultivating that land stuffed

19. Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, n.10, p.16.

20. Ibid.

full of artillery shells and after that, it would be possible for them to talk about autonomy. A good blackmailing attitude.

According to a high-ranking diplomat from the former FRG's embassy in Russia, a new and absolutely unrealistic and unrealisable condition was the quota requiring that 90% of the population of the new firing range area be German. This method of dealing with the problem was never once mentioned in previous contacts between Russia and the former Federal Republic. In the opinion of the German Embassy in Moscow, it was creating an even higher and simply unsurmountable hinderance to the solution of the problem.²¹

Boris Peters, chairman of the Republic Society of Russian Germans told a newspaper correspondent that Yeltsin did not leave any hope for the Germans. His report, according to Peters left no doubt about it. Germans would not have any place there and that was the last tolling of the bell for their departure.²²

In Peter's opinion, the environmental characteristics of the former Soviet Army missile range do not meet even Soviet criteria for the permissible level of pollution in a given area. He also believed that Germans could make even a table leg grow and bear fruit which was also offensive in itself.

Yeltsin clarified three-stage approach to German autonomous unit. He reiterated that present Volga region population would not be uprooted. Certain news media outlets disseminated

21. Current Digest of the post Soviet Press, vol.44, no.5, April 1992, p.59.

22. Ibid.

reports of a change in Yeltsin's position on the question of re-creating a German autonomous unit on Russian territory. Pavel Voshchanov, press Secretary for the President of the Russian Federation was authorized to state the following in this connection:

The President is committed to the course worked out previously, as well as to the agreement reached on this issue with FRG Chancellor Helmut Kohl. The measures being taken by the Russian leadership are based on a three-stage approach to solving the problem:

- (i) determination of areas in the Volga region that are suitable for concentrated German settlement;
- (ii) as they are settled and the share of the German population increases, granting these areas the status of national districts;
- (iii) and finally raising, the status of the German national districts, upto the point of forming an autonomous province.²³

It was in this context that Yeltsin spoke during his dialogue with the former FRG leadership. He set forth the same position during his working trip through the Volga region. The restoration of historical justice with regard to Russian Germans population was not to be accompanied by a violation of justice with regard to the present population of the Volga region. This was the point that he mentioned at his meeting with residents of the city of Engels. He stated that no one would be uprooted and no one would be driven out.

23. Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press, n.10.,p.11.

Thus, Yeltsin's visit to Saratov was somewhat contradictory to his Visit to Bonn in late Nov. 1991. During his Visit to Bonn his approach was moderate but his statements during his Visit to Sa-ratov and Volga region in 1992 are quite contradictory so far his idea of restoration of German autonomous unit is concerned. His demand is like that of asking a dump to sing. In the same ways there will not be any area in Volgograd which will have 90% of German population. Therefore, there is hardly any possibility of any German autonomous unit.

FUTURE OF RUSSIAN GERMANS

In the Congress of Russian Germans held in Moscow during the year 1993, it was stressed that these Germans should be allowed to go to Germany as they no longer trust the Russian government and especially its stand on autonomous Volga Republic. These Germans are more hopeful of having their autonomous unit in Altai-areas in Omsk and in southern Ukraine, St Perertsburg and Orenburg are also included. The Vice-chairman of the Russian government and state adviser on legal policy, Sergei Sakhrai promised these Germans that they would be given the autonomy but he also agreed that the restoration of German rayons among Russians is not tolerable. Under such conditions there is only a remote chance for creation of autonomy there for Russian Germans against the backdrop of such developments in the CIS.²⁴

24. Egon Juttner, "Russlanddeutsche wollen Nationalkreise", Deutschland Union Dienst, 1 April 1993, p.8.

The ethnic Germans are also fearful of the war-like situation prevailing in Tajikistan. The demand of young Russian Germans not to be drafted for the army was considered. Concrete demands, were made regarding improvement of conditions of Germans' life in Russia and the various other republics of the CIs. A demand was raised to create a council of Russian Germans to represent their interests before the Russian and other government, in the sphere of culture, education and economic development. The question of emigration of the Russian Germans was not raised at the Congress which persisted with its focus on the demand for reestablishment of autonomy.²⁵

Volga Republic has become an optimal solution. Nothing concrete has been done about it. It is absolutely open whether the Germans in former Soviet Union could then find selves in comfortable position with respect to their relations with the Russians and other republics of the former USSR. The solutions have to be searched unconventionally in closed negotiations with the council for rehabilitation of Germans in the former Soviet Union and now in Russia and other republics.

The largest organisation of Russian Germans which led by Heinrich Groth known as Wiedergeburt or Rebirth wants to follow in future a constructive policy between Bonn and Moscow. It clearly aims at either the creation of Volga Republic or unrestricted emigration. Heinrich Groth stated that the 'Rebirth' and the Inter State Council of Russian Germans would hold a

25. Ibid.

Congress by the end of February 1994 in Moscow. However nothing has been heard about it so far. Many other Russian Germans organisations were also invited for the Congress. A common programme for the future of Russian Germans was supposed to be worked out. This was meant to be a small step in the direction of the restoration of the autonomy of Volga region. Emigration policy in Russia and Ukraine was also to be framed in the forthcoming Congress. The federal fraction of the CDU appreciated the efforts of the Russian Germans for unity and pursuit of a realistic policy.²⁶

It is no easy matter to solve the problem of resettling hundreds of thousands of people i.e. 367,000 deported Germans. A special sincere state programme by Russian as well as German governments has to be devised and appropriate material, financial and labour resources have to be found. Russian Germans are prepared to solve the problem of housing and creating an infrastructure in the new direction themselves. Even other republics where Russian Germans live have to make sincere efforts to resettle them. A Ukrainian-German Commission in Kiev discussed the possibility of the return of these Germans who emigrated half a century ago. The Bonn Delegation was led by Walter Priessnitz, the state secretary of Federal Ministry. During its discussion the commission discussed about the financial aid and

26. Erwin Marschweski, "Zukunftschancen fuer Russlanddeutsche", Deutschland Union Dienst, 30 April, 1992, p.8.

the construction of houses and the opening of the Ukrainian-German Bank for those who were willing to return back to Germany.²⁷

Kiev and Bonn entrusted the question of the emigration of ethnic Germans in South- Ukraine meeting of the Ukrainian-German commission. Held on 2 Jan. 1993. since Ukrainian President Kravchuk promised free migration of ethnic Germans in January 1993, out of 400.000 ethnic Germans around 1500 have migrated to Ukraine. These Germans had been deported during the second World War. These emigrants would get help from bothe Germany and Ukraine.²⁸

The future of the ethnic Germans in Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and in other CIS republics solely depends on the sincerity of these governments to implement the developmental programmes meant for their rehabilitation and socio-cultural progress. They should be given their lost autonomy in the Volga region and allowed to emigrate where they want to.

27. Suddeustsche Zeitung, 3 June 1993,. p.9.

28. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. (Frankfurt), 3 June 1993, p.7.

CONCLUSION

The history of the ethnic Germans in the former USSR can be traced back to the late 18th century when Catherine the Great and Alexander I had invited the Germans from Germany, Switzerland, and Austria to settle on newly acquired lands in the south of Russia. This region was almost infertile but the skill and hard work of these Germans turned it into a fertile one. Initially they were given rights equal to those of the local people. But their socio-economic and political status underwent a sea change over the centuries. It changed drastically from time to time depending on the political and social conditions of the country they had settled in. At present most of the ethnic Germans live in Saratov Province, Volgograd Province and in Kazakhstan, Kirghiz and Tajikistan.

During the 1920s these ethnic Germans were given an autonomy in the Volga region and several other autonomous districts were created by the former Soviet government under Lenin's leadership. The Volga German Autonomous Republic in course of time became a subject of intense controversy between Bonn and Moscow which it remains till today. During this period German cultural and religious life flourished in the autonomous units. They had their own school, newspapers, theatre and churches. But this autonomy was short-lived.

The second World War and the post-war period was a dark period for these Germans. According to Stalin's deportation policy, they were deported in large number to Ural mountains

in south-western Siberia, totally cut off from the mainstream of central Russia. There they were made to work under inhumane conditions. Their autonomy was taken away. Again during the Detente period their conditions improved because of change of leadership in both the countries, i.e. the former Soviet Union and West Germany. They could freely emigrate back to West Germany. The question of restoration of the autonomous Republic in the Volga region was also taken up for active consideration.

Even Gorbachev's emigration policy played a vital role in free emigration of ethnic Germans. In 1987 German emigration levels rose again under the policies of glasnost and perestrioka. In 1988 and 1989 it attained record levels. After Gorbachev Russian President Boris Yeltsin took a few positive steps towards resolving the problem of ethnic Germans. Regular talks and state visits took place from by both the sides. But till today nothing solid has come up. Yeltsin's visit to Saratov Province and Volgograd in 1992 clearly illustrated that he was not really keen on solving this problem. His answer to the problem of restoration of a German autonomous unit in Volgograd was that unless the area's 90% population consisted of ethnic Germans population, they could not be given an autonomous status. This was a clever way of refusing the demand for autonomy as it is impossible to have a 90% German population in any region of Russia or any other independent republic.

The condition of ethnic Germans in Kazakhstan also remained uncertain. The Kazakh nationalist leadership continues to deny

them their cultural rights which they had enjoined since the destalinisation process under Khrushchev. In Ukraine president Kravchuk has succeeded in attraction a few thousand German settlers to the Crimean peninsula.

On the whole, the fate of ethnic Germans in Russia and other CIS Republics continues to be marked with great uncertainty. The Congress of Germans held in Moscow in 1993 did not bring about any note-worthy change in their status. The ethnic Germans in the CIS Republics are now looking forward to another Congress to be held sometime in late 1994. With little hope for realisation of autonomy, they appear to be building a new hope on migration to Germany.

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