Integration in Two Cities: A Comparative History of Protestant Ethnic German Immigrants in Winnipeg, Canada and Bielefeld, Germany 1947-1989

by

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A Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the processes of integration for ethnic German immigrants migrating to Winnipeg, Canada in the 1950s and to Bielefeld, Germany in the 1970s. Ethnic Germans in this study are descendants of German speakers who migrated to Imperial Russia and Poland in the five hundred years before the 20th century. There they developed ethnic German enclaves among Slavic peoples, spoke German dialects, and maintained what they believed were German ways. Their migration came as a result of the dislocations of the 1940s and the subsequent political tensions associated with the Cold War.

The concept of integration used here reflects recent scholarly efforts to re-examine the assimilation model attributed to American sociologist Robert E. Park. The Chicago School of the 1920s assumed that immigrants steadily lost their old ways and finally became indistinguishable from others in the host society. In the re-examination of this model in the 1980s and 1990s, integration is understood as a moment or phase in immigrant-host society interaction when the tension between the two is no longer attributable to the immigrant condition but has become part of the host society's ongoing cultural negotiation with all groups of citizens.

This dissertation is a comparative social history. It compares the integrating process of two similar groups in the cities of two countries. Economic activity, spatial integration, family life, religious culture, language reproduction, and participation as citizens are the variables that have been examined as case studies of interaction between the first immigrant generation and its host society in these cities.

These measures of integration suggest a remarkable irony: ethnic German immigrants in Winnipeg progressed more easily towards being integrated than did their counterparts in Bielefeld. The central reason was the different imagined trajectories of life in the two environments. Bielefeld's immigrants imagined themselves going home and relieving the ethnic tensions they had experienced in the Soviet Union or Poland, while Winnipeg's immigrants expected to change in an Anglo-Canadian, North American environment. Ironically, ethnic Germans in Bielefeld encountered greater tensions in their attempts to integrate into German society than did ethnic Germans facing the integrative culture of Winnipeg.

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INTRODUCTION

This is a study of how immigrants integrated into the city. It compares the experiences of approximately six thousand immigrants who arrived in Winnipeg, Canada in the 1950s with the seven thousand of similar background who arrived in Bielefeld, Germany in the 1970s.

These newcomers, stepping onto the platform of the train station in Winnipeg or getting off the bus at Bielefeld's temporary housing facility on *Teichsheide Strasse*, immediately began the process of coming to terms with their new environment and finding their place in it. Although both cities hosted many different migrants in the twentieth century, this study focuses on the integration experience of just one of the immigrant groups, ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This thesis argues that ethnic Germans in Bielefeld found it more difficult to integrate than did their Winnipeg counterparts. A number of reasons for this difference will be explored in the following pages. However, differences in the two groups' perception of the trajectory of their lives, a consequence of both of their own expectations of life in their new homes, and of the expectations of their respective host societies, are the most salient themes that explain the patterns of integration of ethnic Germans in the two cities.

A plethora of terms have been employed by scholars to describe and explain processes of interaction between immigrants and their host societies. In the United States, Robert E. Park and the sociologists of the Chicago School developed their view of a "race relations cycle" in the 1920s. This model included contact, competition, accommodation, and assimilation as successive stages of immigrant and host society relations. The

Chicago School constructed the process of assimilation as linear and irreversible. The assimilation model formed the basis for the study of immigrant behaviour in the United States for many years.

Its supremacy was, however, challenged in the late 1950s and early 1960s and thereafter much ink has been spilled questioning its basic premises. Scholars pointed out the lack of a clear end-point of assimilation as formulated by Park. What were immigrants assimilating to? Scholars of the new social history of the 1960s also argued that interaction between immigrants and host societies was hardly as progressive and linear as Park's concept of assimilation suggested, and that such interactions did not culminate in clear and irreversible outcomes.[1] Sociologist Milton Gordon's classic study, *Assimilation in American Life*, for instance, suggested Anglo-conformity, the melting pot and cultural pluralism as three possible end point options. His analysis concluded that "Anglo-conformity, in various guises, has probably been the most prevalent ideology of assimilation in the American historical experience."[2] Assimilation to an Anglo-Saxon core was also soon challenged. Scholars such as Nathan Glazer, Philip Moynihan, and Rudolph Vecoli observed that immigrants retained aspects of their old world identities. In Canada, too, Robert F. Harney spoke of persistence and continuity in immigrant

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[1] For the origin and development of the assimilationist school see: Stow Persons, *Ethnic Studies at Chicago, 1905-1945* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 33-36. Reviews of the rise to dominance and subsequent decline of the concept include: Elliot R. Barkan, "Race, Religion, and Nationality in American Society: A Model of Ethnicity—From Contact to Assimilation," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 14 (1995): 38-75 and Russell A. Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History," *American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 437-471.

[2] Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 115.

cultures.[3] The result of these efforts, as historian Russell Kazal points out, was "a full-blown attack… on the idea of an Anglo-Saxon center."[4] Scholars began to use the very concepts that had been postulated as steps along the path to assimilation, such as accommodation, acculturation and integration, to convey a greater sense of indeterminate outcomes. Often, however, as Samuel Baily points out, "scholars confused their readers by using such broad, imprecise and in general poorly defined terms."[5]

The concept of persistence has also given way to terms that reflect conflict, adaptation, and the reciprocal influences of immigrant and dominant society cultures. Scholars have been especially partial to terms such as "ethnicization" or "ethnic

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[3] Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City*, (Cambridge, Mass: M.I.T. Press, 1970); Rudolph J. Vecoli, "*Contadini* in Chicago: A Critique of the *The Uprooted*," *Journal of American History* 51 (1964): 404-417; Robert F. Harney, "Men Without Women: Italian Migrants in Canada, 1885-1930," in *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 11 (1979): 29-47, and his seminal article: "'So Great a Heritage as Ours': Immigration and the Survival of the Canadian Polity," in *Constructing Modern Canada: Readings in Post Confederation History*, ed. Chad Gaffield (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman, 1994), 529. The article was originally published in *Daedulus* 117 (1988). Susan Bellay argues that in Canada the assimilation model arrived later and was abandoned quickly. She concludes that most Canadian academics had adopted cultural pluralism by the Second World War. Susan Bellay, "Pluralism and Race/Ethnic Relations in Canadian Social Science, 1880-1939" (Ph.D. diss., University of Manitoba, 2001), 452-453. See also Howard Palmer, "Mosaic versus Melting Pot?: Immigration and ethnicity in Canada and the United States," *International Journal* 31 (1975-1976): 488-528. A discussion of pre-multiculturalism ethnic historical writing in Canada is in Dirk Hoerder, "Ethnic Studies in Canada from the 1880s to 1962: A Historiographical Perspective and Critique," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 26 (1994): 1-18. For a review of post-1970 historiography of ethnicity in Canada see Anthony W. Rasporich, "Ethnicity in Canadian Historical Writing 1970-1990," in *Ethnicity and Culture in Canada: The Research Landscape,* eds. J.W. Berry and J.A. Laponce (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 153-18.

[4] Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation," 452.

[5] Samuel L. Baily, "The Adjustment of Italian Immigrants in Buenos Aires and New York, 1870-1914," *American Historical Review* 88 (1983): 282. See also Barkan, "Race, Religion and Nationality," 38 and Ewa Morawska, "In Defense of the Assimilation Model," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 13 (1994): 77.

reinvention." In the early 1990s, for example, Kathleen Conzen, David Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George Pozzetta and Rudolph Vecoli collaborated in suggesting that ethnicity could be invented. Their approach allowed for "the appearance, metamorphosis, disappearance, and reappearance of ethnicities."[6] In a separate article Kathleen Conzen referred to the "localization of an immigrant culture," observing that mainstream culture in Stearn County, Minnesota "had acquired a German tinge" as a result of the immigrant population in its midst.[7]

Most recently scholars have begun to acknowledge that while reinvention may illuminate second and third generation immigrant experiences, the concept of assimilation still offers explanatory power for first generation immigrant behaviour. The latter half of the 1990s have witnessed what historian Jon Gjerde refers to as "calls to revitalize discussion of assimilation."[8] A number of scholars have encouraged a revisiting of the concept of assimilation, stripped of its inevitability and irreversibility.[9] Historian Elliott R. Barkan's 1995 model is an example. He defines complete assimilation as that stage where the immigrant's "political and cultural norms, cultural and social activities, language usage, residential locations, friends, associates, spouses,

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[6] Kathleen Conzen, David Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George Pozzetta and Rudolph Vecoli, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12 (1992): 5.

[7] Kathleen Conzen, "Mainstreams and Side Channels: The Localization of Immigrant Cultures," in *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11 (1991): 6.

[8] Jon Gjerde, "New Growth on Old Vines—The State of the Field: The Social History of Immigration to and Ethnicity in the United States," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 18 (1999): 49.

[9] See for instance: Morawska, "In Defense," and Barkan, "Race, Religion, and Nationality."

identities, and loyalties have by and large become indistinguishable—or insignificantly different from—those aspects of that general society and core culture." He maintains, however, that there are "multiple stages leading to it and multiple alternative outcomes."[10]

As one of the possible stages that might ultimately lead to assimilation, Barkan defined "integration" in a way that is useful for this study. Integration is that stage where a person has "gained some acceptance from the larger society, has become bicultural, and has begun to crystallize dual (or multiple) identities."[11] With this definition in mind, he characterizes an integrated immigrant as one who has become either bilingual or fluent only in the language of the dominant culture, has developed ties outside the ethnic community, participates in external organizations and political processes, and has gone through some aspect of the host society's educational system. In Barkan's view, however, integration does not imply a loss of ethnic identity, the complete abandonment of ethnic attachments, or the resolution of a feeling of marginality.[12]

German scholarly literature and common usage also exhibits a tendency toward ambiguity in the use of terms such as integration and acculturation. Historian of Soviet ethnic German culture, Klaus Boll, points out that these terms are used by a host of government bureaucrats, church organizations, scholars and settlement workers. Seldom, he says, do they mean the same thing to the various people who use them.[13] In Germany

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[10] Barkan, "Race, Religion, and Nationality," 49-50.

[11] Ibid., 48.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Klaus Boll, *Kulturwandel der Deutschen aus der Sowjetunion: Eine Empirische Studie zur Lebenswelt Russlanddeutscher Aussiedler in der Bundesrepublik* (Marburg:

the concept of integration was already advanced in the 1950s to describe the experience of expellees. Expellees from former German areas in Eastern Europe and refugees from the Soviet zone descended upon West Germany in the late 1940s and 1950s as a consequence of the Potsdam Agreement.[14] A three-phase model of their integration was advanced: the first phase was distinguished by the immigrants' preoccupation with finding work and a home; the second by the establishment of social relations; and the third by the all-important state of 'internalized membership'. Emphasis in the later 1950s and the 1960s on the rebuilding of Germany focused discussions of integration in the domain of economics at the expense of examination of social and cultural integration.[15] A 1980 summary of an ongoing debate about the integration of ethnic Germans in the journal, *Osteuropa*, concluded that 'acculturation' was a more precise term than integration. Acculturation occurred when "differing cultures came in contact through the interaction of their members where ...one culture is in a dominant position."[16]

By the 1990s, however, German scholars began to account for the influence of the immigrating group on the host society. Sociologist Hans-Werner Retterath suggested in

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Elwert, 1993), 281. The words *Integration* and *Akkulturation* are also used in the German.

[14] For an overview of postwar forced migrations in Europe see: Dariusz Stola, "Forced Migrations in Central European History," *International Migration Review* 25 (1991): 324-341; Heinz Fassman and Rainer Münz, "European East-West Migration, 1945-1992," *International Migration Review* 28 (1994): 520-538, and Von Wolfgang Benz, "Fremde in der Heimat: Flucht—Vertreibung—Integration" in *Deutsche im Ausland—Fremde in Deutschland: Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart,* ed. Klaus J. Bade (München: C.H. Beck, 1992), 374-386.

[15] Boll, *Kulturwandel,* 282.

[16] Bodo Hager, "Zur Akkulturation und Sozialization von Übersiedlern aus Osteuropa" *Osteuropa* 30 (1980): 154. Translations, unless otherwise noted, are by the author.

1994 that the process of integration involved "subjects from both sides and as a result the host society must be drawn into the investigation."[17] Klaus Boll pointed out in 1993 that integration had come to be thought of as a reciprocal socio-cultural process whereby a group 'fits in' to and 'fits on' a new society. It implied a consensus between the immigrant and dominant cultures in their relations in the domains of power, money, prestige and capabilities.[18] Although scholars emphasized the reciprocal nature of immigrant-host society relations, German society in general retained a narrower view of integration. In German public discussion in the 1990s the degree to which immigrants were 'integrated' became important in political and public debates on the desirability of further immigration. Integration in this context resembled the definition of social integration used by German migration economist Barbara Dietz. She suggested that "participation in the life of the society and expanding daily social contact in the neighbourhood, the community, in school and in one's working life" were the marks of an integrated immigrant.[19]

While the proliferation of terminology may be confusing, it reflects the complexity of the task of understanding the relations between immigrants and their host society. This study concentrates on processes of change in such relations and uses the

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[17] Hans-Werner Rettarath, "Studie zur Integration der Rußlanddeutschen unter besonderer Beachtung der speziellen Integrationsbedingungen in Stadt und Land—Bericht über ein laufendes Projekt," *Referate der Kulturtagung der Deutschen aus Rußland vom 21. bis 23. Oktober 1994 in Würzburg* (Stuttgart: Landmannschaft der Deutschen aus Rußland e.V., 1994), 111.

[18] Boll, *Kulturwandel*, 283-284.

[19] Barbara Dietz, "Rückzug oder Mitwirkung: Zur gesellschaftlichen Partizipation rußlanddeutscher Aussiedler in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in *Referate: Kulturtagung der Deutschen aus Rußland vom 21. bis 23. Oktober 1994 in Würzburg* (Stuttgart: Landmannschaft der Deutschen aus Rußland e.V., 1994), 92.

concept of integration as the framework for analysis. Although the recent emphasis on the reciprocal nature of host-immigrant interaction provides a workable definition for the concept of integration it is based on specific environments. To allow for a comparison of different national and linguistic environments, integration as used in this study implies a transformation of tensions between an immigrant group and the host society to the point that interactions between the two are no longer considered a product of immigration but part of the host society's normal cultural, economic and social negotiation. In addition, as Canadian political philosopher Will Kymlicka has suggested, integration involves immigrant groups coming "to view their life-chances as tied up with participation in the range of social institutions, based on a common language, which define that societal culture."[20]

This sense of coming to a point of 'feeling at home' in a new environment is not only dependent on behavioural changes in the immigrant group, but also on the host society's capacity for embracing diversity. Canada and Germany, and their cities, Winnipeg and Bielefeld, represent host societies with different notions of what an integrated immigrant was. For the purposes of this study, integration processes include adjustments made by both the host society and by an immigrant group that reduce the tensions of difference to those no longer distinguishable from other processes of social and cultural change in that society.

The study of integration processes pursued here uses the comparative approach, a strategy that purports to offer significant methodological advantages for historical

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[20] Will Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), 28.

analysis. In spite of these advantages historians have been slow to accept it. In 1980, historian Thomas J. Archdeacon pointed out that "to urge comparative studies is to endorse what every historian considers a virtue, albeit an often unpracticed one." A similar sentiment was expressed by another historian, Raymond Grew, in 1985; he commented that comparison evokes for historians "the ambivalence of a good bourgeois toward the best wines: to appreciate them is a sign of good taste, but indulgence seems a little loose and wasteful."[21] German historian Hartmut Kaelble protested in 1993 that in the writing of European social history, "everyone talks about but no one practices comparison."[22] In spite of this recurring lament on both sides of the Atlantic, there are an increasing number of studies of immigrants that use comparison and the approach offers a number of benefits for the study of ethnic German integration.[23]

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[21] Thomas J. Archdeacon, "Problems and Possibilities in the Study of American Immigration and Ethnic History," *International Migration Review* 19 (1985): 123 and Raymond Grew, "The Case for Comparing Histories," *American Historical Review* 85 (1980): 763.

[22] Hartmut Kaelble, "Vergleichende Sozialgeschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts: Forschungen europärischer Historiker," *Jahrbuch für Wirtschafts Geschichte* 1 (1993): 174. Kaelble's article provides a comprehensive overview of the use of the comparative method in European historiography since the 1970s.

[23] Historians of migration have taken up the challenge to use the comparative method to some extent. A partial list of English language studies includes: Baily, "The Adjustment of Italian Immigrants"; Herbert Klein, "The Integration of Italian Immigrants into the United States and Argentina: A Comparative Analysis," *American Historical Review* 88 (1983): 306-346; Roger Daniels, "Chinese and Japanese In North America: The Canadian and American Experiences Compared," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 17 (1986): 173-187; Christoph Klessman, "Comparative Immigrant History: Polish Workers in the Ruhr Area and the North of France," *Journal of Social History* 20 (1986): 335-353; Bernard Wong, "A Comparative Study of the Assimilation of the Chinese in New York City and Lima, Peru," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (1978): 335-355; Frederick C. Luebke, "Patterns of German Settlement in the United States and Brazil, 1830—1930," in *Germans in the New World: Essays in the History of Immigration,* ed. Frederick C. Luebke (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 93-

Comparison offers a way to discover new questions. Raymond Grew suggests the comparative method is the only way of establishing "that there is something to be explained." Relying on the work of one of the earliest advocates of historical comparison, Marc Bloch, Grew points out that only by comparing can the historian be 'surprised' and stimulated to apply "to familiar issues some categories of questions evolved in another context."[24] Comparison here serves the purpose of establishing a research agenda. Dutch historian, A.A. van den Braembussche, uses Bloch's search for French counterparts to the English examples of the enclosure movement as an illustration of the rewriting of history due to new research questions raised by comparative analysis. Like Grew, Van den Braembussche concludes that the comparative approach "provides an important heuristic means for tracking down new research problems."[25] German labour historian Klaus Tenfelde points out that the selection of historical questions is implicitly comparative. He

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109, and Bruno Ramirez, *On the Move: French-Canadian and Italian Immigrants in the North Atlantic Economy* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991). Recent monographs include: Nancy Foner, *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000); Samuel L. Baily, *Immigrants in the Land of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Nancy L. Green, *Ready to Wear Ready to Work: A Century of Industry and Immigrants in Paris and New York* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997) and Rima Berns McGown, *Muslims in the Diaspora: The Somali Communities of London and Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999). A recent study based on much of the same literature on the theoretical basis for the comparative approach as used here is Rainer Liedtke, *Jewish Welfare in Hamburg and Manchester c. 1850—1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

[24] Grew, "Comparing Histories," 769. Marc Bloch's article was based on a paper given at the Sixth Congress of Historical Sciences, held in Oslo, August, 1928. An English version is: Marc Bloch, "Toward a Comparative History of European Societies," in *Enterprise and Secular Change: Readings in Economic History*, trans. Jelle C. Riemersma, eds. Frederic C. Lane and Jelle C. Riemersma (Homewood, Ill.: R.D. Irwin, 1953), 494-521.

[25] A. A. van den Braembussche, "Historical Explanation and Comparative Method," *History and Theory* 28 (1989): 10-11.

argues that historical studies of the modern period are based on a "source driven selection of important questions from a potentially unending multiplicity of historical realities."[26]

Comparison also helps determine cause. United States labour historian Charles Bergquist suggests that comparison has the capability of "disentangling the 'seamless web' of deciding which elements of historical causation among the many in the whole are decisive," and "provides a way to separate and weigh historical variables without abandoning (as do social scientists) a commitment to the whole."[27] Van den Braembussche refers, in a similar vein, to the advantages of the comparative approach in separating real causes from what Bloch referred to as "'local pseudo-causes' against which it was necessary to be on guard."[28] For immigration and ethnic studies, Archdeacon suggests that comparison offers a way of "distinguishing the culturally innate from the circumstantial in the adaptive behaviors of those various immigrant peoples."[29]

Most important for this study, comparison helps to lay bare the specifics of historical processes. In the field of migration studies, for example, comparison has been described as being "most effective for examining the processes and consequences" of a phenomenon such as hostility to foreigners where it occurs "under circumstances marked

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[26] Klaus Tenfelde, "Sozialgeschichte und vergleichende Geschichte der Arbeiter," *Historische Zeitschrift (Sonderheft 15): Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung im Vergleich* (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1986), 37.

[27] Charles Bergquist, "Latin American Labour History in Comparative Perspective: Notes on the Insidiousness of Cultural Imperialism," *Labour/Le Travail* 25 (1990): 197.

[28] Van den Braembussche, "Historical Explanation," 11.

[29] Archdeacon, "Problems and Possibilities," 124.

by variations in the economic roles of newcomers, in the attitudes of the receiving nations toward assimilation and diversity, and in the ethnic and socioeconomic characteristics of the arrivals."[30]

This study uses the historical approach. In an essay discussing scholarly comparison, sociologist Charles Tilly suggests that historians possess distinct advantages in using effective comparisons and warns them not "to abandon those advantages to political scientists, sociologists, and other social scientists." He attributes the reluctance of historians to use comparison to their fear of "forcing historical experience into ahistorical categories," but maintains that "the remedy to the evils is not the abandonment of deliberate comparison, but its rooting in genuine historical structures and processes."[31]

German scholars Jürgen Kocka and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt address the question of how historical inquiry differs from questions raised in the social sciences and why these differences pose problems for the use of comparison in history. In Kocka and Haupt's view history differs from social science inquiry in that history is averse to quick generalization, is particularly preoccupied with time and changes over time, and harbours a strong sense that "single realities can only be examined outside of their connections to other realities in very limited ways." Comparison poses problems for historians because of these differences. Comparative examples, for instance, result in a greater dependence on secondary sources and require knowledge of other languages when the examples are international. Comparison also assumes that objects to be compared can be isolated

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[30] Ibid., 124.

[31] Charles Tilly, *Big Structures Large Processes Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984), 85.

sufficiently and that connections between realities can be untangled. The result is that comparative historians are forced to favour analysis over narration. Comparison can also only be managed when limited to a few objects. Kocka and Haupt conclude that because of the above-mentioned problems, historical comparison has been limited to "explicitly theoretically oriented, analytical historians with a certain distance from historical traditions."[32]

Although comparative analysis offers many benefits to the study of ethnic German integration, it is necessary to outline various types of comparison and how they may be applied here. In his typology of comparative methods Charles Tilly lists four kinds of comparison: individualizing, universalizing, variation-finding and encompassing.[33] Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers identify three types of comparison: parallel demonstration of a theory, contrasting, and macro-causal analysis.[34] Van den Braembussche, writing with the benefit of both earlier typologies, settles on contrasting, generalizing, macro-causal, and the inclusive type of comparison.[35]

An examination of each of these approaches reveals a wide range of possible uses of comparative analysis. In the individualizing or contrasting approach "the point is to contrast specific instances of a given phenomenon as a means of grasping the

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[32] Jürgen Kocka and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt eds., "Historischer Vergleich: Methoden, Aufgaben, Probleme. Eine Einleitung," in *Geschichte und Vergleich: Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 1996), 21-23.

[33] Tilly, *Big Structures*, 82.

[34] Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somer, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (1980): 175.

[35] Van den Braembussche, "Historical Explanation," 12-14.

peculiarities of each case."[36] This approach to comparison pays particular attention to specific differences and "is also exceptionally well suited to demonstrating the restricted applicability of general concepts and theories."[37] Jürgen Kocka cautions that contrasting or individualizing comparisons may highlight both similarities and differences. Differences, he goes on to suggest, "can only be meaningfully and accurately described and, where possible, explained on the basis of clearly identified similarities, which are reflected in the conceptual structure of the comparison."[38]

The main criticism of the individualizing method of comparison is that it relies heavily on description and tends to relegate theory to a secondary role. The resulting history is accused of being "particularly eclectic" and of using "theoretical connections [that] have been made a little too haphazardly."[39] Others argue that individualizing or contrasting comparisons are limited in their ability to test theories. Tilly maintains that this form of comparison is fine as "a way of theorizing, and of illustrating the theory as you go," but other sorts of comparison must be used for "testing a theory's validity."[40]

The universalizing or generalizing form of comparison seeks to "establish that every instance of a phenomenon follows essentially the same rule."[41] In a sense this type of comparison is the mirror image of the individualizing type. Where the former attempts

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[36] Tilly, *Big Structures*, 82.

[37] Van den Braembussche, "Historical Explanation," 15.

[38] Jürgen Kocka, "Comparative Historical Research: German Examples," *International Review of Social History* 38 (1993): 376.

[39] Van den Braembussche, "Historical Explanation," 17.

[40] Tilly, *Big Structures,* 96.

[41] Ibid., 82.

to highlight the differences and particularity of historical experience, this type of comparison seeks to show how specific instances or cases fit into the picture of the whole. An example of this type of comparison is a study by Tony Waters of six German groups including such widely different communities as Hutterites in North America and urban Germans in Moscow. Waters concludes that "whether assimilation processes would occur" or not was dependent on the "relation of the group to the inheritable economic base... usually land."[42] As Waters' study illustrates, this second type of comparison is more formally and directly based on theory and on overarching theory in particular. As a result, universalizing or generalizing comparison suffers at the hands of the post-modern critique of overarching conceptual frameworks. Paul Conkin succinctly summarizes this criticism by stating that "the diversity and the complexity of cultural phenomena, nourishes a profound doubt that... an overarching pattern exists and that such a pattern, even if in some sense it were meaningful to say that it might exist, could ever be open to human understanding."[43]

Macro-causal comparative methods allow for hypothesis testing where "causal factors are examined for unequivocal explanation of the phenomenon observed," as Tilly explains. By comparing different cases this method seeks to test "the intensity of a

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[42] Tony Waters, "Towards a Theory of Ethnic Identity and Migration: The Formation of Ethnic Enclaves by Migrant Germans in Russia and North America," *International Migration Review* 29 (1995): 515-544.

[43] Paul Conkin and Roland Stromberg, *Heritage and Challenge: The History and Theory of History* (Arlington Heights, Illinois, Forum Press, 1989), 147. Nancy Green has recently attempted an intermediate approach suggesting that comparison allows for exploration of the "universalism inherent in certain processes while understanding the diversity of both their representations and realities." See Nancy L. Green, "The Comparative Method and Poststructural Structuralism—New Perspectives for Migration Studies," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 13 (1994): 6.

phenomenon by examining systematic differences among instances."[44] The macro-causal type of comparison differs from the generalizing type in that variation is not seen as requiring explanation but rather as a means of determining the strength of a given hypothesis. Samuel L. Baily's works comparing Italians in Buenos Aires and New York are a type of macro-causal comparison. Baily examines the variation in the "skills and attitudes the immigrants brought with them, the characteristics of the receiving societies, and the changing nature of immigrant communities."[45] His aim is to "seek causal explanations by linking dependent and independent variables." These variations and their causes explain the different rates of adjustment in the two cities.[46]

The main criticism of the macro-causal approach is that it reduces historical explanation to single causes. Van den Braembussche's accusation that this type of analysis is "inclined to ignore differences and deviations too easily in terms of the theory of explanation being defended" is echoed by Tilly's numerous examples of the failures of the method in quantitative historical comparisons. Tilly's enthusiasm for the macro-causal approach is, however, only slightly weakened by these examples. He believes that the macro-causal or 'variation-finding' approach "produces a principle that extends readily to new cases, yet is relatively easy to verify, falsify, or modify on the basis of new evidence."[47]

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[44] Tilly, *Big Structures,* 82.

[45] Baily, "Adjustment of Italian Immigrants," 304. See also Baily, *Immigrants in the Land of Promise.* A similar approach is Wong, "Chinese in New York City and Lima Peru," 335-355.

[46] Baily, *Immigrants in the Land of Promise,* 17.

[47] Van den Braembussche, "Historical Explanation, 18 and Tilly, *Big Structures,* 116-117.

The final type of comparison is the 'inclusive' or 'encompassing' type. In this type of comparison, individual instances are situated at "varying points within one and the same system."[48] The characteristics of the individual cases are explained in terms of the "function of their varying relationships to the system as a whole."[49] Encompassing or inclusive comparisons are much less common in the literature, possibly due to their basis in grand and sweeping conceptualizations of large systems. The criticism of encompassing comparisons is that the "logic of the system to a large extent prevails over the documentary evidence."[50] Tilly says that this leads "effortlessly to functional explanations, in which a unit behaves in a certain way **because of** the consequences of its behavior for the system as a whole."[51]

Although not restricted to one type, the analysis pursued here belongs mainly to the categories of 'individualizing' and 'macro-causal' comparison. It is individualizing because it seeks to understand the particular experiences of immigrants with similar backgrounds who migrated to two different urban environments. It is macro-causal because it tries to understand the variation in patterns of immigrant integration in the two cities by employing a number of case studies taken from a range of human activities. The analysis pursued, however, remains intensely conscious of the problems that can develop when immigrant experiences are collapsed into simple categories and causal explanations. As anthropologist Fredrik Barth cautions, "we should not succumb to the

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[48] Van den Braembussche, "Historical Explanation," 14.

[49] Tilly, *Big Structures,* 83.

[50] Van den Braembussche, "Historical Explanation," 19.

[51] Tilly, *Big Structures,* 125-126. Emphasis in the original.

temptation" to cast culture and human lives "as puzzles by selecting a limited set of data, designing a solution that makes them appear coherent—and then, outrageously, claiming this to be an example of the coherence that obtains to the whole."[52] The discussion in the pages that follows attempts to keep the story of immigrant experiences—both the similarities and differences—at the centre. It does not seek to illustrate universally applicable rules or specific instances of an inclusive system of immigrant integration. The importance and role of structures such as state admission and settlement policies, the housing market, citizenship and the requirements for and availability of jobs are brought into sharper relief by examination of both differences and similarities in immigrant experiences in the two cities. Using macro-causal approaches, social and cultural choices, as influenced by public discourse, imagined life trajectories, and degrees of membership and belonging, can be understood as a general feature of immigrant integration or as particular to a specific case.

The subjects for this study are ethnic Germans. During the Second World War and immediately thereafter, they were called *Volksdeutsche*. By the 1970s those that came to Bielefeld were known as *Aussiedler*. In this dissertation both groups will be called 'ethnic German.' Both groups were descendants of various streams of Germanic people that migrated from Central and Northern Europe to areas of Eastern Europe and Russia over a period of 450 years. In the German language of the twentieth century, these people were often subsumed in the general category of *Volksdeutsche*—'ethnic' Germans—as opposed to *Reichsdeutsche* who were German nationals and part of the

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[52] Fredrik Barth, *Balinese Worlds,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 6.

German state as it existed on September 1, 1939.[53] The Germans who moved into areas of present day Poland in the centuries after 1400 and those German peasants who responded to Catherine the Great's invitation to settle the steppes of New Russia in the eighteenth century, comprise the ancestors of the ethnic Germans of this study.[54] The twentieth century brought dramatic changes to their German settlements in the East. Migrations to Winnipeg and Bielefeld were rooted particularly in the events of the Second World War and the ensuing Cold War.[55]

Ethnic Germans migrating to both cities demonstrated high levels of adherence to religion and to four religious denominations in particular. Catholics, Lutherans, Mennonites and Baptists formed the majority of immigrants to both cities. Of ethnic German immigrants arriving in Canada approximately 41 percent were Catholic, 29 percent were Lutheran, 20 percent Mennonite, 7 percent Baptist and 2 to 3 percent other religions. Compared to Canada, among Germany's Soviet-origin ethnic German immigrants in the1970s there were more Lutherans (43 percent) and Baptists (15

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[53] See Hans P. Werner, "Volksdeutsche, D.P.'s, Germans: The 'Official' Identity of Postwar German Immigrants," in *1945 in Canada and Germany: Viewing the Past through the Present,* eds. Hans Braun and Wolfgang Kloos, (Kiel: l&f Verlag, 1996), 29-36.

[54] A survey of the German experience in the Soviet Union is in Adam Giesinger, *From Catherine to Khruschev: The Story of Russia's Germans* (Battleford, Sask.: Author, 1974). See also Conrad Keller, *The German Colonies in* South *Russia 1804-1904*, trans. Anthony Becker, 2nd edition revised by Adam Giesinger (Lincoln, Neb.: American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1980). For an analysis of the German ethnic group from the Soviet point of view see Sergej Tscheschko, "Das Problem der deutschen Ethnie in der UdSSR," trans. Thomas Peterson, *BIOS: Zeitschrift fur Biographieforschung und Oral History* 1 (1990): 55-60.

[55] It has been argued that the two streams of immigrants should be considered 'one people'. See: Nikolaus Arndt, "The Interrelationships Among the Various Groups of Germans in Russia," *Journal of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia* 6 (1983): 3-5.

percent). There were fewer Mennonites (10 percent) and Catholics (30 percent). Polish-origin ethnic German immigrants arriving in Germany in the 1970s were, however, mostly Catholic.[56] In both Bielefeld and Winnipeg the proportions of Mennonites and Baptists were much higher than these national averages suggest and the numbers of Lutherans, and of Catholics in particular, were correspondingly lower.[57] The availability of sources, both written and oral, has limited this study to the Protestant—Lutheran, Mennonite and Baptist—immigrant groups.

Nancy Green's suggestion that the study of immigrants automatically "embodies a host of comparisons," is true for this study.[58] A comparison of ethnic German integration in the two cities also entails an explicit comparison of integration in different economic periods, between immigrants with differing times of exposure to Soviet policies and culture, and between different religious sub-groupings. Implicitly ethnic Germans are also being compared to other migrants of the same time period, whether guest workers from Mediterranean countries arriving in Bielefeld or immigrants of other ethnic origins in Winnipeg.

The basic similarities of the immigrant sources and of the receiving societies, as Kocka reminds us, make apparent the differences between the experiences of integration. Winnipeg and Bielefeld are both medium sized cities—regional rather than national or international centres. The two cities permit an examination of integration in environments where particular immigrant experiences are more likely to affect the general society and

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[56] For further discussion of the breakdown of religious denominations among ethnic Germans, see Chapter Six.

[57] See Table A-3 and A-7 in the Appendix.

[58] Green, *Ready-to-Wear and Ready-to-Work*, 9.

are more easily observed. Winnipeg and Bielefeld also share a history of integrating migrants into their economies and cultures. Bielefeld was home to many expellees and refugees from former German territories in the aftermath of World War II, before ethnic Germans from the East began arriving. Winnipeg had been a polyglot community decades before the arrival of ethnic Germans, other displaced persons, and other immigrants of the postwar period. The flows to both cities featured a high percentage of immigrants who, having originated in the Soviet Union, had experienced both the oppression of Communism and the anti-German sentiments of Soviet society. In both cities there were significant numbers of sectarian Baptist and Mennonite immigrants among ethnic German newcomers.[59]

Along with significant similarities in the receiving environments, there were also important similarities in the historically shaped mentalities of the two immigrant flows. Migrants who settled in the East over the centuries maintained the German language and German cultural elements in the midst of Slavic peoples right up to the time of their migration. This shared experience of living as Germans next to Slavic cultures was important to the Germans' self-understanding. Ethnic Germans who migrated to Winnipeg and Bielefeld were leaving a society in which their ancestors had settled as a distinct linguistic and cultural minority. Their migration to two new worlds, one in Germany where they were ostensibly returning to their cultural origins, and the other in Canada where an increasingly multi-cultural self-definition of the nation prevailed,

[59] The percentage of Soviet origin immigrants among Bielefeld's immigration total in the 1970s is estimated to be sixty percent. *Sozial u. Wohnungswesenasschuß Protokolle, 18.12.79,* Bielefeld Stadtarchiv, (hereafter BSA). Similar statistics for Winnipeg are unavailable although almost all Mennonites, a high percentage of Winnipeg's ethnic German immigrants, came from the Soviet Union.

allows for an analysis of the strategies and choices made by immigrants in these two distinctive cultural milieus.

Figure 1. Eastern European Origins of Ethnic German Immigrants

In the broadest sense, the events marking this movement of peoples are bracketed on one side by Mackenzie King's 1947 declaration in the Canadian House of Commons that Canada would open its doors to refugees from war torn Europe. The other temporal boundary is the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, which signalled the end of the Cold War that had cast its shadow over twentieth century ethnic German life and migration. It also opened the floodgates of immigration from Eastern Europe. Between 1990 and 1995 a wave of 1.5 million ethnic Germans came to Germany, raising a new challenge to that

society's ability to absorb them.[60] The integration of these immigrants and the effect of this dramatic event on subsequent generations of the ethnic Germans under examination here is beyond the scope of this study.

The integration experiences of this study are bounded even more narrowly by the specifics of the two migrations. Winnipeg's immigrants began arriving in late 1947; the numbers arriving annually peaked in the years between 1951 and 1955, and then fell to a trickle by the 1960s. By 1961 some 5700 ethnic Germans had arrived in the city. The Winnipeg part of this comparison examines the integration of this generation of immigrants. For Bielefeld immigrants, the thaw in Soviet-German relations in 1970 signalled the beginning of their migration. During the 1970s, 7000 immigrants arrived in Bielefeld. Controversies surrounding the stationing of Warsaw Pact missiles in the East, and the threat of retaliatory missile deployment by NATO in the West, soured East-West relations in the latter half of the 1970s and the numbers of immigrants began to decline.[61] Arrivals from the Soviet Union for all of Germany, for instance, declined from 9704 immigrants in 1976 to a low of 460 in 1985. Although some immigrants continued to arrive in the 1980s the immigrants who arrived in Bielefeld in the 1970s are the primary subjects of the Bielefeld part of this comparison.

The sources for this study are diverse. Such extensive comparisons must rely on the work of other investigators particularly for the analysis of quantitative data. Much of the available German literature on the subject of ethnic German immigration is concerned

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[60] Harald W Lederer, *Migration und Integration in Zahlen* (Bamberg: Europäisches Forum für Migrationsstudien, CD-ROM edition, 1997), sec. 2.3.

[61] Alfred Eisfeld, "Rußland/Sowjetunion," *Informationen zur politischen Bildung,* 222 (München: Franzis-Verlag, 1989), 22.

with the problems of integrating the arrivals of 1989 and thereafter. Nevertheless, there is a substantial collection of secondary literature on this topic at the University of Bielefeld Library, and there are extensive holdings on the subject of Germans in Eastern Europe at the *Osteuropa Institute* in München. Also relevant are the publications of the *Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Rußland* at their offices in Stuttgart. The University of Manitoba Library and the collection of secondary sources on the German-Canadian experience assembled by the University of Winnipeg were sufficient for the study of Canadian and North American immigration scholarship.

In order to understand not only the results of choices made by immigrants but also how those choices were made and then reflected in individual lives, this study relies in part on immigrant narratives. Interviews and life-writings are integral to uncovering the motivations, compromises, and changing perceptions of immigrants over time.[62] As an interviewer for the German-Canadian Oral History project of the Chair in German-Canadian Studies at the University of Winnipeg I conducted seven interviews with ethnic Germans in Winnipeg that form a significant part of the dozen or so interviews in this collection. The increasing numbers of life writings, both in Canada and in Germany, in the form of memoirs and contributions to newspapers, have also been a valuable source. Reading the stories of ethnic Germans as portrayed in their own writings deepens one's understanding of their experience but, to an even greater extent, so do personal interviews. During three visits to Germany, including stays in Bielefeld of varying lengths of up to three weeks at a time, I gained a sense of both the immigrant and host

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[62] Dirk Hoerder, *Creating Societies: Immigrant Lives in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), ix.

society that were invaluable to my work. In addition to the eight German interviewees identified in the bibliography, I owe a debt of gratitude to those who helped me to arrange visits to church services, to conduct informal visits with ethnic Germans over meals, and to participate in individual discussions with immigrants in their homes and often where they were surrounded by their extended families.

The Bielefeld city archives newspaper clipping collection has been the source for the German newspaper articles cited throughout the thesis. This very accessible collection of newspaper clippings from all the Bielefeld newspapers of the period included a section organized under the title "Expellees, Refugees, and Associations." All clippings from the 1950 to 1989 period were examined. A similar collection from the *Winnipeg Tribune* located at the University of Manitoba Archives at the Elizabeth Dafoe Library provided convenient access to the articles in that newspaper on the theme of immigration from 1946 through 1960. Newspaper sources also included the *Winnipeg Free Press* articles for 1949 and 1950 and a selection of specific articles drawn from the years between 1947 and 1990. These were selected to coincide with major policy announcements and immigration and community events. The Canadian German-language newspaper published in Winnipeg, *Der Nordwesten* was read from 1947 to 1955 and parallel articles were examined in its counterpart, *Der Courier.* A useful index and the suggestions of the resident indexer at the Mennonite Heritage Centre helped to identify relevant articles in the German language Mennonite newspaper *Der Bote*. Newspaper reports have been valuable in providing insight into the dominant society's responses to the strangers who showed up in its neighbourhoods, schools and work places.

The deliberations of city committees charged with settlement of ethnic Germans in Bielefeld are recorded in minutes and reports in the collection of city records at the Bielefeld city archives. In Canada, the details of processing, transporting and settling ethnic Germans was uncovered by an examination of the minutes, correspondence and the entire collection of the extensive case files of the Canadian Lutheran World Relief and the Baptist World Alliance located at the National Archives in Ottawa. The records of the other main church immigration agency, the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, were examined at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. The materials made available from Alexander Neufeld's personal files in Bielefeld, the personal papers in the Hans and Sonja Roeder Collection at the National Archives in Ottawa, and other small collections of the records of ethnic organizations have permitted a better understanding of internal cultural conflicts, contests and changing strategies.

The first part of this study explores the setting for integration. Chapter One examines the environment of the city and how the history of Winnipeg and Bielefeld as receiving societies informed local expectations for ethnic German immigrants. Chapter Two examines these questions on a national level, exploring host society discourse and policies of admission that set out perceptions of the value of ethnic Germans and projected their role in the society. Part Two focuses on the economic and spatial integration of the immigrants, the processes of finding a place to live, and the need for proximity to ethnic institutions, to family and to friends. The process of finding work, the importance of women's work to the immigrant family, and the path to prosperity are examined in Chapter Three for Winnipeg and in Chapter Four for Bielefeld. Part Three examines the issues important for social and cultural integration, the processes of

reproduction. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven in this section explore these questions in the context of family, church and language. The final section in Chapter Eight explores the theme of participation as expressed in citizenship, membership in associations, and involvement in political processes.

This study enters new ground by focusing on immigrant integration in a transnational comparative context. Similar people left the same parts of the world in reasonably like circumstances to make new homes for themselves within similar, modern, capitalist, urban societies in two national contexts. Their experiences of integration actually differed quite markedly. To what degree, and why, is my subject.

PART ONE: THE SETTING

Chapter One: The City as Receiving Society: Forming Collective Memories of Immigration

Sociologist Robert E. Park, an early student of American cities, characterized the city as being "rooted in the habits and customs of the people who inhabit it." As a result, he suggested, "the city possesses a moral as well as a physical organization, and these two mutually interact in characteristic ways to mold and modify one another."[63] Migration is an inherent feature of cities. Integrating newcomers is a continuous process if a hamlet is to become a city and it is patterned on habits and customs born of the collective and cumulative memories of those who came earlier.

The site in northwest Germany that became the city of Bielefeld was at the entry to a convenient path through the Teutoburger Forest. The Ravensberg nobility of the thirteenth century established a town at this location because of their desire for revenues from customs and duties on goods travelling between the Rhineland and Lübeck on the Baltic Sea, or from Münster and Osnabrück to Magdeburg via Hameln.[64] On the Canadian prairies the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, both major transportation arteries before the railway age, was a meeting point for aboriginal peoples

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[63] Robert E. Park, *Human Communities: The City and Human Ecology* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1952), 16.

[64] Rolf Botzet, "Märkte, Gilden, Tagelöhner: Alltagsleben im mittelalterlichen Bielefeld," in *Stadtbuch Bielefeld: Tradition und Fortschritt in der ostwestfälischen Metropole,* ed. Andreas Beaugrand (Bielefeld: Westfalen Verlag, 1996), 32 and Reinhard Vogelsang, "Die Stadtgründung im Bielefeld: Über die mittelalterlichen Anfänge der heutige Großstadt", in Beaugrand, 28.

and the place where Lord Selkirk's Scottish settlers established a colony in the early years of the nineteenth century. The colony eventually became Winnipeg.

To become cities, these fledgling settlements had to be receiving societies for migrants, whether from the hinterlands outside the city gates or from across the sea. The arrival and integration of ethnic Germans in the 1950s and the 1970s was but another chapter in the history of newcomers contributing to the growth of Winnipeg and Bielefeld. The two cities had a history of integrating newcomers. Both had experienced specific periods when the arrival of migrants was traumatic although the memory resulted in different expectations for ethnic German immigrants. Thus, historical patterns of migration and integration in the two cities shaped their collective mentality as receiving societies and framed the social meaning of being an immigrant for ethnic Germans.

The city's collective memory of being a receiving society and the influences of that memory on subsequent processes of integration has received little attention in analysis of the immigrant experience. Many studies of urban immigration move quickly from a cursory account of the development of the city to specific analysis of a particular ethnic group's place in it. An exception to works examining a single group has been the large body of literature analyzing the spatial character of the city, that is, its patterns of residential settlement. This thrust of scholarly attention has, however, restricted the question of immigrant integration in cities to a quantitative measurement of ethnic residential segregation. Jürgen Friederichs' statement that residential segregation is a

"central aspect (and indicator) of the integration process" is representative of the emphasis in this type of analysis.[65]

In order to understand Bielefeld and Winnipeg as receiving societies emphasis must extend beyond a study of the residential distribution of migrants. Samuel Baily, in his comparison of Italians in New York and Buenos Aires, concluded that "the receiving environments ...varied dramatically and significantly affected immigrants' adjustment." The differences included the economy, the host society perceptions of Italians, and the character of local cultures.[66] Kay Anderson goes even further. She describes Vancouver's Chinatown, a few blocks of Dupont, Carrall and Columbia Streets, as "a social construct"

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[65] Jürgen Friedrichs, "Ethnic Segregation in Cologne, Germany, 1984-94," *Urban Studies* 35 (1998): 1745. For an overview of the theoretical basis for the concept and its application see Ronald van Kempan and A. Sule Özüekren, "Ethnic Segregation in Cities: New Forms and Explanations in a Dynamic World," *Urban Studies* 35 (1998): 1631-1656. A reexamination is Eric Fong and Rima Wilkes, "The Spatial Assimilation Model Reexamined: An Assessment by Canadian Data," *International Migration Review* 33 (1999): 594-620. European segregation research includes: John O'Loughlin, "Distribution and Migration of Foreigners in German Cities," *The Geographical Review* 70 (1980): 254-275 and Petros Petsimeris, "Urban Decline and the New Social and Ethnic Divisions in the Core Cities of the Italian Industrial Triangle," *Urban Studies* 35 (1998): 449-465. For a comparison of segregation in Canadian cities see T.R. Balakrischnan, "Ethnic Residential Segregation in the Metropolitan Areas of Canada," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 1 (1976): 481-498. Segregation in Winnipeg has been the subject of a number of studies. See for instance: Ronald D. Fromson, "Acculturation or Assimilation: A Geographic Analysis of Residential Segregation of Selected Ethnic Groups: Metropolitan Winnipeg 1951-1961" (M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1965); Peter Matwijiw, "Ethnicity and Urban Residence: Winnipeg, 1941-1971," *Canadian Geographer* 23 (1979): 45-61; Leo Driedger and Glenn Church, "Residential Segregation and Institutional Completeness: A Comparison of Ethnic Minorities," *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 11 (1974): 30-52, and Bernard D. Thraves, "New Immigrant Groups and Urban Residence in Winnipeg," *Prairie Forum* 16 (1991): 95-104.

[66] Baily, "Adjustment of Italian Immigrants", 297.

of the white European receiving society within which it was situated."[67] This chapter pursues an approach that privileges specific collective memories in seeking to understand how newcomers were incorporated into Winnipeg and Bielefeld society. Thomas Bender and Carl Schorske, in a collection of essays comparing New York and Budapest, argue that incorporating new migrants into the city is "a historically situated and differential process, not a universal one."[68] Winnipeg and Bielefeld demonstrate the uniqueness of that process.

The transfer in 1870 of the vast Hudson's Bay Company lands to the newly constituted Canadian nation triggered a wave of optimism for settlement of the expanses of the Canadian West. Aggressive promotion of Winnipeg, a disorganized collection of buildings connected by muddy ruts, as gateway to that west was an important feature of the city's culture. The little community near the Hudson's Bay Company fort at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers was formally incorporated as the 'City' of Winnipeg in 1874. In keeping with the view that the new West was to be an opportunity for Central Canadian expansion, most of Winnipeg's newcomers were from Ontario and the models of organization they brought were reflected in the charter of the new City of

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[67] Kay J. Anderson, "The Idea of Chinatown: The Power of Place and Institutional Practice in the Making of a Racial Category," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77 (1987): 594.

[68] Thomas Bender and Carl E. Schorske, eds., *Budapest and New York: Studies in Metropolitan Transformation, 1870-1930* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1994), 18-19.

Winnipeg. Property qualifications, the ward system, and even dates of elections were identical to those of Ontario.[69]

In the first years following incorporation the community continued to be a receiving society primarily for fellow Ontarians. As the historian of Winnipeg Alan Artibise points out, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon, Ontario born businessmen were "at one and the same time a social, cultural, and, above all, commercial elite."[70] These leaders were eager to establish a receiving society on a grand scale and undertook promotional efforts to stimulate immigration. Initial efforts remained focused on Anglo-Saxon newcomers as city fathers sent promotional literature to over seven hundred libraries in Great Britain and two hundred and fifty in Ontario. The inadequate response of fellow Anglo-Saxons changed the target of their advertising campaign. By 1885 promotional literature had been translated into most North European languages and efforts to attract immigrants

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[69] Studies of Winnipeg's urban history include the seminal studies by Alan F.J. Artibise, *Winnipeg A Social History of Urban Growth 1874-1914* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975); Alan F.J. Artibise, *Winnipeg: An Illustrated History* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1977), and Alan F.J. Artibise and Edward H. Dahl, *Winnipeg Maps 1816-1972* (Ottawa: National Map Collection, 1975). More limited studies examining particular ethnic groups and relations between groups include: Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainians in Winnipeg's First Century* (Toronto: Kobzar Publishing Co, 1974); Henry Trachtenberg, "Unfriendly Competitors: Jews, Ukrainians and Municipal Politics in Winnipeg's Ward 5, 1911-1914," in *A Sharing of Diversities: Proceedings of the Jewish, Mennonite, Ukrainian Conference, "Building Bridges"* ed. Fred Stambrook (Regina: Jewish Mennonite Ukrainian Committee and Canadian Plains Research Center, 1999), 135-156; Arthur Grenke, *The German Community in Winnipeg 1872 to 1919* (New York: AMS Press, 1991), and Arthur A. Chiel, *The Jews in Manitoba: A Social History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961).

[70] Artibise, *Social History,* 36.

were directed not only at Great Britain and Ontario, but at the United States and Northern Europe as well.[71]

Immigrants in the 1885 to 1914 period came in large numbers not only from these areas but also from Eastern Europe. Winnipeg grew dramatically when the West's appeal as a new frontier for settlers began to take hold. In the twenty-five year period between 1881 and 1916 the city's population grew from 7,985 to 163,000. Although most foreign-born residents of Winnipeg remained Anglo-Saxon, Slavic migrants from Russia, Poland, Galicia, and Bukowina accounted for the most dramatic increase among the foreign-born in the period, reaching 14.4 percent of the population in 1916. Other significant groups included Icelandic, Scandinavian and German immigrants.[72]

The rate of arrival of newcomers and the high percentage of immigrants who arrived speaking different languages and with different cultures left a lasting imprint on Winnipeg. James Gray, a journalist who grew up in Winnipeg's North End around the First World War, was convinced "the city was totally unprepared for the mass influx that hit after the turn of the century." He remembers canvassers for the city's *Henderson Directory* who, "when they came to a family with an unpronounceable name, or an unspellable name, ...simply used the word 'foreigner' which seemed to satisfy everybody." [73] Alan Artibise believes:

> the racial and religious characteristics of the immigrant population served as a provisional base for society.... The various ethnic groups, with their unique backgrounds, culture, and living standards, each had their own

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[71] Ibid., 104-105.

[72] Ibid., 140.

[73] James Gray, *The Boy from Winnipeg* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1970), 3-4.

> reaction to the Winnipeg environment and in time helped shape that environment."[74]

However, in spite of the numbers and variety of immigrants the city's dominant culture remained British. Those whose ancestry was in the British Isles accounted for 67 percent of the city's population in 1921 and their hold on political power and economic decision-making was not relinquished in the first half of the century.[75]

Until the First World War, the dominant Anglo-Saxon group remained confident that it was possible to 'assimilate' newcomers in spite of the reservations of labour groups who believed continued promotion of immigration threatened their jobs and wages.[76] The school, church and labour union were seen as important tools to integrate newcomers. Such was the view of James Woodsworth, the later champion of social democracy in Canada and superintendent of the Methodist All People's Mission in Winnipeg before the First World War. While at the mission, Woodsworth wrote a book in which he outlined his concerns about Winnipeg's capacity as a receiving society in the face of what to him seemed an onslaught of 'foreigners.' Woodsworth reflected views common among Winnipeg's dominant society, if not its aggressively expansionist commercial elite. The later public discourse that classified Germans in the category of desirable immigrants already appears in Woodsworth's thoughts. In *Strangers Within our*

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[74] Artibise, *Social History*, 138.

[75] Artibise, *Illustrated History*, 204.

[76] An article that examined the editorial pages of Winnipeg's three daily newspapers of the day, the *Winnipeg Free Press,* the *Winnipeg Tribune,* and the *Telegram/Nor'Wester* concluded that "each eulogized the social and political institutions of the British empire and viewed the assimilation of the foreign settler into the British way of life as an integral and imperative part of the colonization process." See John C. Lehr and D. Wayne Moodie, "The Polemics of Pioneer Settlement: Ukrainian Immigration and the Winnipeg Press," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 12 (1980): 93.

Gates, he placed non-Anglo Saxon immigrants on a scale; Germans were "our best immigrants" and "easily assimilated." Ukrainians, most of who came from the region of Galicia, were among the less desirable immigrants, were "despised" and believed to be difficult to Canadianize and their state of origin was "almost a term of reproach."[77]

Regardless of their place in the hierarchy Woodsworth believed education to be a powerful tool in making immigrants into Canadians. He placed high value on the school and labour union as agents of 'assimilation.' When he wrote the book in 1909, Roman Catholic schools and schools based on languages other than English were allowed in Winnipeg and it was not mandatory to attend a school of any kind. Woodsworth believed that universal public education would contribute greatly to making good citizens out of newcomers.[78] Some sense of the immensity of such a task was conveyed in the recollections of W.J. Sisler, an educator and administrator in the city. He asked readers of his memoirs to "imagine if you can a young girl, herself only a few years out of school, facing a class of fifty children, none of whom could understand a word that she said; nor could the teacher understand a word spoken by her pupils." The difficulty of the task overwhelmed educators and there were serious disagreements about how best to teach newcomers English. Sisler advocated the "direct method," a method of teaching English where the teacher need have no knowledge of the student's language. Sisler argued that if anything a teacher's knowledge of the newcomer's language hindered the rapid

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[77] James S. Woodsworth, *Strangers within our Gates or Coming Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 84 and 110.

[78] This view was shared by the influential editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, J.W. Dafoe who, according to his biographer, began "a campaign which he vowed would never end until education in Manitoba was compulsory, secular, and conducted in English." See Murray Donnelly, *Dafoe of the Free Press* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), 58.

acquisition of English language skills. Other educators along with virtually all immigrant parents disagreed and clamoured for teachers who could speak immigrant languages.[79]

Although the energy of the church, the school and the labour union was consumed by the task of helping newcomers 'fit in' to British Winnipeg's model of society, ethnic groups in the city lived largely separate lives. The separate world of immigrants was reflected in the spatial divisions of the city. What came to be called 'The North End' was north of the CPR tracks and west of the Red River and was home to Jews, Germans, Slavs, and working class British. Separated from the rest of the city by railway tracks and possessing few suitable crossing points, the North End was also separated economically and socially from the British Canadian elites and middle class.[80]

The First World War severely tested Winnipeg's mettle as a receiving society. The war aroused the nativist feelings of Anglo-Canadians in Winnipeg and non-Anglo Saxon immigrants were subjected to even greater discrimination than before. Some immigrants were interned, others suffered discrimination in the work place, and many were the victims of physical and verbal abuse in the streets. Although not German, Slavic Galicians were also branded as the enemy because their homeland was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Publication of German and Ukrainian ethnic newspapers was banned, cultural and club halls of immigrant groups were closed or vandalised, and individuals were subjected to the taunts and violence of mobs of angry returning soldiers even after

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[79] W.J. Sisler, *Peaceful Invasion* (Winnipeg, author, 1944), 19, 27-28 and Krawchuk, *Ukrainians in Winnipeg,* 26.

[80] W.J. Carlyle, "Growth, Ethnic Groups and Socio-Economic Areas of Winnipeg," in *Winnipeg 1874-1974: Progress and Prospects*, ed. Tony J. Kuz (Winnipeg: Manitoba Department of Industry Trade and Commerce, 1974), 27-42.

the war ended.[81] The 1919 Winnipeg General Strike was blamed on foreign workers who were significant in number among rank and file strikers but otherwise played only a limited role in an event organized by English speaking labour leaders.[82] Tensions with the 'foreign' elements in the population peaked during and immediately after the war, but the crisis also seemed to signal the last throes of virulent anti-foreigner sentiments among the population. James Woodsworth's close contact with immigrant workers caused him to modify his stance about both the possibility and desirability of assimilation even before the war. In 1913 Woodsworth had already revisited the question of immigration in a series of articles he wrote for the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Allen Mills, his biographer, suggests that in these articles Woodsworth "was trying to embrace a more pluralistic account of the country's character."[83]

Coming to terms with the 'foreign' element was, however, a slow process for Winnipeg's dominant society as was illustrated by a 1919 national conference on citizenship organized by local businessmen. Some participants, such as Marcus Hyman, a Winnipeg lawyer who had defended jailed strike leaders, "rejected criticisms of European

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[81] Krawchuk, *Ukrainians in Winnipeg,* 36-37 and Arthur Grenke, "The German Community of Winnipeg and the English-Canadian Response to World War I," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 20 (1988): 21-44. On January 26, 1919 riots broke out after soldiers disrupted memorial services organized by socialists. A number of German businesses were looted and Germans and Ukrainians were beaten and forced to kiss the British flag. The facilities of the German-Hungarian Club, the Prosvita Reading Society and the Ukrainian Labour Temple were also attacked. Grenke, *German Community*, 174; Krawchuk, *Ukrainians in Winnipeg,* 37.

[82] David J. Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg: Labour, Industrial Relations , and the General Strike* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974), 125-126.

[83] Allen Mills, *Fool for Christ: The Political Thought of J.S. Woodsworth* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 47. See also Bellay, "Pluralism and Race," 125.

workers as bearers of alien and destructive ideologies."[84] John MacKay, principal of Manitoba College, also denied "the notion that the creation of a Canadian nation required cultural assimilation of all into a common Canadianism." MacKay and John Boyd of the Canadian National League advanced the idea that Canadian "nationhood could be rooted in a political citizenship that accommodated wide cultural diversity."[85] However, the "case for cultural diversity advanced by McKay and Boyd made little impact on the conference delegates." The majority passed resolutions endorsing traditional Anglo-Canadian organizations such as Boy Scouts and the Young Men's Christian Association and encouraged the government to ensure that adequate numbers of teachers introduced immigrants to British institutions and ideals.[86]

The war years and their immediate aftermath gradually tempered the relationship between the dominant Anglo-Saxon and immigrant groups. Alan Artibise attributes the easing of ethnic tensions in Winnipeg after 1921 to a slowdown in the number of arrivals and the "wider variety of ethnic origin categories, social classes, and occupations" of later immigrants.[87] The depression of the 1930s reduced immigration to a trickle and Winnipeg, like the rest of Canada, struggled with an unemployment problem that seemed to respect no one's ethnic heritage. When the Second World War began, labour demands

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[84] Tom Mitchell, "'The Manufacture of Souls of Good Quality': Winnipeg's 1919 National Conference on Canadian Citizenship, English-Canadian Nationalism, and the New Order After the Great War," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 31 (1996-97): 17-21. The conference attracted 1500 hundred delegates including "university professors, school teachers, economists, editors, preachers, manufacturers and businessmen from across English-speaking Canada." (p.7)

[85] Ibid., 20.

[86] Ibid., 21.

[87] Artibise, *Illustrated History*, 132.

assured work for everyone and, with the exception of Japanese Canadians, ethnic origins were increasingly overlooked. There were few internments of Germans or Ukrainians during the Second World War and there was little discrimination or overt abuse of ethnic minorities in public or in Winnipeg newspapers.[88]

Winnipeg's post 1945 immigrants faced a different receiving society than that of their predecessors before the First World War. One of the changes was the range of benefits available to them in a developing welfare state. In addition to the considerable services provided by church and community organizations, immigrants also benefited from a national unemployment insurance system, mothers' allowances, and other improvements in health, welfare, and workers' compensation schemes.[89] The city was again in an optimistic mood and there was hope that it would return to the growth and prosperity of the pre-1914 era.

Winnipeg's postwar optimism was misplaced. The city faced continued sluggish growth and "the grey pall of pragmatism hung heavy over all areas of provincial life," as

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[88] During the Second World War, 847 Germans were interned although only 20 remained in custody as of August, 1945. They were predominantly German nationals and members of one of three German organizations. They were also urban with most coming from Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. See Robert H. Keyserlingk, "Breaking the Nazi Plot: Canadian Government Attitudes Towards German Canadians, 1939-1945," in *We Stand on Guard for Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, 1939-1945,* eds. Norman Hillmer, Bohdan Kordan and Lubomyr Luciuk (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1988), 53-64 and Barbara Lorenzkowski, "'Spies, 'Saboteurs', and 'Subversives': German-Canadian Internees and the Wartime Discourse at the Canadian Homefront, 1939-1945," in *A Chorus of Different Voices: German-Canadian Identities*, eds. Angelika E. Sauer and Matthias Zimmer (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1998), 166-185.

[89] Franca Iacovetta, "Making 'New Canadians': Social Workers, Women, and the Reshaping of Immigrant Families," in *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History,* eds. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 267.

Manitoba historian W.L. Morton described it.[90] Winnipeg was no longer the 'Gateway to the West' and places like Calgary and Edmonton became the new centres of growth. In spite of having to sustain itself on internal growth there was, however, considerable activity in some sectors of the city's economy. Many German and later Italian immigrants of the postwar period found employment in the construction industry.[91] Pent-up demand for housing due to wartime constraints followed by rising numbers of postwar baby boom children meant that many houses and schools had to be built. Many immigrants were able to find jobs and business opportunities in the building trades to satisfy these postwar construction demands.

As a receiving society Winnipeg became home to two streams of migrants in the postwar period. The first included former residents of rural areas of Manitoba, the second immigrants who came as part of the large postwar immigration movement from Europe. Both streams diminished in size in the late 1950s, after which steady but much lower numbers of newcomers continued to arrive. By the 1961 census, 49,516 people in the Winnipeg metropolitan area identified themselves as immigrants of the 1946-1961 period. They constituted 10.4 percent of the population and, reflecting the low rates of immigration of the interwar years, postwar immigrants comprised 43.8 percent of the city's total foreign-born population. Ten years later, in 1971, postwar immigrant numbers had climbed to 64,490, 11.9 percent of the metropolitan population.[92]

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[90] W.L. Morton, *Manitoba: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957): 466. See also Artibise, *Illustrated History,* 163.

[91] For the Italian experience in Winnipeg see: Stanislao Carbone, *Italians in Winnipeg: An Illustrated History* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1998), 53.

[92] *Census of Canada,* 1961 and 1971.

There were significant changes to the countries of origin of Winnipeg's immigrants when compared to the pre-First World War migrations. Over 21 percent were British, but up to 1961 the largest single group, comprising 29 percent of the total, was German.[93] The ethnic composition of Winnipeg's population changed not only due to immigration but also due to rural-urban migration. The population of the metropolitan area grew by 121,920 or 34.4 percent in the ten years between 1951 and 1961 with British and German ethnic groups growing by 30,405 (16.6 percent) and 25,707 (104.9 percent) respectively. Russian, Polish, Dutch and 'Other European' groups also gained in numbers dramatically.[94] While population growth in the next ten years, from 1961 to 1971, was about one-half that of the 1950s, the arrival of Germans continued at only a slightly less hectic pace.

Statistics of immigrants indicating Manitoba as their destination illustrate the changes in origins of the new arrivals in the period after 1962. Italians, who had numbered only 2,455 in 1951, grew in number to form a community of 5,785 people in 1961 and 9,395 by 1971.[95]Newcomers arriving from the Philippines and the West Indies numbered 2,237 and 1,953. Most of them came in the five years after 1967.[96] The

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[93] See Table A-2 in the Appendix.

[94] The categories of 'German', 'Dutch', and 'Other European' create some confusion in identifying ethnic German immigrants among these immigrants, particularly for Mennonite ethnic Germans. Mennonites who migrated to Manitoba in the 1870s, 1920s and in the postwar period to Winnipeg from Russia have claimed both Dutch and German ethnic identities. In the cross-tabulations prepared for the Metropolis Project based on the 1991 census, 78.8 percent of Mennonites claimed German and 22.2 percent Dutch ethnic origin. The census allowed for multiple responses to the question.

[95] *Census of Canada,* 1961 and 1971.

[96] *Immigration Statistics,* annual issues, 1962-1972, (Ottawa: Department of Citizenship and Immigration, 1962-1972). The number arriving in Winnipeg is not

increase in Winnipeg's immigrants from areas such as the Philippines and the West Indies reflected changes to Canada's admission policies that emphasized non-discrimination with respect to ethnic origins or nationality.[97] The 1971 census reflected this next phase of immigration. The census category of 'Asiatic' more than doubled from 3,198 to 7,305 and the beginnings of a concentration of the Asian population was evident in the city's West End.[98]

Immigration to Winnipeg in the years after 1945, while significant, was not the overwhelming social challenge it had been before 1914. After the Second World War there was, however, a perceptible, if gradual change in Winnipeg's mentality as a receiving society. There seemed to be a greater capacity to accommodate newcomers, fostered to a large extent by the flexible attitude and reduced expectations of the host society. The horror of Nazi Germany's treatment of Jews and other minorities seemed to cause Canadians to reconsider the sharply nativist sentiments apparent in places like Winnipeg in the period before the First World War.[99]

Although Winnipeg became increasingly tolerant of immigrant newcomers in the postwar period change in attitudes did not come overnight. One study of the Citizenship

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available for most years; however in 1980, 76 percent of those destined for Manitoba were intending to settle in the city. By 1986 it was 91 percent. See *Immigration to Manitoba: A Statistical Overview* (Ottawa: Employment and Immigration Canada, 1989).

[97] Anthony H. Richmond and Warren E. Kalbach, *Factors in the Adjustment of Immigrants and their Descendents* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, Statistics Canada, 1980), 61.

[98] *Census of Canada,* 1951, 1961 and 1971. Matwijiw, "Ethnicity and Urban Residence," 52.

[99] Howard Palmer, *Ethnicity and Politics in Canada Since Confederation* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991), 17.

Council of Manitoba, a middle class organization devoted to assisting immigrants, argues that the Council mirrored postwar attitudes towards immigrants prevalent in Winnipeg. During the first years after the Second World War the attitude of Winnipeg's middle class toward immigrants was one of paternalism. This attitude, reflected in the Citizenship Council's early committees, "was most clearly articulated by their assumptions that immigrant settlement was inherently problematic without intervention by Canadians, and that in order to be 'good' Canadians, immigrants needed to adopt the values of the host society."[100] The values of Canadian and Winnipeg society were assumed to be middle class and Christian, embracing hard work and responsible citizenship. There was, however, an emerging sense of a Canadian identity separate from a connection to Britain. Canada's first Citizenship Act, proclaimed in 1947, contributed to the creation of a new sense of being Canadian as opposed to the Britishness that had prevailed before the First World War.

Winnipeg also continued to become more cosmopolitan and tolerant in the late 1950s and 1960s. By 1961, 55 percent of the population of the city was non-British.[101] The introduction of official multiculturalism in 1971 formalized a growing acceptance of a more pluralistic Canada and reflected the growing influence of immigrant groups in the

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[100] Jennifer Rogalsky, "'Good Canadians in Every Sense': The Citizenship Council of Manitoba," (M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 2000), 29

[101] See Table A-4, Appendix. Karen Badgley argues that immigration officials did not keep up to the attitudes of the population and remained oriented to British immigrants as the ideal. Karen Badgley, "'As Long as He is an Immigrant from the United Kingdom': Deception, Ethnic Bias and Milestone Commemoration in the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, 1953-1965," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33 (1998): 130-144.

political life of the country.[102] In Winnipeg a significant number of immigrants rose in economic and social status in the 1950s and thereby gained acceptance by the previously Anglo dominated middle classes. Residential segregation, while still present, began to weaken or was maintained by choice, rather than through necessity. Jews moved in greater numbers from Winnipeg's North End to its more upscale River Heights and West Kildonan neighbourhoods. Ukrainians moved out of the North End but retained a preference for the northern half of the metropolitan area and Germans seemed to disperse all over the city.[103]

The approach toward immigrants, as reflected in the activities of the Citizenship Council, became less intent on promoting their assimilation to an Anglo-Saxon ideal. After 1965 the Citizenship Council began actively promoting a vision of Canada and Winnipeg as a plural society. The Council's leadership was taken over by a group of dynamic women, two of who were immigrants themselves. The new approach of the Council under their leadership allowed for immigrants to be "given the message that it was possible to belong within Canadian society without subverting their ethnicity."[104] In 1969 the group managed to persuade the city's mayor to provide them with facilities and the International Centre was created as a meeting place for ethnic groups, immigrants and the community. A year later the city also marked the first year of celebrating its ethnic

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[102] Allan Smith, "National Images and National Maintenance: The Ascendancy of the Ethnic Idea in North America," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 14 (1981), 235. See also Palmer, *Ethnicity and Politics*, 24.

[103] Artibise, *Illustrated History,* 174.

[104] Jennifer Rogalsky, "Good Canadians in Every Sense," 84.

diversity with Folkorama, a festival of ethnic culture and food held each year at venues throughout the city.

Bielefeld's story of receiving migrants is longer and, at least in the period before 1914, less traumatic. The early potential for trade in the little town on the edge of the Teutoberger Forest was encouraging and by the beginning of the fourteenth century Bielefeld's residents numbered a few thousand. The growing, mostly merchant population was attracted by the favourable trading privileges granted to the town.[105] The organization of life in Bielefeld in the Middle Ages followed the pattern of most towns in Europe and offered a certain freedom not found in the feudal countryside. Servants and craft labourers became the first migrants to the new settlement, leaving serfdom to live in the relative freedom of the town where they soon comprised half of the population.[106] Bielefeld's status as a medium-sized centre may have been foreordained as early as the fourteenth century when nobility centred in Düsseldorf inherited the town along with the other Ravensberg domains. Bielefeld remained a medium sized city exercising significant influence in the Detmold region of Westphalia, but never challenging the dominance of Düsseldorf, other Ruhr industrial cities, or the Frankfurts and Berlins of Europe.

By the middle of the eighteenth century Bielefeld's commercial activities had become much more specialized. The agricultural area surrounding the growing town was

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[105] For Bielefeld's history to the end of World War I see the two volumes by Reinhard Vogelsang, *Geschichte der Stadt Bielefeld: Band I, Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Bielefeld: Verlag Wolfgang Winkel, 1980) and *Geschichte der Stadt Bielefeld: Band II, Von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Bielefeld: Verlag fur Druckgrafik Hans Gieselmann, 1988).

[106] Botzet, "Märkte, Gilden, Tagelöhner," 32-39.

ideally suited to flax production and the resulting proliferation of peasant weavers made the city a centre for the trade of linen products. Before industrialization Bielefeld already had a reputation as the linen capital of the region.[107] Its growth, however, remained limited. In the late eighteenth century improvements in agriculture and the attendant increase in food supply increased Bielefeld's population as it did other towns in Western Europe. By the middle of the nineteenth century Bielefeld was a modest city of ten thousand inhabitants, the third largest in the region of Westphalia. The growth in Bielefeld's population prior to industrialization was, however, due to an excess of births over deaths rather than from an influx of newcomers.[108]

Industrialization brought increased migration of workers and their families and for the first time Bielefeld became a receiving society for significant numbers of newcomers. In the 1850s Bielefeld's textile merchants responded to mechanization in their industry by establishing a number of textile mills in what had formerly been a merchant town.[109] In the following decades, the textile industry spawned related activities in the metals industries including the production of sewing machines and bicycles, which gradually came to dominate the industrial sector before the First World War. Additional new industries in the food products sector manufactured baking powder and spices.[110] From

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[107] Vogelsang, *Geschichte, Band I*, 168.

[108] Friedrich W. Bratvogel, *Stadtentwicklung und Wohnverhältnisse in Bielefeld unter dem Einfluß der Industrialisierung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Dortmund: Gesellschaft fur Westfälische Wirtschaftsgeschichte e.v., 1989), 51.

[109] Vogelsang, *Geschichte, Band II*, 25-26.

[110] For an overview of Bielefeld's industrialization see: Karl Ditt, "Von der Industriellen Revolution zur Dienstleistungs-Ökonomie: Wirtschaftsgeschichte Bielefelds im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," in Beaugrand, 488-499. For a theoretical examination of industrialization that uses Bielefeld as a case study see Günther Schönbauer, *Die*

the small city of ten thousand before the mechanization of the textile industry, Bielefeld had grown to a city of 82,580 by the First World War. The city's identity as a town of bourgeois merchants and peasant weavers had also changed and its working class was now the dominant group numerically if not politically. Social mobility during industrialization meant that merchants and artisans moved downward into the ranks of working classes increasingly populated by growing numbers of skilled and semi-skilled factory workers.[111]

Even during industrialization, Bielefeld's population growth continued to be driven by high rates of natural increase. In the 1876 to 1915 period the total growth in population, not including the annexation of neighbouring areas, was 48,930, and natural increase accounted for two-thirds of the total. Upon closer examination, however, it is apparent the Bielefeld's role as a receiving society was much greater than population growth alone would suggest. During the period of industrialization Bielefeld's population was highly mobile. Although net population growth due to migration was small, the numbers of arriving and departing persons were much larger. In the years 1894 to 1915, for instance, migration contributed just over 12,000 persons to Bielefeld's population, but

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Industrialisierung Bielefelds in der 2. Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Eine soziologische Untersuchung zur Früh- und Hochindustrialisierung in Preußen (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1987).

[111] For an examination of social mobility in Bielefeld compared to other towns in Westfalen, see: Jürgen Kocka, "Family and Class Formation: Intergenerational Mobility and Marriage Patterns in Nineteenth-Century Westphalian Towns," *Journal of Social History* 17 (1984): 411-433.

during the same time 244,723 newcomers arrived in the city and 232,686 persons left it.[112]

Unlike Winnipeg, however, there were no 'foreigners' speaking a totally different language and bringing with them an exotic culture to challenge Bielefeld society. Before the First World War, the greatest percentage of newcomers arrived in Bielefeld from other places in Westphalia. In 1880, 51.1 percent of Bielefeld's population was born in the city while another 35.5 percent came from other areas of Westphalia. Only .6 percent arrived in the city from outside of Germany. Twenty-five years later, in 1905, the numbers of Bielefeld residents born in the city and in the region was still 44 and 29 percent respectively, with non-German arrivals only accounting for 1.1 percent of the population. Although cultural differences between indigenous Bielefelders and newcomers were much less pronounced than those between Winnipeg's host society and its newcomers, the high rate of population movement also presented challenges for the German city. Bielefeld historian Reinhard Vogelsang concludes that for an "increasing percentage of the population it must have been difficult to feel like Bielefelders and to identify themselves with the city. High demands were placed on the ability of the local population to assimilate newcomers and on the preparedness of newcomers to adjust to the mentality of the city."[113] The addition of neighbouring Gadderbaum to Bielefeld in 1900 increased its gross population, but the city's growth began to slow after 1900 due to

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[112] Vogelsang, *Geschichte, Band II*, 104-105. Vogelsang's explanation for these astonishing statistics is that for many people the industrial economy did not permit permanent residence, but rather Bielefeld became a temporary stopping off place for a highly mobile labour force.

[113] Ibid., 106.

decreasing rates of in-migration.[114] A further addition of territory to the city in 1930 explained that period's sudden jump in population but natural growth and migration continued to decline.[115]

If Winnipeg's collective memory of being overwhelmed as a receiving society was shaped by the influx of newcomers in the period before the First World War, Bielefeld's residents remembered the crisis that emerged after 1945. As the Second World War progressed Bielefeld's population steadily declined as men went into the army and women and children were evacuated from the city in response to Allied bombing. Most were transferred to areas further to the east in Upper Bavaria, Silesia and

Table 1. Bielefeld and Winnipeg: Population Growth, 1881-1941[116]

Year	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941
Winnipeg	7,985	25,639	42,340	136,035	179,087	218,785	224,252
Greater Winnipeg			48,488	156,969	229,212	294,905	302,024
Bielefeld	31,110	41,358	64,323	80,704	82,825	121,010*	128,209**

* 1933 **1939

[114] Bratvogel, *Stadtentwicklung,* 282-283.

[115] The neighbourhoods of Schildesche, Dornberg, Gellershagen, Theesen, Brake, Heepen, Oldentrup, Sieker and parts of Brackwede and Hoberge-Uerentrup were added in 1930. Jürgen Büschenfeld, "Stadtverfassung und Stadtverwaltung: Kommunale Strukturen im Zeitwandel," in Beaugrand, 62.

[116] Population figures for Winnipeg are from: Artibise, *Social History,* 130-131 and *Metropolitan Winnipeg Population Study 1961-1986* (Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg, Development Plan Branch, ca. 1966), Appendix Five. Bielefeld population is from Vogelsang, *Geschichte, Band II,* 103; Bratvogel, *Stadtenwicklung,* 282; Andreas Bootz, *Kultur in Bielefeld 1945-1960* (Bielefeld: AJZ Verlag, 1993), fn 3, 236 and Ditt, "Industriellen Revolution," 492.

and Austria.[117] Other Bielefelders simply moved into the countryside to avoid the nightly bombing. By April 1945 the city's population was cut in half to 69,446 people. Evacuation to the countryside coincided with declining living space in the city. Allied bombing caused increasing damage to the housing stock and by October 1942 a shortage of six thousand homes was reported.[118]

At the same time as Bielefelders were moving out into the country and to areas outside of Allied bombing range, the city was confronted by the influx of foreign labourers brought to Germany against their will from occupied Poland and the Soviet Union. A wartime chronicler writing from Bielefeld indicated that by 1944 "foreign workers, of which there are thousands in Bielefeld, dominate the streets before and after work." But he also presented a dismal view of these easterners' presence and status in the city. In 1943 he reported a great deal of ethnic conflict, documenting on one hand how "the many Ukrainian women working in Bielefeld's factories are to wear the label 'East' on their dresses and coats," and recording on the other hand, how the Slavic women taunted German women, suggesting, "next year German women would work in Russia."[119] The large numbers of foreign workers from the East were, however, a temporary phenomenon and their challenge to Bielefeld culture was transitory.

More important, however, in shaping attitudes to later arrival of ethnic Germans was the post-1945 influx of expellees from Eastern Europe and refugees fleeing East

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[117] The first group of children to be evacuated to rural areas left on December 16, 1940. Thomas Güntter and Arno Ley, eds., *"Wir waren froh, daß wir das Leben hatten": Bielefelder erleben die letzten Monate des Zweiten Welkriegs* (Bielefeld: Westfalen Verlags, 1995), 92.

[118] Bootz, *Kultur in Bielefeld,* 236 and Güntter, *Wir waren froh,* 94.

[119] Güntter, *Wir waren froh,* 95 and 97.

Germany who dramatically shaped the collective memory of Bielefeld as a receiving society. The memory of their arrival would influence expectations and offer models of integration for the ethnic German immigrants of this study when they arrived in Bielefeld in the 1970s. The expulsion of millions of Germans from Eastern Europe was a product of agreements made between the Allies at Yalta and Potsdam in 1945. Under these agreements, the borders of Poland were shifted to the west, placing areas with largely German populations in Polish territory. Eastern European countries were also permitted to expel their German populations, a task pursued aggressively and harshly by Poland and Czechoslovakia in particular. By 1950 almost eight million expellees had arrived in what had become West Germany.[120] The hardening of relations in the emerging Cold War and the resulting creation of a Communist East Germany resulted in the arrival of additional Soviet-zone refugees. Most expellees and Soviet-zone refugees left their former homelands on short notice and arrived in West Germany with little. They reached Bielefeld while the city was still reeling from extreme shortages of housing due to wartime destruction of the housing stock. By 1947 over seventeen thousand expellees, 13 percent of the population, lived in the city. Expellees and refugees continued to arrive

[120] After the war the German government set up a commission to document the experiences of Germans in the East between about 1944 and 1946. For an English excerpt from the findings see: Theodor Schieder, *Documentation on the Expulsion of Germans from Eastern-Central-Europe: a selection and translation from Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa*, 4 vols. (Bonn: Federal Ministry for Expellees, Refugees and War Victims, 1955-57). See also Gerhard Reichling, "Die Aussiedlung von Deutschen aus Osteuropa im Lichte der europäischen Nachkriegsentwicklung," *AWR (Association for the Study of the World Refugee Problem)* 15 (1977), 206 and Werner Nellner, "Die Wanderungen der Vertriebenen im Bundesgebiet—Vorraussetzung für ihre Wirtschaftliche Eingliederung," in ..*Aus Trümmern wurden Fundamente: Vertriebene/Flüchtlinge/Aussiedler Drei Jahrzehnte Integration*, ed. Hans Joachim von Merkatz (Düsseldorf: Walter Rau Verlag, 1979): 35-68.

unabated for the next few years, until, in 1954, 30.2 percent of Bielefeld's population consisted of these migrants.[121]

The expellee and Soviet-zone refugees were an important factor in the reconstruction of the German economy after the war. Migrants pouring in from the east contributed a cheap and mobile source of labour at a time when Germany's economy began to grow rapidly because of the combined stimulation of post war reconstruction and the Marshall Plan.[122] However, in Bielefeld as in other German cities, the economic benefit of these migrants was accompanied by the daunting task of finding ways to make them part of the city's life and society. Housing was the most critical problem and many Bielefeld families had to share their already stressed living arrangements with refugee newcomers. By 1950 there were 800 cases of living arrangements where more than four persons occupied one room.[123] The crowding and the lengthy period of having their personal space invaded by strangers became a prickly memory of the immediate postwar period for most Bielefelders. Integrating Germans from the East was also complicated by the unstable political future of their former territories in the context of a developing Cold War. As a result of the instability of the postwar European political scene, integration of these newcomers occurred under the shadow of a possible return to their former

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[121] Statistisches Amt der Stadt Bielefeld, *Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1. Jahrgang 1946-1950* (Bielefeld, 1950), Table 35, 47 and Idem, *Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1955*, (Bielefeld, 1955), Table 30, 21. For the origins of expellees in Bielefeld, see Bootz, *Kultur in Bielefeld,* 236. See also Statistisches Amt der Stadt Bielefeld, *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1. Jahrgang 1946-1950* (Bielefeld, 1950), Table 16, *"Die Wohnbevölkerung 1950 nach dem Wohnort am 1.9.1939 (nach der Volkszählung vom 13.9.1950).*

[122] Mary Fulbrook, *The Fontana History of Germany 1918-1990: The Divided Nation* (London: Fontana Press, 1991),184.

[123] Andreas Beaugrand ed., "Aufschwung in die fünfziger Jahre: Bielefeld's Weg zum 'Oberzentrum'," 91.

homelands. In the early years, most expellees and Soviet-zone refugees considered their stay temporary and maintained a stoic belief in their eventual return, a belief accompanied by active maintenance of their regional traditions and cultures.

In many ways Bielefeld's experience of the expellee and refugee phenomenon was exceptional. The city seemed to offer better prospects for employment in the immediate postwar reconstruction period and many Germans from the East were attracted to the city. Compared to the rest of Nordrhein-Westfalen Bielefeld received more than its share of these migrants. In 1950, when 17.3 percent of Bielefeld's population was expellees, the rest of Nordrhein-Westfalen averaged 7.8 percent and German cities with a population in excess of a hundred thousand averaged only 6.7 percent expellees in their populations.[124]

Integrating migrants from the East into the life of Bielefeld shaped the memory of the city for some time. In 1956 when the expellee movement had come to an end but while Soviet zone refugees were still arriving in the city, the *Neue Westfälische*, a Bielefeld newspaper, paused to reflect on the first days of the arrival of expellees.[125] According to the newspaper, when the first expellees had arrived in the city some eight years earlier "a hard time began, a new existence had to be established amidst general

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[124] Bootz, *Kultur in Bielefeld*, endnote 4, 236. Among seventeen cities listed by Nellner only two had a higher percentage of expellees in their populations. Nellner, "Die Wanderungen," 65.

[125] All references to Bielefeld newspapers are from the clipping collection in the Bielefeld Stadtarchiv (BSA), particularly the volume: *Kultur –u. Geistesgeschichte 110b Band I u. II. Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge, Landmannschafte.* The collection includes clippings from the *Neue Westfälische, Freie Presse, Westfalen Blatt,* and the *Westfälische Zeitung* assembled in binders organized along thematic lines.

poverty."[126] The city had been unprepared for their arrival and the first group had to wait five hours before being put up in emergency accommodations in hotels and schools. After almost ten years of unending refugee arrivals, the city's resources were strained to the limit. In 1956 the city tried to stop further inflows of the Soviet-zone refugees because of a lack of housing and of available housing sites. The lack of suitable building sites inside the city limits of the day prompted the building of Sennestadt, a planned community just outside the city on land considered unsuitable for agriculture. Most residents of the new city were Germans from the East. The building of Sennestadt was touted by expellees as an example of progressive settlement policies at a 1956 meeting in Bielefeld held by migrants to draw attention to their housing situation. At the meeting, expellees expressed dissatisfaction with Bielefeld's elected officials and with their intransigence in refusing to modify the city's building height restrictions, a policy revision they believed would allow more housing construction. The city's policy, according to expellees, was "driving a wedge between newcomers and natives."[127]

Although traumatic in many ways, the arrival of expellees did not challenge Bielefeld's view of itself as a homogeneous, German society. In spite of the conflict caused by overcrowding, the memory of integrating expellees evoked a sense of satisfaction for many Bielefelders. In a 1957 article, the integration of expellees was described by the local newspaper as having happened almost naturally. According to the

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[126] "Als damals die Vertriebenen kamen…: Vor acht Jahren war die Ankunft des ersten Transportes in Bielefeld," *Westfalen Blatt*, 7 April 1956.

[127] "'Sennestadt hätte vielen geholfen': Ostzonenflüchtlinge appellieren die Stadt—Scharfe Angriffe gegen Oberbürgermeister," *Westfälische Zeitung*, 18 July 1956. Sennestadt became part of Bielefeld in 1973.

Westfalen Blatt, "along with employment came contact with others, success in forging a new existence brought the recognition and respect of the native population and with years of living together came social and cultural connections." Bielefeld's employment opportunities, said the newspaper, made integration relatively easy, especially when compared to having to restore agriculturally oriented expellees to the life they had known before the war. The newspaper pointed to the expellees' previous education and experience that had enabled many of them to step into positions in the civil service that had become available due to retirements. After ten years of living in Bielefeld there was increasing intermarriage between the groups, even if expellees held to their traditions and dialects. The newspaper concluded that integration had been much smoother and more rapid than either group would have predicted.[128]

Later writers have been more circumspect in their assessment. Andreas Beaugrand, historian and editor of a compendium of Bielefeld history and culture, acknowledges the industry of expellees and their contribution to postwar reconstruction in Bielefeld but maintains "no legacy of the war would reach so far into the future as the difficult circumstances surrounding the relationship between the native population and refugees and expellees. In many expellee families it would require generational change for the bitterness to diminish."[129]

Many of the ethnic German immigrants who are the subjects of the Winnipeg side of this comparison were drawn from these expellee and Soviet-zone refugees. Joined by

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[128] "Die Vertriebenen leben sich ein.. Zur zweiten Heimat geworden: Im Landkreis Bielefeld fühlen sich viele Ostdeutsche heimisch," *Westfalen Blatt*, 3 October 1957.

[129] Beaugrand, "Aufschwung," 91.

displaced ethnic Germans from the Soviet Union, many migrated to Canada and Winnipeg in the postwar period.[130] The potential for a direct comparison of the integration of 1950s expellees in Bielefeld and postwar immigrants in Winnipeg is however compromised by the instability and disruption of the immediate postwar period in Bielefeld. For example, for almost five years there was uncertainty about the unity of the country. In 1949 the division of Germany became formal and West Germany adopted its constitution or Basic Law. The country, however, remained formally under the control of occupying powers till May 1955.[131] In Bielefeld, the British military government exerted some control over the city administration until 1952.[132] Occupying foreign powers influenced, and sometimes dictated, responses to migrants. Public discussion and debate, newspapers, political structures and cultural activity only resumed gradually and then under the shadow of the denazification policies of the allies. As Joachim Rogall put it in an educational publication: "at that time people did not come to a stable society, rather into one that found itself rebuilding. A rebuilding in which they could participate from its inception."[133] The large number of migrants in Bielefeld during a time of upheaval and change contributed to the disruption and uncertainty. The comparison pursued here rests on processes of integration observable in two economically and

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[130] Between 1947 and 1953 approximately 100,000 of the 265,000 emigrants from Germany were expellees. Nellner, "Die Wanderungen," 36.

[131] Fulbrook, *History of Germany,* 178.

[132] Bootz, *Kultur in Bielefeld,* 237, fn. 7.

[133] Joachim Rogall, "Polen/Oder-Neiße-Gebiete," in *Informationen zur politischen Bildung,* 222 (München: Franzis-Verlag, 1989), 35.

politically stable receiving societies. In the late 1940s and early 1950s Bielefeld was a receiving society still in turmoil due to the consequences of the war.

The rebuilding and economic leap of the 1950s spawned a new and different immigrant challenge for Bielefeld. The labour supplied by Germans from the east began to dry up after the expulsions of Germans from Eastern Europe ended in 1950 and then ended completely with the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. By the late 1950s the positive effect of the wave of postwar refugees, expellees and escapees from the Soviet zone on the labour market was over and Germany found itself with growing labour shortages. In response to the shortages, Germany concluded labour recruitment agreements with other countries throughout the 1950s and 60s. The first agreement for labour migrants was with Italy in 1955 and agreements followed with Greece and Spain in 1960, Turkey in 1961, Portugal in 1964, Morocco and Tunisia in 1965 and finally with Yugoslavia in 1968.[134]

The shortage of labour and active recruitment of foreign labour migrants gave rise to the guest worker phenomenon. Admitting foreign guest workers signalled a new era for Bielefeld as a receiving society. Between 1961 and 1972, the year before surrounding areas were added to Bielefeld, the number of non-Germans living in the city grew from 3,358 to 14,373. After amalgamation the number of non-Germans in the newly enlarged city stood at 26,963 and continued to rise moderately to 30,813 in 1982. Thereafter the numbers remained relatively stable at approximately 10 percent of the population. The national origins of Bielefeld's migrants reflected the trends in recruitment success. In the 1960s the largest groups of non-Germans living in Bielefeld were from Greece,

[134] Friedrichs, "Segregation in Cologne," 1745.

Yugoslavia and Poland, but by the end of the 1970s workers from Turkey were the most numerous. In 1986 the Turkish population comprised 43 percent of the foreign population of the city.

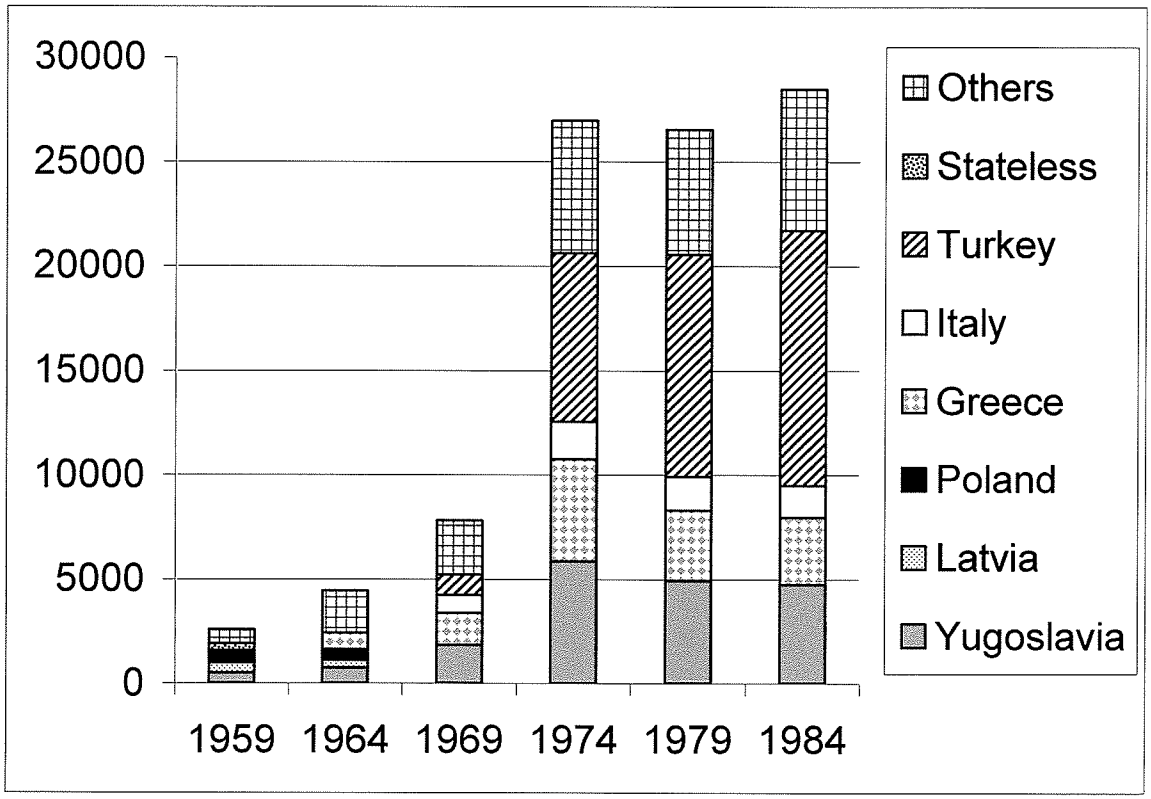

Figure 2. Foreigners in Bielefeld by Country of Origin, 1959 to 1984[135]

These newly recruited workers were, however, not considered immigrants. In the early years no attempt was made to integrate them into Germany society. The foreign worker population in the 1960s "was as a rule in the lowest social position with low or unskilled and physically harder work in Bielefeld's industries." The majority of foreign

[135] The numbers of foreigners registered in Bielefeld are from annual reports of the city's Statistics Office. The addition of neighbouring communities in 1973 distorts the growth in the numbers between 1969 and 1974. Statistisches Amt der Stadt Bielefeld, *Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1959-1986* (Bielefeld, 1959-1986).

workers were employed in the metal working industries and in construction, though service industries employed an increasing number over time.[136] The foreign population tended to concentrate in specific neighbourhoods in the centre of the city, which offered affordable housing close to places of work. In 1986 the two areas in the city with the greatest concentration of non-Germans were the city centre with 41.5 percent and Brackwede with 17.6 percent of the total foreign population. Brackwede was the largest of the urban concentrations that amalgamated in the 1970s to become greater Bielefeld.

As in the case of expellees there was a 'myth of return' that accompanied the initial arrival of foreign workers. Bielefeld still thought of itself as a homogeneous German society in spite of the influx of foreign workers. The intention of both migrants and native Bielefelders was that foreign workers would not integrate into Bielefeld society. After a period of good income and savings, it was assumed the mostly male workers would return to their native homelands. There were fundamental changes to this circumstance in 1973 when the guest worker policy was revised by the national government. Recruitment of workers was stopped. Those already in the country were given incentives to return to their homelands, but those wishing to stay were allowed to bring their families.[137] With time the change in policy dramatically increased the numbers of immigrant families in Bielefeld and altered assumptions about their permanence. Numbers of non-German children registered in schools and in regular contact with German school children rose dramatically. Between 1976 and 1992 the percentage of

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[136] Annegret Grewe, "Menschen in Bielefeld: Bielefelder ausländischer Herkunft," in Beaugrand, 119.

[137] Friedrichs, "Segregation in Cologne," 1746.

Bielefeld school children with non-German origins tripled to 16.6 percent of the student population. The foreign worker population was young and the immigrants' large numbers of children contrasted sharply with the smaller families of the German majority.[138]

The permanence of the foreign population eventually forced the question of their integration upon Bielefeld society. Bielefeld's residents of foreign origin, or increasingly, foreign ancestry, were not eligible for citizenship under German citizenship laws. As in the rest of Germany, large numbers of third generation Bielefelders of foreign origin could not participate in the political and social life of the city. The city was, however, at the forefront in seeking to redress the unequal status of its ethnic populations. In 1974, Bielefeld established a committee to advise the city on matters of concern to the foreign population; it was one of the first cities to recognize the inequity of their status. Ten years later the committee's appointed membership was changed to one elected directly by the foreign population of the city.[139] In spite of such measures, Annegret Grewe, a city administrator in the office responsible for foreign residents, writing in 1990 believed "the assumption adopted fifteen years ago of an adjustment period of two or three generations shows little evidence of being a reality." In the view of many citizens, succeeding generations of Bielefeld's ethnic minority groups appeared to inherit the integration problems of their parents. They continued to have limited social contact with their

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[138] Stadt Bielefeld, *Situation der Bielefelderinnen und Bielefelder ausländischer Herkunft,* Bericht der Ausländerreferentin, Reihe Stadforschung in Bielefeld, Heft 4, (Bielefeld, 1994), 16-17.

[139] Grewe, "Menschen in Bielefeld," 119.

German neighbours, continued to suffer disenfranchisement and limited political rights, and remained isolated from German national life.[140]

Bielefeld and Winnipeg differed in the way they came to terms with newcomers in their midst. The wave of immigrants with strange languages and exotic cultures that arrived in Winnipeg before 1914 left a lasting imprint on that city's memory. The presence of large numbers of immigrants intent on becoming a permanent part of the community was central in Winnipeg's history. Although fraught with conflict and driven culturally by a dominant Anglo-Saxon population, Winnipeg was a polyglot community for almost as long as it was a city. Diversity gradually but inexorably became part of Winnipeg's culture.

In Bielefeld the migration of expellees and refugees to the city in the aftermath of war was also traumatic and shaped that city's outlook towards the integration of newcomers. In contrast with Winnipeg's experience, the Germanness of Bielefeld's dominant culture was never challenged in spite of the upheavals of absorbing so many migrants from the East. Bielefeld could remain a receiving society that absorbed newcomers but avoided serious challenges from distinctive ethnic groups in its midst by denying their status as citizens. Throughout the period under consideration the city perceived itself as culturally homogeneous. Only in the late 1980s was there a gradual realization that the foreign population would become a permanent feature of Bielefeld life and that the city would be forced to embrace diversity.

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[140] Ibid.

When ethnic Germans arrived in the two cities in the 1950s and the 1970s respectively, their host societies fashioned approaches to their presence based on the collective memory of earlier experiences. Bielefeld society had two historical models of dealing with newcomers that served as reference points for their approach to ethnic Germans. If ethnic German newcomers of the 1970s were to be considered fellow Germans, their path into Bielefeld life would be modelled on the experience of integrating the expellees and refugees of the 1950s. If they were not considered fellow Germans, the only other historically informed approach to their integration would be based on the experience of foreign guest workers in the city—in which case the latest ethnic German migrants would be treated as foreigners. By the 1950s and 60s Winnipeg had come to accept ethnic diversity. While its British dominated middle classes still displayed a paternalistic approach to the integration of immigrants there was a noticeable shift underway, a shift that allowed for greater diversity in the city and required less change from immigrants.

Chapter Two: The Value of Immigrants: Comparing Public Discourse and Immigration Policies in Canada and Germany

Public discourse and the immigration policies it shaped differed remarkably in Germany and Canada. True, there were overarching similarities. The Second World War and the Cold War cast long shadows over the migration of ethnic Germans to both Winnipeg and Bielefeld. At the end of the war many ethnic German migrants found themselves in the occupied zones of a defeated Germany. Most were homeless and hungry but thankful that they had seemingly escaped Soviet communism. Others faced a very different future. They shared the destitution of their relatives in occupied Germany, but were on their way to the frozen Gulags of Siberia. Some were left behind in Poland or Czechoslovakia to face expulsion or to exist as repressed minorities.

Most importantly for public discourse, shortly after hostilities ended in 1945 the co-operation of the United States and the Soviet Union faltered and then ended. Winston Churchill's famous speech in Fulton, Missouri in March 1946 spoke of an 'iron curtain' that had descended—a curtain that divided Germany and its people. It separated many ethnic Germans from relatives in Canada, South America, and West Germany. The Cold War had begun and in both cities immigrants and long term residents alike made sense of their postwar world in the context of its drama. Ethnic Germans in the two cities were given roles to play in the Cold War's discourse of dichotomies: good and evil, freedom versus totalitarianism, capitalism as opposed to communism, 'us' and 'them'.

Within this common context, however, the two societies developed distinct approaches to immigrants. Thomas Faist has said that postwar German public discourse

maintained the fiction that Germany was a non-immigrant country in spite of having a greater number of immigrants than the United States in the 1945-1989 period. To maintain this fiction, he argues, German discourse on the subject of its non-German minorities "at once demands that immigrants assimilate culturally and, at the same time, denies the opportunity for cultural assimilation and political participation through an ethnic understanding of membership." Ethnic Germans escaped this paradox because they were considered to belong to the "polity in cultural terms, that is, language, customs, and ancestry."[141] In Canada, according to Robert Harney, postwar admissions policy "reflected a dialectic between desired population increase and the impact of immigration on Canadian ways or on the racial and ethnocultural composition of the country."[142] Although both societies shared a desire to minimize ethnic tension, their approaches to immigrants differed significantly. Admissions policy emanating from German discourse considered ethnic association a primordial attachment and, thus, citizenship was granted to immigrants on the basis of the strength of that attachment. In contrast, admission to Canada was governed by the anticipated ease of adjustment to 'Canadian ways'.

These two broad, but differing discourses influenced policies of admission for ethnic Germans into Canada and Germany and shaped immigrants' perception of their role in their adopted states. This chapter will examine public discourse as reflected in the utterances of politicians and the reporting and editorializing of local newspapers in Canada and Germany.

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[141] Thomas Faist, "How to Define a Foreigner? The Symbolic Politics of Immigration in German Partisan Discourse, 1978-1992," *West European Politics* 17 (1994): 53-54.

[142] Harney, "So Great a Heritage," 529.

In Canada, humanitarian sensitivity and Cold War politics were interwoven in public debate about granting ethnic Germans admission to Canada.[143] The plight of refugees in Europe reawakened the country's interest and concern for immigrants. Canada had all but closed its borders to immigration in the 1930s in response to the filling up of the West and a loss of confidence brought on by the Great Depression. It emerged from the Second World War a more mature economy. Its tremendous natural resources and manufacturing capacity came as a surprise both to Canadians and the world. Prime Minister Mackenzie King's 1947 declaration that Canada would again encourage immigration reflected the country's surging confidence.

In the fall of 1946, King had announced the government's response to the refugee crisis in occupied Germany. He approved emergency measures that provided assistance for some of those in Displaced Persons camps in Europe to settle in Canada.[144] In his May 1947 address to the House of Commons, King touched on the issue again, maintaining that "...Canada's policy has to be related to the social, political and economic circumstances resulting from the war." The decision to admit Displaced Persons was part of a need to "take account of the urgent problem of the resettlement of

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[143] For an analysis of the political debates and policy aspects about admitting ethnic Germans see Angelika Sauer, "A Matter of Domestic Policy? Canadian Immigration Policy and the Admission of Germans, 1945-50," *Canadian Historical Review* 74 (1993): 226-263 and Gerhard P. Bassler, "Canadian Postwar Immigration Policy and the Admission of Germany Enemy Aliens 1945-1950," *Yearbook of German-American Studis* 22 (1987): 183-197.

[144] Warren E. Kalbach, *The Impact of Immigration on Canada's Population* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1970), 19. The standard study of Canada's refugee policy during this time remains Gerald E. Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977).

persons who are displaced and homeless, as an aftermath of world conflict."[145] Mackenzie King's statement betrayed no hint that the proportions of the refugee problem had caught the government unprepared. Yet the Department of External Affairs had only become aware of the forcible repatriation of refugees in the fall of 1945 when the government received numerous complaints from Polish and Ukrainian groups in Canada.[146] With their many connections to Eastern Europe, Canada's Polish, Ukrainian, and ethnic German population propelled the issue to the forefront when the magnitude of the refugee and forced repatriation situation became known.

Discourse on the subject of refugees and immigration was not limited to Ottawa. The plight of refugees also struck a positive chord with writers for both of Winnipeg's daily newspapers. The *Winnipeg Free Press* was perhaps the leading newspaper of the West, had long supported the Liberal party, and could boast of the reputation of its one-time editor John Dafoe. The *Free Press* had enjoyed national influence under Dafoe right up to his death in 1944. The city's other daily newspaper, the *Winnipeg Tribune,* was established as an independent Liberal newspaper in 1890 and although often more outspoken on local issues, was junior to its competitor both locally and on the national stage.[147] Both newspapers joined in the national discussion of immigration and refugee policy in general and the advisability of admitting ethnic Germans in particular.

In an editorial responding to the question of admitting European refugees, the *Winnipeg Free Press* was sure that by allowing them to come, "Canada will be doing, for

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[145] Hansard, House of Commons *Debates*, 1 May 1947, 2644.

[146] Sauer, "A Matter of Domestic Policy," 232.

[147] Artibise, *Social History,* fn. 60, 338.

human reasons, no more than is indicated for a country with abundant room."[148] Once immigrants began arriving, editorial comment was supplemented with human-interest stories that stimulated the humanitarian sensitivities of Winnipeggers. The paper carried the story of Maria, an ethnic German woman travelling with her son and aged mother who was interviewed while crossing the Atlantic on the *Marine Flasher*. The article told of how she had lost all but one of her twelve children through repression in the Soviet Union and the turmoil of war. Her husband had died in a forced labour camp in the Ural Mountains of the Soviet Union and in Germany she had been sent to work on a farm. The story ended with Maria expressing desire only for "peace and a good school for my boy."[149]

Sensitivity to humanitarian needs in Europe was strong enough to overcome the concerns of those worried about unemployment. Labour's fear of immigration, so evident before the First World War, resurfaced and labour groups remained cautious about allowing too many immigrants into the country, fearing that their presence in great numbers would lower wages for everyone.[150] A conference on unemployment held in Winnipeg after the arrival of the first immigrants concluded, however, that newcomers had not displaced Canadian workers. Newspaper reports of the meeting touched on many of the themes that were quickly becoming part of public discourse on the subject of immigration. In voicing its concern for the unemployed, the final statement of the

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[148] "Editorial," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 7 May 1947, 13.

[149] Lila Wontoch, "'Now We Only Want Peace and a Home': Emigrants Unfold Memories of Past and Plan for Future on Board Ship," *Winnipeg Free Press,* 3 January 1949, 9.

[150] Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy,* 129.

conference gave qualified support for immigration, suggesting: "apart from Canada's international commitments as to immigration from Europe, and apart from the humanitarian aspect, the dominion's immigration policy should conform to the economic needs of Canada."[151] Serious concerns about displacement of Canadian workers were overshadowed by the peoples' sensitivity both to the plight of European refugees and to the responsibility that accompanied the country's new status as a middle power with international obligations.

The refugee question could not be contained within the bounds of humanitarian concern. Canada was a minor player in decisions about occupied Germany made by the Allied Powers but it became more involved when the United Nations began to tackle the problem of refugees. In the postwar international debates that led to the formation of the United Nations and the International Refugee Organization (I.R.O.), Canada placed itself squarely on the Western side. As part of the February 1945 Yalta agreement, Britain and the United States had agreed to the repatriation of Soviet citizens in Europe regardless of their ethnic identity. When the United Nations attempted to create a refugee organization after the war, the intransigence of the Soviet Union frustrated efforts to include as refugees those who did not want to return to Eastern bloc countries. As a result, the I.R.O. was finally created without the support of the Soviet Union and its allies, and Canada accepted its more limited mandate as, in Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent's words, the "best compromise that could be achieved."[152] Fallout from these political

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[151] "Unemployment Insurance Group Meets: Immigration Programme Based on Canada's Needs is Urged," *Winnipeg Free Press,* April 22, 1949, 1.

[152] Hansard, House of Commons *Debates,* 30 June 1947, 4838. See also Sauer, "Domestic Policy," 233.

decisions in the international arena would subsequently influence the tone and substance of the debates about admitting ethnic Germans into the country.

The limited mandate of the newly formed I.R.O. prevented it from assisting ethnic Germans displaced from their homes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. There was, however, nothing in Canadian immigration regulations that precluded their admission, provided they were not German nationals. The inconsistency between Canadian immigration regulations and the I.R.O. mandate was addressed by the Member of Parliament for Saskatoon, W.A. Tucker, in the debate in the House a day after the Prime Minister's immigration policy statement. Tucker, along with Peter Taraska, a Winnipeg member of the Liberal Party Executive, and Senator T.A. Crerar had been spurred into action by the pressure of ethnic Germans in Canada who realized that their relatives technically did not qualify as Displaced Persons under the I.R.O. mandate.

Tucker's speech touched on all the important themes that would come to characterize public discussion about ethnic Germans and their immigration. He was careful to reinforce the gesture of humanitarian support that Canadians were extending to the refugees in Europe by "urging the nations of the world as a whole to take some interest in these most unfortunate people." He also paraded the record of earlier German immigrants before the house. Germans, he said, were "among our finest immigrants," and previous German immigrants "have shown, by the type of people they are, that they would be fine citizens of this country." Tucker was careful to specify that he was not talking about immigrants with German citizenship but rather those who had lived outside of Germany in places like Ukraine, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The German immigrants he was talking about, Tucker maintained, were ethnic Germans who were "not German

nationals any more than General Eisenhower is a German national."[153] When the minister responsible for immigration, J.A. Glen, rose in the house a few days later he assured Tucker that the government had no objections to the immigration of ethnic Germans and advised the house that immigration officers in Europe had been instructed to facilitate their entry.[154]

Although encouraged by the minister's response, Canadian relatives of ethnic Germans were frustrated by the lack of immediate results. Although some ethnic German groups, such as Black Sea Mennonites and Baltic German Lutherans, had managed to get I.R.O. status, many immigrants could not come to Canada because of the lack of an organization to process them in Europe. The Winnipeg based German language newspaper, *Der Nordwesten,* challenged the government to correct this situation. It accused the government of discrimination because by the fall of 1947 other Displaced Persons were arriving in Canada while ethnic Germans continued to languish in camps in Germany.[155] Religious groups with significant ethnic German membership responded to the need for an organization to process ethnic Germans by establishing the Canadian Christian Council for the Resettlement of Refugees (outside the mandate of the I.R.O.) (C.C.C.R.R.). The C.C.C.R.R. grew out of an Ottawa meeting in June 1947 arranged by T.O.F. Herzer, a Lutheran leader and General Manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway's colonization department in Ottawa. The organization's original membership included the Catholic Immigrant Aid Society, the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, the

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[153] Hansard, House of Commons *Debates,* 2 May 1947, 2703-2704.

[154] Hansard, House of Commons *Debates*, 5 May 1947, 2779.

[155] "Wo bleiben unsere Verwandten?," *Der Nordwesten,* 8 October 1947 and "Warum durfen unsere Verwandten nicht kommen?," *Der Nordwesten,* 22 October 1947.

Sudeten Committee, the German Baptist Colonization and Immigration Society, and the Canadian Lutheran World Relief organization.[156] The C.C.C.R.R. established offices in Winnipeg and worked in collaboration with the immigration department to help bring co-religionists of its member groups to Canada.[157] In late 1947 the first ethnic German immigrants began arriving in Canada under its auspices. Along with its processing and transportation functions, the ambiguity of ethnic German identities soon forced the C.C.C.R.R. to become an advocate for expanding the eligibility for German migration.

While German-Canadians initially emphasized the ethnic and religious as opposed to the national identity of potential immigrants it soon became clear that limiting their efforts to bringing over immigrants with strictly ethnic German identities would leave many of their relatives stranded in Europe. Many ethnic Germans from German-occupied areas of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had been naturalized after being evacuated to the Warthegau during the war. The Warthegau was a part of occupied

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[156] For a brief history of the Canadian Lutheran World Relief organization see Arthur Grenke, "Canadian Lutheran World Relief," *Archivist* 15 (1988): 12-14. There were more organizations at the inaugural meeting. Eventually only Lutherans, Mennonites and Baptists were part of the C.C.C.R.R..

[157] T.O.F. Herzer, "A Brief History," *Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization Collection,* vol. 1330, file 989, Mennonite Heritage Center Archives, (hereafter MHC). The C.C.C.R.R. has been the subject of considerable interest to historians. Analysis of government immigration policy using the organization as an example is contained in Sauer, "A Matter of Domestic Policy," 226-263. See also Gerhard Bassler, "German Immigration to Canada 1945-1950: Issues and Questions," *Annals 6 (Sixth Symposium German-Canadian Studies, 1986)*: 168-179 and his "Canadian Postwar Immigration Policy." For the point of view of contemporary participants, see: William Sturhahn, "The Canadian Christian Council for the Resettlement of Refugees. Its Contribution to Post-War Immigration to Canada," *Annals 3 (Third Montreal Symposium for German-Canadian Studies, May 1980)*: 45-52 and Willi Wanka, "Auftakt zur deutschen Nachkriegseinwanderung nach Kanada," *German-Canadian Yearbook 9* (Toronto: Historical Society of Mecklenburg Upper Canada, 1986), 125-140.

Poland the Germans had intended to make a permanent part of the Third Reich. Most eligible ethnic German males had served in the German armies; some had been members of the Nazi Party and the SS. By 1949 the C.C.C.R.R. and German language newspapers were advocating the removal of restrictions on the immigration of German nationals to facilitate the movement of these ethnic German immigrants.

Winnipeg newspapers seemed to have no difficulty with admitting Germans even under expanded eligibility rules. When the prospect of granting admission to German nationals arose, the *Free Press* commented that the "history of German immigration to Canada in the past has shown that these people under the leadership of democratic government become good citizens and thousands of their children have served loyally in the armed forces of Canada in two wars."[158] Good citizenship, loyalty and a democratic political system were important themes in postwar discourse but enlisting ethnic Germans in the cause against communism soon became even more important.

Tucker's 1947 speech to the house alluded to the role that ethnic Germans would play in the discourse against the evils of Communism. While making his request to allow ethnic Germans into Canada, Tucker pointed out that they had fled into Germany ahead of the advancing Soviet armies because of "their known anti-Communist attitude." He also reminded the government that the mandates of the I.R.O. and its predecessor, the Inter-Governmental Committee for Refugees, had not included ethnic Germans. This restriction was a remnant of earlier negotiations that attempted to include the Soviet Union as a member of these organizations and had become part of the mandate because

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[158] Chester Bloom, "Without awaiting Treaty: Ottawa May Remove Ban on German Immigrants," *Winnipeg Free Press,* March 3, 1949, 1.

ethnic Germans were known to be opposed to Communism.[159] Being anti-Communist was, however, quickly becoming an asset in the eyes of the West. The aversion to admitting potential Communists was a product of the Cold War paranoia that was gripping the Canadian people by 1947 and ethnic Germans and other refugees were enlisted in the cause of keeping this ideology from creeping into Canada. In the immigration debate in the House, members cautioned the government that in accepting Displaced Persons or DPs, as they were commonly called, care should be taken that "we are not bringing to our shores those who are communistic in any way."[160] In 1949, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reprinted a story from the *Toronto Globe and Mail* in which DPs were touted as helping in the 'anti-red fight." The article's writer was thrilled to report that Communists were losing the battle to influence Canadians because of the presence of "immigrants who had suffered in body and spirit under Russian rule." The *Globe* assured readers that the same thing was happening in every town where DPs had settled.[161]

The possible association of ethnic Germans with Nazis, recent enemies of the Canadian people, was rapidly lost in the anti-Communist rhetoric of the postwar years. A report that Otto Strasser, a former Nazi, was planning a move to Winnipeg from Nova Scotia illustrated the remarkable shift from the threat of Fascism to the dangers of Communism. In reacting to this news the *Free Press* pointed out that in contrast to those whom the local Communist, Joe Zuken, looked to for "light and guidance," Canada was a country where people could live wherever they pleased. The article acknowledged that

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[159] Hansard, House of Commons *Debates,* 2 May 1947, 2703-2704.

[160] Hansard, House of Commons *Debates,* 5 May 1947, 2777.

[161] "DP's Influence Reported Aiding Anti-Red Fight," *Winnipeg Free Press,* July 14, 1949, 6.

"few banners would be hung out if Mr. Strasser came here to live," but believed that Winnipeg was "a tolerant city. If it can put up with Mr. Zuken, it can surely survive Mr. Strasser."[162]

Added to public discussion about the country's humanitarian responsibilities and the anti-Communist rhetoric of the day, was a focus on Canada's need for, and ability to absorb, more newcomers. King's 1947 statement not only addressed the issue of refugees, but also set out an immigration policy for the postwar period that would last until the 1962 change in policy that substantially increased the number of possible countries of origin. Two key features of King's 1947 policy were a desire to maintain the ethnic balance of the country and a concern to admit immigrants into the country at a rate at which they could be absorbed. Workable criteria for absorptive capacity, however, remained elusive.

Setting the stage for Mackenzie King's statement outlining immigration policy was the work of the Senate's Standing Committee on Immigration and Labour whose investigations began in 1946 and ended in 1953. The committee agreed on many aspects of Canada's immigration policy, including the idea that "admissions should not exceed the number which can be absorbed from time to time without creating conditions of unemployment, reducing the standard of living or otherwise endangering the Canadian

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[162] "Otto Strasser," *Winnipeg Free Press,* 4 May 1949, 19. An analysis of the shift in postwar attitudes from concerns about potential Nazi immigrants to that of 'subversive' leftist elements is in Alvin Finkel, "Canadian Immigration Policy and the Cold War, 1945-1980," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 21 (1986): 53-70. A similar shift was reflected in the area of security clearance for immigrants. See Reginald Whitaker, "Origins of the Canadian Government's Internal Security System, 1946-1952," *Canadian Historical Review*, 65 (1984): 154-183 and his *Double Standard: The Secret History of Canadian Immigration* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987)

economy."[163] King's 1947 speech reflected the early work of the Senate Committee and emphasized that the rate of immigrant numbers permitted into the country would be "such numbers ...as can advantageously be absorbed in our national economy."[164] Absorptive capacity became an important framework for the immigrant debate in the immediate postwar period. It was believed that the availability of natural and human resources, the changes in population due to natural increase and migration processes, and the ability of the economy to create employment opportunities all played a role in determining the capacity of the country to absorb immigrants. Absorptive capacity was also very dependent, as Gerald Dirks points out, on the "flexibility and quality of those immigrants whose labour is being sought."[165] Even without general agreement as to how absorptive capacity could be assessed there was a general sense of optimism about prospects for immigrants.

Initial fears that a depression would follow on the heels of the war soon dissipated. After the winter of 1946-47, editorials in Canadian newspapers increasingly challenged the government to revise its immigration policy. The *Winnipeg Free Press* joined in the chorus, commenting that the slight relaxation of entrance requirements announced by the minister, J.A. Glen, in 1947, did not "by itself, constitute a new policy." The paper believed that Glen's policy was too conservative and a "too gradual opening of the door inch by inch." The *Free Press* however concurred with the plan it

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[163] Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 80-88. The quotation from the Committee is on page 84.

[164] Hansard, House of Commons *Debates*, 1 May 1947, 2644.

[165] Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy,* 126.

thought was taking shape. The paper believed that "the policy which seems to be emerging is one which envisages a flow of workers who are willing and able to engage in the physically harder but still skilled work, who are content to begin there and by their own efforts improve their lot." Immigrants admitted under such conditions, the paper went on, "must have the qualities of physique as well as the determination to succeed and a very large measure of self-reliance."[166]

After Mackenzie King's landmark 1947 speech on immigration in the House, commentary in the *Winnipeg Free Press* again raised the need to answer the vital question of how to fill Canada's "sparsely populated lands" with immigrants to "heighten her standard of living."[167] In 1949, the editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press* reflected on the success of the government's immigration policy and still believed that there were "few people in Canada ...who will deny the need for more settlers." The immigrants arriving up to 1949 had "no more than begun to fill in bad gaps in the economy" and were taking jobs that Canadians were unable or unwilling to do. The editor concluded that immigration was not a humanitarian gesture but rather "a pressing need" without which "full development of the Dominion" would be hobbled.[168]

Winnipeg Tribune opinions also leaned toward an aggressive interpretation of how many immigrants Canada could absorb. The paper was relentless in its editorial comment on the need for additional population. In February 1947 it suggested a target of 300,000 immigrants per year and stuck to the number throughout the 1950s. "Canada's

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[166] "Inadequate and Too Slow," *Winnipeg Free Press,* February 14, 1947, 13.

[167] "Priorities and Quotas? House Debates Ways to Obtain Immigrants," *Winnipeg Free Press,* 3 May 1947, 7.

[168] "Immigration Policy," *Winnipeg Free Press,* 14 February 1949, 17.

resources," according to the *Tribune,* "could support a population of at least thirty million people."[169] The paper criticized the government's immigration policy as not comprehensive enough and in May 1947 suggested that admitting three persons for every one thousand was an achievable target to ensure "economic acclimatization." The *Tribune* admitted, however that "human beings are not like dried beans that can be transferred from one container to another." The population, it went on, exists in a "delicate ecological balance with its environment" and the government ought to pay more attention to that environment by creating infrastructure to increase Canada's capacity to absorb immigrants. [170]

In 1950, the *Winnipeg Tribune* was almost relieved to hear news that Germans would be permitted entry because it would make the 1951 target of 175,000 immigrants easy to achieve. The paper joined in supporting German immigration believing that "Canada counts among its most useful citizens half a million persons of German origin. They have a reputation of being thrifty, law abiding and industrious." The *Tribune* was sure that German immigrants would be "productive assets in the Canadian economy."[171] In 1952, it again chastised the Minister of Immigration for being too timid in his

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[169] "Not an immigration Policy Yet," *Winnipeg Tribune*, February 7, 1947. See also *Tribune* editorials: "Mr. King's Refugee Policy," May 3, 1947; "A Department of Immigration," July 21, 1949; "Immigration from Germany," October 6, 1950; "Ottawa Fumbles Immigration," June 3, 1950; "Immigration and Manufacturing," September 11, 1950; "'Surplus' Populations: Canada's Opportunity," November 2, 1951; "Canada Needs People," January 31, 1952; "A Depressing Statement," June 5, 1952; "Mr. Harris' Little List," July 22, 1952; "They Bring Something With Them, April 6, 1953; "Same Old Outcry," February 25, 1954, and "Consign Him to the Codfish," September 9, 1955.

[170] "Mr. King's Refugee Policy," Editorial, *Winnipeg Tribune,* Saturday, May 3, 1947, 6.

[171] "Immigration from Germany," *Winnipeg Tribune*, October 6, 1950.

immigration policy, suggesting that "development of this vast Dominion will require a great many more people than now live in Canada. ...Canadians can hardly expect to fence in this huge territory and keep it underpopulated indefinitely when many other countries are overcrowded."[172]

Both newspapers accepted the concept of absorptive capacity as a legitimate way of examining who, and how many immigrants to allow into the country. In contrast to Freda Hawkins's suggestion of a "background of anxiety about future employment prospects in Canada and the fear that the depression might return," Winnipeg's public discourse concluded that more immigrants should be allowed into the country—a lot more.[173]

A lot more immigrants did not imply allowing in newcomers of any race, ideology or culture. Public discourse favoured British immigrants above any other group and was unabashedly biased against non-white races until the later 1950s. King's 1947 statement maintained that it was the right of Canada as a sovereign nation "to control the entry or non-entry of persons seeking to become permanent residents." In keeping with that stance the government had "no intention of removing the existing regulations respecting Asiatic immigration" because it would "give rise to social and economic problems of a character that might lead to serious difficulties in the field of international relations."[174] The "fundamental composition of the Canadian population," as King's statement hinted, implied a bias in favour of British immigrants. The editors at the

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[172] "Canada Needs People," *Winnipeg Tribune*, January 31, 1952.

[173] Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration,* 86.

[174] Hansard, House of Commons *Debates*, 1 May 1947, 2646.

Winnipeg Tribune, writing in 1952, believed this to be a necessity because "with our British background and tradition it is desirable that a large number of immigrants should come from the British Isles in order to balance arrivals from other countries." The paper claimed "it was obvious to all that since the war a desirable balance has not been maintained."[175]

Germans, while not British, were part of the group of North European immigrants generally believed to be easy to assimilate. The *Winnipeg Tribune's* report on the 1950 changes in regulations admitting German nationals to the country quoted the federal rules that would apply. Germans would be granted admission

> if they are not undesirable owing to their peculiar customs, habits, modes of life, methods of holding property, or because of their probable inability to become readily adapted and integrated into the life of a Canadian community and to assume the duties of Canadian citizenship within a reasonable time after their entry.

The *Tribune's* report of the announcement also quoted the minister's conclusion that "German immigrants who came to Canada in earlier years had become an important industrious and loyal element of the Canadian population."[176]

German-Canadians and their newly arrived ethnic German compatriots were quick to adapt to many of the roles given them in public discourse. When the government was considering allowing ethnic Germans into the country, the *Winnipeg Free Press* went to the editor of the Winnipeg-published German language newspaper, *Der Nordwesten* for information about the German community in the city. The resulting article praised German-Canadians for their skills and hard work in the building trades. The *Free Press*

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[175] "A Depressing Statement," *Winnipeg Tribune*, June 5, 1952.

[176] "Canada to Admit German Settlers," *Winnipeg Tribune*, September 29, 1950.

pointed out again that most Germans living in Winnipeg were ethnic Germans and had "not come to Canada from Germany at all," but rather from Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union. The contribution of earlier, pioneering settlers was mentioned, as was the sacrifice of the eighty sons and daughters of members of the local Canadian German Society who had served in the Second World War. With a dramatic flair, the article concluded, "Winnipeggers of German origin are not only builders, but builders for Canada."[177]

Germans sensed that for them to fit into their new environment it was better to be non-political in their approach to public life. Reports of the opening of a new assembly hall for the German Society in 1949 stressed this non-threatening role. In bold type, the Society proclaimed that no discussions of political or religious subjects were allowed at its meetings.[178] German-Canadians, however, sensed the value of the anti-Communist orientation of ethnic German newcomers. When in a 1947 editorial *Der Nordwesten* advocated a more active public life for German-Canadians, it suggested that forming a German-Canadian organization would contribute to victory in the ideological war against Communism.[179] When the newly formed German-Canadian League held a meeting on

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[177] Doug Young, "Building for Canada: Germans Adept in Construction," *Winnipeg Free Press,* 5 March, 1949, 6.

[178] "Canadian German Society Opens New Assembly Hall," *Winnipeg, Free Press*, January 24, 1949, 3.

[179] "Die Deutschcanadier im öffentlichen Leben," *Der Nordwesten,* 19 November 1947, 2.

the topic of immigration in Winnipeg a few months later the paper printed in bold typeface the declaration that it was "an anti-Communist association."[180]

The receding fear of Nazism and the anti-Communist reputation of ethnic German immigrants meant that immigration advocates such as the C.C.C.R.R. and German language newspapers had the government's ear. The C.C.C.R.R. actively pressured the government to widen eligibility rules for ethnic German immigration. These lobbying efforts were successful. In 1947 only ethnic Germans who had not been naturalized could immigrate. By the spring of 1950, those who had been German citizens on September 1, 1939 could immigrate if they had close relatives in Canada and were prepared to work as farm labourers. Even nominal membership in the Nazi party and service in the German army were no longer automatic causes for rejection. In the fall of 1950, the necessity to become a farm labourer was removed and in 1951, membership in the elite *Waffen-SS* was only cause for exclusion if there were grounds to believe the applicant had volunteered. By 1955, only high-ranking members of Nazi organizations were ineligible for entry into Canada.[181]

The staged relaxation of admission restrictions resulted in a pattern of immigration that first brought to Canada ethnic Germans who had been able to secure I.R.O. status in spite of their association with German language and culture; this group

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[180] "Liga der Deutschcanadier nimmt zur Einwanderung Stellung," *Der Nordwesten,* 17 March 1948, 1.

[181] Kalbach, *Impact of Immigration,* 20-21 and Finkel, "Canadian Immigration Policy," 63.

included primarily Baltic German Lutherans and Black Sea Mennonites.[182] The largest groups of ethnic Germans came when the restriction against German nationals was relaxed permitting entry to those who had acquired German citizenship while living in areas of German-occupied Poland, Russia and Czechoslovakia. Immigration from Germany itself increased after 1950 and thereafter the numbers of ethnic Germans are more difficult to distinguish from the immigration of German nationals. Relaxation of earlier restrictions against the entry of German nationals and then of SS members contributed to a remigration to Canada in the 1950s and 1960s of some ethnic Germans who had migrated to Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay in the 1940s.[183] The 1961 Census indicates that 61001 ethnic German immigrants came to Canada in the 1946 to 1961 period. The immigration of ethnic Germans to Canada from Europe was largely complete by the mid-1950s. In the peak 1948 to 1954 period church-sponsored ethnic German immigration averaged 6579 annually. In 1955, the last year of operation for the C.C.C.R.R., the number dropped to 2597. Immigration numbers for all Germans, including German nationals who began coming after 1951, began to drop after 1957.

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[182] Mennonites argued they were of Dutch ancestry in support of their claim for I.R.O. status. For an examination of the controversary surrounding their eligibility see Ted D. Regehr, "Of Dutch or German Ancestry? Mennonite Refugees, MCC, and the International Refugee Organization," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 13 (1995): 7-25. The historian of the I.R.O. suggests that Mennonites and Balts benefited from a "more liberal assessment of eligibility," born out of "a degree of understanding required by experience." See Louise Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization: A Specialized Agency of the United Nations, Its History and Work, 1946-1952* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 210.

[183] Frank H. Epp indicates between 1947 and 1961 the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization assisted 3,405 Mennonites originally from Europe to remigrate from Paraguay to Canada. Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution* (Altona: D.W. Friesen & Sons, 1962), 442.

Ethnic German immigrants from South America continued to trickle in to Canada up to end of the 1980s.[184]

To a large extent, German-Canadians and their new ethnic German compatriots accepted the role of grateful immigrants implied in the humanitarian emphasis in Canadian public discourse. They sensed that it was better for them to work hard than to be seen as politically or religiously controversial. By 1964, when immigration of both ethnic Germans and German nationals had subsided, the noted journalist and editor, Ralph Allen reflected on Canada's experience with German Canadians in a *Macleans* magazine article. He concluded that Germans had "turned out to be the least controversial, the least quarrelsome and least quarrelled-over element in our whole society." Allen listed the problems of other ethnic and immigrant groups in the country and concluded that "the German problem should have been the biggest and ugliest immigration problem of them all." Apparently, however, not "a single unreconstructed Nazi or fascist agent" had been allowed entry; "not a single communist agent" had made it into the country and German-Canadians were an "almost painfully unassertive" group. German Canadians were portrayed as reserved and quiet—only too happy to be living in a land that offered freedom and prosperity.[185] In a similar vein a 1962 article in the *Free Press* warned readers that their German neighbours should not face biases meant for Nazis. It suggested that Germans had come to Winnipeg because of lack of security in their homeland and that they adapted easily to their new homes. Learning English was

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[184] See Tables A-5 and A-6 in the Appendix.

[185] Ralph Allen, "The Untroublesome Canadians," *Macleans,* 77(5), 7 March 1964, 19.

less of a problem for them than other immigrant groups and they made significant contributions to the Winnipeg economy.[186]

The situation in Bielefeld at the end of the Second World War was very different. Germany had lost the war and the country was occupied by foreign powers. Many people had moved out of the cities to avoid the continuous bombardment that characterized the latter stages of the war and in most cities homes and industries lay in ruins. While Canadians contemplated bolstering the country's population to "hold so great a heritage as ours," as Mackenzie King put it, Germany was overcrowded with refugees and displaced persons. According to the 1950 census, the first after the war, there were 9.43 million expellees and Soviet Zone refugees in West Germany. Refugees accounted for 19.8 percent of the population and this number included both those expelled from Eastern European countries under the Potsdam Agreement and those who had fled the Soviet occupied zones up until census day.[187]

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[186] Pat Clayton, "You and Your Neighbours: German Migrants Face Bias Meant for Nazis," *Winnipeg Free Press,* 13 January 1962, 11.

[187] Lederer, *Migration und Integration in Zahlen*, sec. 2.3.

Germany's approach to newcomers in the 1970s was very different from Canada's in the 1950s. German discourse was steadfast in its denial that Germany was a country of immigration. Public discussion about ethnic Germans took place in the context of their role as members of an ethnocultural 'people' rather than as newcomers. Migrations of ethnic Germans to West Germany through the period from 1947 to 1989 consisted of a number of concurrent and successive movements of people from different

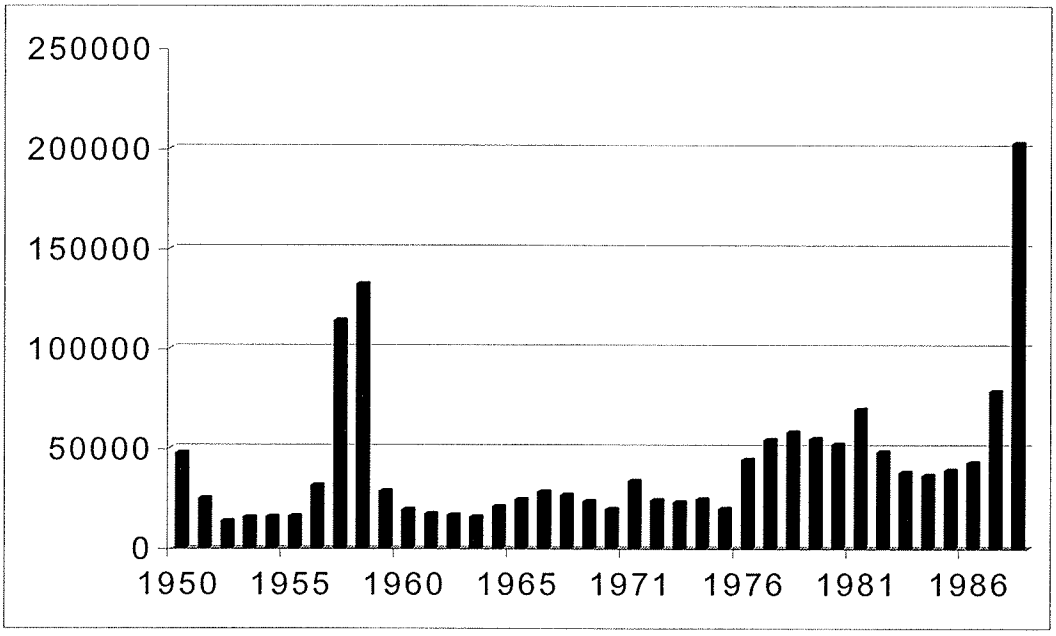

Figure 3. Annual Total Ethnic German Immigration to Germany

geographic, historical and cultural worlds. Each movement was accompanied by a label in German public discourse—a label that often became a reference for their perceived value as immigrants. In the immediate postwar years, ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) left Germany for overseas at the same time as expellees (*Vertriebene*) from Poland, Czechoslovakia and other Eastern European states were arriving in Western Germany.

The two movements were intermingled in that approximately 30 percent of those emigrating from Germany consisted of ethnic Germans expelled from Eastern Europe. The expulsion period ended around 1950 but movements inside Germany continued for some time thereafter.[188] The arrival of expellees overlapped with the movement of refugees from the Soviet occupied zone of Eastern Germany. The movement of these *Sowjet Zone Flüchtlinge* or *Übersiedler* effectively ended with the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. In the next decade ethnic German migration slowed to a trickle until the earliest ethnic Germans of this study began arriving in the late 1960s. The mid-1970s witnessed a rise in the numbers of ethnic Germans coming from Eastern Europe. These larger numbers of *Spätaussiedler, Umsiedler* or *Aussiedler* as they were variously labelled, coincided with Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* that featured a series of agreements normalizing relations between West Germany and its Eastern neighbours. Beginning in 1970 with an agreement with the Soviet Union, Brandt's foreign policy culminated in the official recognition of the Communist regime of East Germany in 1972.[189]

Most important for framing public discourse, however, was the experience of the expellees of the immediate postwar period. Public discussion of the migrations of ethnic Germans in the 1970s was framed in the context of the need to accept and assist those who had been driven from eastern areas because of their ethnicity. In German discourse, a whole range of direct and indirect suffering for one's ethnicity came to qualify as 'expulsion' in public discourse and in the laws that reflected it.

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[188] Nellner, 36 and 58.

[189] Fulbrook, *History of Germany*, 208.

The legal framework under which ethnic Germans were admitted to Germany in the 1970s was an extension of provisions that had been made for expellees and Soviet-zone refugees in the 1950s. Under Germany's 1953 *Bundesvertriebene und Flüchtlingsgesetz* (Expellee and Refugee Law) persons who could demonstrate German ethnicity were considered German citizens if they had been residents of Poland, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Danzig, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Albania or China before May 8, 1945 and had left these areas after the end of the period of expulsion. German ethnicity had to be demonstrated by proving German descent, displaying knowledge of the German language, producing evidence of having been raised as a German in childhood or having participated in German cultural activities. Ethnic Germans were considered 'expellees' for the purposes of the law and had automatic right to citizenship.[190]

A second basis for admitting ethnic Germans rested on an interpretation of Article 116 of the Basic Law, Germany's Constitution. Under Article 116, those ethnic Germans, their spouses or descendants, who as refugees or expellees were admitted to the German Reich, as it was constituted on December 31, 1937, were to be considered Germans. The context of admissions policy respecting ethnic Germans clearly followed as a consequence of, and an obligation resulting from Germany's role in the Second World War and in the Cold War that followed. In a study of ethnic German immigrants in the city of Münster, German researcher, Heinz Ingenhorst suggests that ethnic German immigrants became important politically as players in the Cold War's 'contest of

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[190] Adelheid Herrmann-Pfandt, "Eingliederung der Aussiedler" in *Informationen zur politischen Bildung,* 222 (München: Franzis-Verlag, 1989), 2.

systems' mentality. In this ideological battle "every ethnic German migrant became an expellee and living proof of the inhumanity of communist systems."[191]

The debates on the 1953 Expellee and Refugee Law illustrated the connection German public discourse made between the Cold War and Germany's view of ethnic German migrants. On February 25, 1953, *Bundesminister* Dr. Lukaschek rose in the *Bundestag* to speak in the debate on the final reading of the law. The minister acknowledged the change in integration prospects for earlier expellees due to the arrival of many refugees from the Soviet occupied zone at the time. The *Bundesminister* continued with the suggestion that "these Germans from the Soviet occupied zone are victims of the politics of the major powers. They are victims of the Cold War. The movement of refugees from the Soviet zone is a clear vote of the German people for the freedom of the West."[192] German public discourse in the 1970s often affirmed the notion that ethnic Germans from the East were not immigrants but returnees fleeing to freedom in the West. Alexander Neufeld recalls that when he came to Bielefeld from Estonia in the 1970s there was a common "belief that people were coming from an environment of repression into freedom and that they were being granted a favour coming, as they did, from the Communist system."[193] An address by a government minister to new arrivals in

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[191] Heinz Ingenhorst, *Die Rußlanddeutschen: Aussiedler zwischen Tradition und Moderne* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 1997), 86-87. See also Rainer Münz and Rainer Ohliger, "Long-Distance Citizens: Ethnic Germans and Their Immigration to Germany," in *Paths to Inclusion: The Integration of Migrants in the United States and Germany*, eds. Peter Schuck and Rainer Münz (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998), 155-201.

[192] *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages: I. Wahlperiode 1949, Stenographische Berichte Band 15,* 25 February 1953, 11972.

[193] Alexander Neufeld, *Interview*, Bielefeld, January 20, 1999.

Nordrhein-Westfalen's receiving centre at Friedland in 1975 suggested that the first visitors there had been prisoners of war returning from the Soviet Union. The minister acknowledged that there were no prisoners of war at the centre at the time, but suggested that the ethnic German immigrants present were still "people who were held captive in their situation in other ways through political developments now almost a part of history. They were prisoners because they were not free to make their own choices and decisions."[194]

Expellee groups also used the immigration and presence of ethnic Germans to further their own political objectives. The value of ethnic German immigrants was enhanced because of their usefulness in reminding Germans of the losses suffered by expellees. Recovery of territories in the East remained an important political objective for expellee groups for many years and these groups used ethnic German immigration for political advantage.[195] As Thomas Faist points out, the admission of these so-called 'expelled' ethnic Germans could "be implicitly used as a reminder of the 'lost territories' in the East."[196]

Germany's political parties valued ethnic Germans because they were immediately enfranchised. As such they were "easily incorporated into political parties," making them important sources of voter support.[197] This value was reflected in the

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[194] Werner Maihofer, "Ansprache von Bundesminister Professor Dr. Werner Maihofer vor Aussiedlern im Grenzdurchgangslager Friedland am 19. Dezember 1975," quoted in *AWR*, 14(1976): 124.

[195] It was only in 1991 that Chancellor Helmut Kohl formally recognized the Oder-Neisse line as the border between Poland and Germany.

[196] Faist, "How to Define a Foreigner," 59.

[197] Ibid.

political discourse of the parties vying for their vote. The greatest beneficiaries of the ethnic German vote were the right-of-centre parties, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian counterpart the Christian Social Union (CSU). These parties were also the most vocal supporters of the ethnocultural concept of citizenship. The social democrats (SPD) attempted to advance the republican principle of citizenship, a platform that could have appealed to guest workers who were mostly working class.[198] The SPD could not be seen as sympathetic to communism, however, and had to "consent unconditionally to the policies of invitation for ethnic Germans." Its own attempts to have election laws changed were unsuccessful and laws enfranchising guest workers in SPD controlled states were overturned in the Federal Constitutional Court. The arguments used were that guest workers could not be given the rights of citizens because they did not belong to "the people" (*das Volk*).[199] Partisan discourse, which favoured the granting of citizenship to ethnic Germans based on the ethnocultural model of the polity, granted ethnic Germans access to the political process while guest workers, who had often been in Germany longer or were born there, remained outside these processes.

To some extent, public discourse as it was pursued in Bielefeld's newspapers echoed and reinforced some aspects of national discourse. In particular, the role of ethnic Germans as freedom seekers was a prevalent theme of their stories throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Headlines heralding the arrival of a new group of ethnic Germans frequently referred to the 'long awaited freedom' they had now achieved, the pleasure they had in breathing the West's 'free air', and the satisfaction they would experience now that they

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[198] Ibid., 56.

[199] Ibid., 59.

were able to express themselves without fear of repression.[200] With the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 there was a perceptible change in public discussion of ethnic German immigrants. Ethnic Germans who arrived in Bielefeld after the building of the wall were characterized more as strangers than as fellow sufferers. After 1961, newspapers in Bielefeld increasingly discussed problems experienced by ethnic German immigrants and their potential solutions. Even the highly touted vote for freedom that ethnic German migration symbolized was not free of ambiguity and contradictions.

In response to the shock of post-sexual revolution Germany ethnic Germans connected freedom with an ability to protect their children from what they believed were inappropriate public attitudes toward sexuality. They thought, for instance, that if the West was really so free they should be able to withdraw their children from sex education classes in the schools. In January 1973, the *Westfalen Blatt* wrote: "for many ethnic German families sex education is a tremendous shock."[201] Five years later the paper again reported that at a public meeting of officials and immigrants, ethnic Germans had suggested that "in Germany there is freedom—but it is not freedom if I have to send my children [to sex education classes]."[202] Newspaper analysis concluded that ethnic Germans were inadequately prepared for their emigration and the first contact made with

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[200] Two examples are: "Aussiedlerfamilien kamen an: wie Fremdlinge von einem anderen Stern: Keinem von ihnen hat das Leben etwas geschenkt," *Neue Westfälische,* 14 December 1971 and "Nach zwanzig Jahren unmenschlicher arbeit in sibirischen Lagern jetzt die langersehnte Freiheit erhalten: Mutter und Töchter waren 22 Jahre von ihren Angehörigen getrennt," *Freie Press,* 16 October 1965.

[201] "350 Übersiedler leben in Bielefeld: Keine Schwierigkeiten an den neuen Arbeitsplätzen: Froh, wieder in Deutschland zu sein—Lob für Kollegen und Vorgesetze," *Westfalen Blatt,* 12 January 1973.

[202] Waltraut Sax-Demuth, "Freiheit schafft manchmal Probleme," *Westfalen Blatt,* 13 November 1979.

them overlooked the "patriarchal family structure" that formed the basis for their views of human sexuality. Newspapers could offer no solution to this problem of Germany's free society. Ethnic Germans would simply have to adapt to this aspect of their new home.[203]

Public discussion also considered what needed to be done in order to improve the integration of ethnic Germans into society. Newspaper articles and spokespersons quoted in them were often critical of host society approaches to ethnic German immigrants. One common criticism was that Bielefeld citizens seemed to think that their responsibility ended with the provision of financial resources, housing and a place to work. Agencies with the responsibility of providing counselling and settlement services believed this was insufficient. Dr. Hildegard Reinartz (Soest), the leader of the women's organization of a local church, the *Evangelische Frauenhilfe*, feared that ethnic Germans from Poland, Romania and Paraguay were in danger of being left on the fringes of Bielefeld society. She urged greater acceptance of ethnic Germans in community life and gave an example of an ethnic German immigrant from Paraguay who complained of being labelled a 'Polack'.[204] In another article offering otherwise glowing testimonials about their successful integration, the writer was forced to conclude that "as a rule contacts with Bielefelders ended at the door of the workplace or the home." The article's informants, the writer maintained, were in danger of remaining isolated because they did not take the

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[203] "'Sind wir denn hierhergekommen, daß man unsere Kinder verdirbt?': Für manche Umsiedler-Familien wirkt 'sexuelle Freizügigkeit' wie ein Schock," *Westfalen Blatt,* 23 January 1973.

[204] "Frauenhilfe erleichtert Umsiedlerschicksale: Jahresfest im 'Haus des Handwerks'" *Neue Westfälische,* 17 May 1971.

initiative in making contact with members of the host society because of apparent "shame or shyness."[205] The impending arrival of a large group of ethnic Germans from Poland stimulated the newspaper to again admonish its readers to remember that financial resources were not enough—contact with Bielefelders was critical to integrating the newcomers into the community.[206]

Ethnic Germans were also valued as indicators of the value and strength of ethnic association. Public discussion repeatedly pointed to the fact that ethnic Germans had maintained their 'Germanness' and continued to feel that they were German in spite of their lengthy isolation from Germany proper. The *Neue Westfälische* reported that one ethnic German had claimed that "we feel like Germans—our place is in Germany."[207] An elderly immigrant believed that for her it was "like a dream to be in Germany."[208] In a similar vein, a pamphlet designed as a resource for schoolteachers examined the role of ethnic association for Germans and newcomers. In addition to explanatory information, the pamphlet reprinted a portion of an article from the newspaper, *Die Zeit.* Its writer stated that while ethnic association might be an orientation that was transitory in a unified

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[205] "350 Übersiedler leben in Bielefeld: Keine Schwierigkeiten an den neuen Arbeitsplätzen: Froh, wieder in Deutschland zu sein—Lob für Kollegen und Vorgesetze" *Westfalen Blatt,* 12 January 1973.

[206] "In Bielefeld trifft heute die erste größere Ausländer gruppe ein: Kaum materielle Notlagen, aber menschliche Kontakte wichtig," *Neue Westfälische*, 21 January 1976.

[207] "'Wir fühlen uns als Deutsche—unser Platz is in Deutschland': Minister Maihofer besuchte Aussiedler/Offenes Ohr für Nöte," *Neue Westfälische,* 30 August 1976.

[208] "Aussiedler: 'Es ist wie ein Traum in Deutschland zu sein': Einwöchiges Seniorenseminar in Haus Neuland," *Neue Westfälische,* 22 January 1977.

Europe he believed that Germans "remained, ...one people, living in various states." "This association," he went on,

> has obligations; we are more than the population of a given country, a collection of reluctant taxpayers and citizens. We should be thankful for our membership in a *Volk* and affirm this association by being willing to assist and sacrifice for it. Ethnic Germans who are now coming to us from the East have made a much greater sacrifice for their ethnic association than we have.[209]

Public discourse justifying the admission of ethnic Germans from the East stressed the common ethnic connection they shared with indigenous Germans. Common ethnic association was, however, a tenuous relationship. For ethnic Germans, association with other Germans was—like their newfound freedom—fraught with some tension. Ethnic Germans had for years nurtured an imagined Germany to which they had a strong desire to return. In this sense they were the out-of-state nationals who fit the description of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities.* These ethnic Germans 'imagined' that their local practices, language, food ways and rituals connected them to a German nation. To employ Anderson's concept, although separated from Germany, "in the minds of each live[d] the image of their communion" with other Germans.[210] When they arrived, however, the realities of modern Germany were threatening to them. Their struggles to accommodate became interwoven with their perceived value to the community. In general, the tone of articles in Bielefeld newspapers emphasized differences between native and ethnic Germans. Ethnic Germans were cast in the role of people suffering

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[209] Roland Phelps, "Was heißt es, Deutscher zu sein?" *Die Zeit,* 4 November 1988 reprinted in *Informationen zur politischen Bildung,* No. 222 (München: Franzis-Verlag, 1989), 7.

[210] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* 2nd edition (London: Vero, 1991), 6.

from centuries of isolation. The newcomers were perceived to be steeped in religion and unaware of the cultural transformation of Germany since the Second World War. Added to public discussion of ethnic German aversion to the sexual freedom of modern Germany was a recurring reference to their inability to cope with a market economy. Concerns were expressed about the newcomers' tendency to fall prey to hucksters.[211] Public discourse also dwelled on the immigrant's undesirable, but strong wish to cluster in certain city neighbourhoods. Language ability was a recurring item of public discussion because many Germans found the immigrant's nineteenth century German to be dated and conspicuous.

Despite these tensions, ethnic Germans were perceived as valuable to the country because they provided an apparent solution to the problems of an aging population.[212] With declining birth rates, German society had an abiding concern about the ultimate economic and social sustainability of their society. During the years of ethnic German migration, public discussion became increasingly concerned about how the welfare state that had been created could be sustained. Ethnic Germans were perceived as a possible solution to this problem because of the younger profile of their population. In 1979, the government of Nordrhein-Westfalen publication, *Der Wegweiser*, addressed this advantage in an article evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of admitting ethnic

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[211] "Spezialist hilft Aussiedlern aus unseriösen Verträgen: Arbeiterwohlfahrt engagierte Fachman/Versicherungen," *Neue Westfälische,* 2 December 1976.

[212] Even during the 1990s when the numbers of arriving ethnic Germans threatened to overwhelm Germany, Dr. Horst Waffenschmidt the Minister in charge of ethnic German immigration maintained that "with their many large, young families and numerous children they are a gain for our country." *Aktuelle Aussiedlerpolitik* 1998, Release of the Bundesministerium des Innern, 1998.

German immigrants. The article concluded that one of the assets brought by ethnic Germans was "that [they] have a positive influence on the demographic balance of the population."[213] In Bielefeld, the declining birthrate of native Germans meant that the large families of ethnic Germans were conspicuous in the community. Although newspapers made few direct references to the demographic advantage of young families, there was increasing emphasis on the bright future that awaited the large numbers of ethnic German children. One immigrant family's hope for the future, according to the newspaper, was believed to centre on their daughter, fifteen year old Hildegard.[214] Newspapers noted that the younger age profile of immigrants would "ease their integration and improve their mobility." They were sure that the "children will integrate very quickly," and regretted the loss of "two families with numerous children who had gone back to Don and Volga with a heavy heart because of the unrelenting eroticism in the media and the sexual freedom in German society."[215]

Public discourse, both directly and indirectly, addressed the question of the value of ethnic German immigrants for the two societies. And they **were** valued in both

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[213] Ernst Wagner, "Aussiedler: Belastung oder Bereicherung?," *Der Wegweiser* 8-9 (1979): 16.

[214] "Die ersten Umsiedler aus Polen: Acht Jahre auf Ausreisegenehmigung gewarted Dann kosteten die Pässe ein kleines Vermögen," *Neue Westfälische,* 25 February, 1971.

[215] "Aussiedlerfamilien kamen an: wie Fremdlinge von einem anderen Stern: Keinem von ihnen hat das Leben etwas geschenkt," *Neue Westfälische,* 14 December 1971, "Deutsche aus Rußland öffneten vor Minister Maihofer einen prallen Sack voller Probleme: Gespräch führte zu konstruktiven Ratschlägen," *Neue Westfälische,* 23 January 1978 and "Mindestens 5000 Aussiedler wollen nach Bielefeld Mittel für 165 Wohnungsneubauten sichergestellt: Bislang kamen knapp 100 Personen / Individuelle Beratung im Übergangsheim Teichsheide," *Neue Westfälische*, 5 May 1977.

Winnipeg and Bielefeld. To a large extent the discourse that pointed to this value and set the tone for immigration policies in both countries was cast in terms of the immediate postwar experience, even for immigrants arriving in Bielefeld in the 1970s. The outline of public discussion and resulting immigration policies that has been drawn in this chapter suggests that ethnic Germans had economic, political, and symbolic value in the two cities. The nature of this value and the messages conveyed by the public discourse accompanying the early integration experiences of newcomers were, however, quite different.

Questioning the economic benefit of immigration was of much greater importance in the Canadian discourse of the late 1940s and early 1950s than it was in Germany in the 1970s. In Canada the number and type of immigrants that could be absorbed by the country was widely accepted as an appropriate basis for determining immigrant admission. A mood of optimism prevailed and there appeared to be a general public consensus, certainly in Winnipeg, that the country needed a larger population to remain economically and political viable. As potential assets for the balance sheet of the country, ethnic German immigrants were considered in the same light as the German immigrants who had preceded them. They adapted easily, it was believed, and would make a valuable contribution to the country's economy. In Bielefeld there was also economic value attributed to ethnic German immigrants, although it was focused on the potential contribution of their large families in ameliorating the aging population profile of German society. The immediate economic implications of their admission were much less of a concern in public discussion.

Politically, however, Bielefeld's immigrants were of immediate value. In partisan political discourse their quick enfranchisement made them valuable and, as a result, political parties were forced to take them into account in the formulation of immigration and settlement policies. In Winnipeg the political value of ethnic German immigrants was not as direct. The German community in Canada was, however, able to persuade the government of the day that ethnic Germans would be valuable assets to the country. The onset of the Cold War was propitious for those marshalling support for expanding the eligibility requirements for German immigrants. In both Winnipeg in the 1950s and Bielefeld in the 1970s the Cold War dominated the public's outlook and both societies placed high value on the anti-Communist orientation of ethnic German immigrants.

In Bielefeld the greatest value of admitting ethnic German immigrants was symbolic. It was symbolic in the sense that for German society they represented in concrete form certain German cultural and national values. In keeping with the orientation that had come as a result of the turmoil of integrating expellees and refugees in the immediate postwar period, ethnic Germans were valued as symbols of Germany's coming to terms with the harm caused by the Nazi period. Admitting ethnic Germans demonstrated Germany's resolve to deal with its history. For the large numbers of Germans who were expellees or their descendents, ethnic Germans also symbolized the continuing "expulsion" of Germans from the East. Ethnic Germans were a reminder of the sacrifice of expellees and this status reinforced the value of their contributions to German society. Ethnic Germans were also a concrete reminder of the validity of ethnocultural identity as a prerequisite for full membership in German society. Although to a much lesser degree, ethnic Germans in Winnipeg were also valued for what they

represented. In Winnipeg they were symbols of the country's humanitarian sensitivity to the refugee problem in Europe. Seeing ethnic Germans in their city was tangible evidence of Canada having fulfilled its obligations in the new world order at the end of the war.

Did public discourse influence the ease or difficulty of integrating immigrants into the new environment? Certainly the tenor of public discussion made possible immigration policies that allowed ethnic Germans to gain admission to the two countries. Comparing the two discourses highlights the importance of the value attributed to ethnic German immigrants by the national discourse in the host societies. The role that public discourse projected for Winnipeg's immigrants provided a receptive environment for their strategies of coming to terms with their new home. They were quick to assume the role of hard working but unobtrusive members of Winnipeg society. In Bielefeld, the value of ethnic Germans, heavily laden as it was with symbolic content, offered fewer apparent advantages for those immigrants' strategies for integration. Public discussion there was centred much more specifically on the pitfalls along the way to integration and immigrants were often treated as strangers in spite of their ethnic and linguistic affinities. The resulting disjuncture between the Germany that newcomers had imagined and its reality was considerable and they developed defensive and inward-looking strategies to come to terms with their environment.

PART TWO: PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Chapter Three: Winnipeg: Self Reliance in a Laissez-faire Milieu

Immigrants arriving in Winnipeg in the late 1940s and 1950s immediately faced two problems. One was establishing a home located in a neighbourhood that would facilitate their effort to raise a family and to find friends with whom to share the bewilderment of settling in a new country. Finding work was even more urgent. As Barry Broadfoot's introduction to a chapter of postwar immigrant stories puts it:

> 'You got job?' Often these were the first three words an immigrant learned. A job meant money with which to live, and money was also the measure that European immigrants used to gauge their success against that of other immigrants. With a job, you were doing fine. Without one, you were a nobody. ...A job was hope. A job was confidence. A job was the first thing a newcomer needed, and it was the first mark of success in their new lives. Everything else followed. Nothing mattered more. First, get a job.[216]

Winnipeg offered both homes and jobs, grudgingly, it must be said, but in its very reluctance it offered the kind of challenge that could be met, and later savoured, as proof that one had earned one's way, and won one's place.

Finding their first work places is remembered as a difficult time for most immigrants. The early experiences of Walter Koberstein, who arrived in Winnipeg as a young man, were typical. Like most immigrants, his first objective was to find work. A relative who had come to Canada before the Second World War helped him look through newspaper ads, took him to various work places, and helped him apply for a job. His first

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[216] Barry Broadfoot, *The Immigrant Years: From Europe to Canada 1945-1967* (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1986), 130.

job was dipping red-hot truck springs into an oil bath to cool them. He made forty cents an hour, an amount that was 'big money' at the time. The job was dirty and dangerous because the oil bath became very hot and splattered oil all over his hands causing blisters. Koberstein remembers thinking that "hell couldn't be any worse than this; I think I better quit this job and find something else." He took a job as a construction labourer where he worked for two years before joining a sheet metal company. The sheet metal company went out of business and in 1953 Koberstein joined a man much his senior as equal partners in their own sheet metal company. The partnership lasted two years before Koberstein sold his interest to strike out on his own in a heating business. Within two years he had established an enviable reputation and a growing enterprise that employed eighty people. Over the next few years he started a number of other business ventures. Eventually he sold them to concentrate on a window manufacturing enterprise he had founded in 1965.[217]

Koberstein's story is not typical of ethnic German immigrants in either Winnipeg or Bielefeld. Most immigrants did not become business owners although entrepreneurial success was much more likely in Winnipeg than in Bielefeld. The story does, however, illustrate the themes that dominated the working world of immigrants and the pattern of the typical narrative. Perceptions of having to start at the bottom, memories of difficult and sometimes dangerous work, stories of sudden unemployment when firms failed were shared realities for immigrants. Another shared reality was the last section of Koberstein's story that describes the success he achieved after a period of struggle.

[217] Walter Koberstein, *Interview,* Winnipeg, Chair in German-Canadian Studies, University of Winnipeg, German Oral History Collection, (hereafter GOH), GER-W05-KOB.

Although not as apparent to them at the time, the character of their work and its precariousness were often local expressions of fundamental changes in the national and international economies. Regardless of these larger trends, ethnic German immigrants in Winnipeg believed their tradition of hard work, their thrift, resourcefulness, and ability to please employers and customers would open doors in the working world of the city. The significance of work to their integration depended on their gender, the size and composition of their family, and their individual work histories. How did work contribute to their sense of belonging and assure their legitimacy as participants in the life of their recently adopted city?

That ethnic Germans took pride in their work did not distinguish them from other newcomers. As Franca Iacovetta points out in her study of Italian immigrants in Toronto, stories of parents who worked hard were part of the legacy of growing up in a postwar Italian immigrant family and were likely repeated for many other immigrant groups.[218] Moreover, in the context of migration, the meaning of work must be considered in broader terms than purely the economic sense of acquiring the resources needed to sustain life. Migrating workers invested work with diverse meanings that included but were not limited to their membership in a class, or "social grouping rooted in productive relations."[219] As H.F. Moorhouse has suggested, "the meanings of work are not likely to be neat and simple, or form some uncomplicated 'ethic' but are rather likely to be

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[218] Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (Montreal, Kingston, London, Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), x.

[219] Bryan D. Palmer, *Working Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), 23.

jumbled and variegated, so that any individual has a whole range of types and levels of meanings on which to draw, and with which to understand or appreciate the labour they are doing at any particular moment."[220] Both economic and cultural meaning were attached to ethnic German work and the degree to which immigrants developed a sense of feeling at home in their new environments depended on both levels of meaning.

Canadian economic prospects after the end of hostilities in May 1945 were clouded by fears of a depression much like that encountered after the First World War. Kenneth Norrie and Doug Owram's description of the international economic scene after the Second World War suggests that in North America governments were preoccupied with anticipated problems of absorbing returning military forces, converting military to civilian production and meeting questions about sources of demand for peacetime production.[221] Many of these fears proved to be unfounded and the country was blessed with a strong economic performance between 1945 and 1957.

Most Winnipeg ethnic German immigrants arrived between 1947 and 1955, at the beginning of what became a postwar economic boom. With the exception of 1954 when economic output declined, Canadian growth rates exceeded 4.5 percent for most of the 1950s, reaching a record high of 9.5 percent growth in 1955. Five years of lower performance from 1957 to 1961 slowed the economy to an average of 2.9 percent growth

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[220] H.F. Moorhouse, "The 'work' ethic and 'leisure' activity: the hot rod in post-war America," in *The Historical Meanings of Work,* ed. Patrick Joyce (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 241.

[221] Kenneth Norrie and Doug Owram, *A History of the Canadian Economy,* 2nd edition (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996), 401-402.

per year, but an extended boom from 1962 to 1973 produced economic growth of more than 5 percent almost every year.[222]

Immigrants arriving in Winnipeg in the late 1940s and the 1950s came when the economy was in transition from war driven demand to production for a peacetime consumer market. Some industries were unable to survive the restructuring demanded by the postwar economy. In Winnipeg the clothing industry experienced its greatest number of business failures in the 1950s. To a large extent the cause was labour shortages. The industry that remained was an important employer of immigrant women. Manufacturing began a gradual decline that would continue throughout the period of ethnic German immigration although some sectors, such as transportation equipment and the food industry, would remain important employers for immigrants.[223] The expanding service sector, comprising 54 percent of the work force in 1950, provided employment for many immigrants, particularly women.[224]

Ethnic German admission requirements were directly connected to the perceived labour shortages of the postwar period. Immigration policy, although pursued on humanitarian grounds, was also formulated as a response to labour shortages. One of the most severe was in agriculture where it was suggested that between the beginning of the war and the early 1950s some five hundred thousand farm workers had been lost.[225] Targeted immigration programs were devised in response to this need and many ethnic

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[222] Ibid., 411 and 417.

[223] Kuz, *Winnipeg 1874-1974,* 89-96 and 136.

[224] See Table 2 in Chapter 5.

[225] "Govt. Plans Crackdown on Immigrant Farmers," *Winnipeg Tribune*, January 8, 1954.

Germans came to Canada under immigration schemes such as the Sugar Beet Scheme, the Farm Worker Scheme, the Lumber Workers Scheme or the Domestics Scheme, all of which addressed perceived labour shortages.

While immigration officials viewed these schemes as fulfilling a Canadian need, immigrants cared less about the details of the various schemes or the suitability of their skills than about the opportunities for getting into the country. For ethnic German immigrants these schemes served as a vehicle to get out of postwar Germany and to settle in a country perceived as having unlimited opportunity. The objectives of the government and of immigrants in the realm of work were frequently at cross-purposes, creating many problems for both government and the religious organizations sponsoring ethnic German immigration. The various labour schemes required some proof of suitability for the intended labour category and a minimum time commitment to the type of work the particular immigration scheme was designed to address. In both areas ethnic Germans tested the limits of the programs' guidelines and objectives.

An example of the divergent meanings that immigrants and Canadian church and government officials attached to perceptions of their place in Canada's working world can be found in the problems associated with the Farm Worker scheme. On the surface the plan appeared to be tailored to ethnic Germans because so many of them had experience in agricultural work. Winnipeg-bound immigrants were refugees from German enclaves in the Soviet Union and Poland that had been agriculturally oriented. Although industrialization had come to many of these areas, ethnic German work worlds remained closely tied to agriculture and the land. In the Soviet Union, many had toiled on the same land as their forefathers, though it had been reorganized during the Stalin era as

a collective farm. The war had certainly disrupted the uniformity of ethnic German work experiences. A significant proportion of ethnic German refugees who had congregated in West Germany in the 1940s and 1950s, some of whom would end up in Winnipeg, were from agricultural backgrounds. Indeed, 40 per cent of them reported that they had been involved in agriculture in 1939. By 1949, however, only 29.3 percent of ethnic German refugees were still involved in agriculture.[226] In spite of the dislocation of war and the loss of agricultural lands in Eastern Europe, many immigrants knew farm life and wanted to resume it. The intended occupation of German immigrants arriving in Canada reflected the predominance of farm backgrounds among ethnic German immigrants. Between 1947 and 1950, before German nationals were permitted entry, 37 percent of those of working age intended to enter farm work.[227] Ella Oster suggests in her memoir that:

> Many of the people from our settlements had given up the hope of ever becoming farmers again. They had taken the risk and moved to the USA, Canada or Australia. The letters we received from friends who had emigrated to Canada sounded very promising: 'As long as one is willing to work for it, anyone in this country can eventually own some land.'[228]

While some managed to establish themselves as farmers, mainly as Ontario and B.C. fruit growers, most immigrants discovered that capital requirements and the lack of cheap land made this an impossible dream.[229] Signing up for a job on a Canadian farm, however, remained an attractive way to enter Canada.

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[226] Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees, 1939-1952: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1956), 388.

[227] *Immigration to Canada by Ethnic Origin from Overseas and Total from the United States by Intended Occupation: Calendar Years 1946 to 1955, Inclusive,* (Ottawa: Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Statistics Section, 1956).

[228] Ella Oster, *Memoirs: Oster*, ed. Ilse Krentz, (Winnipeg: Author, 1987), 42-43.

[229] Kl. Klassen, "In der Neuen Heimat," *Der Bote*, 25(38) 22 September 1948.

The opportunity was not nearly as attractive once immigrants actually arrived on Canadian farms. As a result, immigrants leaving the farm and failing to complete their employment contracts remained a constant and persistent problem for immigration officials. It soon became apparent that immigrants were using the program as a way to get to Canada rather than as a route to an economic livelihood on a Canadian farm. It even seemed that immigrants were becoming adept at using the scheme to enter Canada with the express intent of moving almost immediately to other forms of work when they arrived. One report in 1953 indicated that in areas near large cities up to 50 percent of farm workers left their farm placements for a job in the city before their one-year commitment had been fulfilled.[230] The farm worker situation became serious enough to prompt the Department of Immigration to commission a study involving members of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. In response to "the strong tendency for many to seek employment in cities," three members of the farm organization travelled to Europe to study the problem at its root.[231]

In addition to leaving their farm jobs as soon as they could, immigrants often managed to pass immigration admission hurdles by citing experience they did not possess. A frustrated C.L. Monk, the Canadian Executive Director of the Lutheran World Relief, wrote to his co-workers in Europe about an immigrant who had been placed with a farmer in Saskatchewan only to reappear in the offices of the organization in Winnipeg

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[230] "Govt. Plans Crackdown on Immigrant Farmers," *Winnipeg Tribune*, January 8, 1954.

[231] "C.F.A. Representatives Studying Immigration of Farm Labourers," *Canadian Lutheran World Relief*, MG 28 V120, vol. 28, file 24, National Archives of Canada, (hereafter NAC).

five days later. Monk writes: "By no stretch of the imagination can he be called a farm labourer. He apparently is a photographer. In spite of the promises he had made to work on a farm for one year he now wishes to recant such promises."[232]

Immigration workers in Canada encouraged their European counterparts to make sure that potential immigrants fully understood their contractual obligations. D. Wichmar from the Canadian Lutheran World Relief office in Kitchener had observed the European camp director speaking to immigrants in Europe and noted that he spoke "realistically and urges everyone to keep their contracts and make a good impression in Canada." He had also noticed, however that "many of the immigrants did not believe him and declared that once they were in Canada they would do as they pleased."[233]

In spite of official awareness of the problem there seemed to be nothing that could be done to correct it. The government seemingly lacked the will to force the issue. In a 1954 article in the *Winnipeg Tribune* a reporter claimed that "federal authorities lack any administrative weapon with which they could effectively stop the farm labourers from leaving the farms. They are only able to try and persuade them to remain at their farm jobs."[234] Wichmar accused the Department of Labour of inconsistency "in dealing with the situation of run-away immigrant farm workers." The problem could not be solved

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[232] C.L. Monk to J.G. Keil, 21 July, 1950, *Canadian Lutheran World Relief*, MG 28 V120, vol. 20, file 20, NAC.

[233] D.Wichmar to C.L. Monk, September 8, 1953, *Canadian Lutheran World Relief*, MG 28 V120, vol. 30, file 32, NAC.

[234] Victor Mackie, "Govt. Plans Crackdown on Immigrant Farmers," *Winnipeg Tribune*, January 8, 1954.

because, as he believed, "if our men see Government sponsored men leave the farm and get away with it, it is only natural that they too will get restless and try to do the same."[235]

There were other labour-dominated immigration schemes, most notably the Domestic Worker scheme that brought many ethnic German women to Canada on one-year contracts to work as domestics. Before 1951 those intending to enter domestic service accounted for 9.5 percent of working age ethnic German immigrants. Between 1951 and 1961, 82,937 female domestic servants arrived in Canada. Germans made up 30 percent of the total—the largest ethnic contingent.[236] The first domestics to arrive were destined for health care and other institutional placements, while later arrivals went directly into service in homes. As in the Farm Worker Scheme, women accepting employment as domestics used the opportunity as a way to come to Canada rather than as a career. Immigrant women who came to Canada as domestics were frequently accused of having misrepresented themselves to immigration and church authorities and of not having a commitment to their one-year contract. For domestics there was the added complication that their job was incompatible with married life. The eagerness of domestics to leave their jobs to get married was a frequent cause of complaint. Like farm workers, domestics were accused of not taking their obligations seriously. Once again, a frustrated C. L. Monk complained about the lack of commitment demonstrated by the women his organization was assisting. He used the example of Lilly Lang who came to Canada under the domestic scheme and was placed in an up-scale household because of

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[235] D.Wichmar to C.L. Monk, September 8, 1953, NAC.

[236] *Immigration to Canada by Ethnic Origin* and Marilyn Barber, *Immigrant Domestic Services in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991), 2.

an "impression that she was a bonafide domestic." The placement was, however, unsuccessful because "during the first morning with her new employer she announced that she had not come to Canada to do domestic work, but actually wanted to do factory work."[237]

According to Marilyn Barber, the theme of domestic service as a way to gain entry to Canada is a common one. She claims that British domestic immigrants, those Displaced Persons admitted to Canada as domestics between October 1947 and March 1950, and ethnic German domestics arriving under assisted passage schemes between 1951 and 1961, all "left household work for other employment at the first opportunity, thus creating a constant demand for more domestics."[238]

Later immigration schemes were less specifically targeted at labour shortages, favouring instead the immigrant with a sponsor, usually a family, already in Canada. Sponsored immigration schemes reflected the general government policy of opening doors for immigration without providing any coordinated program of settlement assistance. As historian Reg Whitaker suggests, the sponsored immigration scheme lowered "the cost of the acclimatization and integration of immigrants... transferring some of these costs to the private sector—in this case to the sponsoring families and their

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[237] C.L. Monk to G.M. Berkefeld, 15 October 1951, *Canadian Lutheran World Relief*, MG 28 V120, vol. 29, file 20, NAC.

[238] Barber, *Immigrant Domestic Services,* 20-21. In analyzing his interviews of German immigrant women Alexander Freund concludes that many women used domestic service as a stepping stone to achieving their goals. Alexander Freund and Laura Quilici, "Exploring Myths in Women's Narratives: Italian and German Immigrant Women in Vancouver, 1947-1961," *BC Studies* 105-106 (1995): 172.

immigrant communities."[239] The government made sure there would be no call on its financial resources from immigrants by requiring church immigration organizations and relatives of immigrants to guarantee their self-sufficiency.

Left on their own, many immigrants soon realized that they could not achieve economic independence and their desired social arrangements while working on the farm or in domestic service. On a Manitoba farm they typically could only earn income during the summer months and had to exchange the performance of daily chores—feeding livestock and cleaning barns—for food and shelter during the winter. With only a few months to earn money, they soon became discouraged at their prospects and many made their way into Winnipeg to find work. Domestic service was physically and socially restrictive and in some cases placed women at risk of abuse. Like farm workers, domestics left their assigned work places as soon as, or often before their employment contracts had been fulfilled to enter the workforce in factories, offices, health care institutions and retail outlets in the city. A letter published in a newsletter for prospective immigrants still in Europe illustrated the tensions between the government's labour force objectives, the somewhat nostalgic appeal of immigrants' earlier peasant experience, and the realities of Canada's economic and employment situation. Anna and Heinrich Hamm informed prospective immigrants still in Europe of the mechanized agriculture they found in Canada and suggested, "because of these circumstances many of our farm worker immigrants become unemployed in the winter time and are forced into the cities where

[239] Reg Whitaker, *Canadian Immigration Policy Since Confederation,* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991), 16.

the employment prospects and wages are higher."[240] Initial employment as a farm worker or sugar beet hoer with a subsequent move to the city to find work became a general feature of postwar ethnic German migration. Immigrant women who were employed as domestics were spared a move from rural areas but they also left their work as soon as possible, particularly if they were in private service, for work in sewing factories and health care institutions.

The move off the farm or away from private domestic service presented new challenges. The mobility, persistence and resourcefulness required to achieve stable employment in Winnipeg is illustrated by the career of Wilhelm Maretzki who arrived in Canada in 1954. Maretzki used a strategy employed by many immigrants of earlier times. His wife remained behind in Germany while he came to Canada to see if he could establish himself and earn enough money to pay her passage and establish a secure foundation for their new life. Like many postwar immigrants Maretzki's life had been disrupted by the war:

> I had no career, I went to school until I went into the army and when we were released I had to see that there was food to eat so I went to a farmer to work. Till 1948 it was bad. When we were on the ship and I was alone, no family with me; we spun tales of how we would make a dollar, make money, and get rich quickly here in Canada.

Getting rich would be more difficult than Maretzki and his fellow travellers could imagine. The process of finding a job was difficult and stories of finding work revealed the depth of disorientation and disillusionment among immigrants in the city. Getting that first job in Winnipeg required persistence and was accomplished mostly in the absence of

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[240] Anna and Heinrich Hamm, "Brief aus Kanada," *Unser Blatt* 3, February 1, 1949.

assistance from government. Government employment offices helped some immigrants find work, but the government took no responsibility for ensuring a job for everyone. Most immigrants had to rely on their own resources and their network of friends and kin to land that first job and the details of how it was obtained remained a poignant memory for many ethnic Germans in Winnipeg. Changes in work both from the point of view of availability as well as suitability meant that they also had to be persistent and resourceful in adjusting to the work place.

As Maretzki recalls, the dreams of opportunity were frequently somewhat shaken at the first sighting of the new land:

> We arrived in Quebec City; first we traveled for a day along the St. Lawrence—there was not much to see and it took so long. We looked to the left or right and occasionally caught a glimpse of a church or something like that but it was mostly forest, it did not look that promising.

The prospects for wages also dimmed upon their arrival at Quebec City where they attempted to confirm the reality of their earlier dreams.

> ...[In Quebec City], we had to stay overnight on the ship; we wanted to find out from the dockworkers what wages were like here, what the prospect was for work in Canada. We found out that they only spoke French. I could speak a little English—from school. There was one person in our group who could speak French; he went to ask about wages. He came back and said 'I don't know—they say it is very bad.' We had always heard that you could earn four dollars an hour—four dollars! At that time you got 4.20 or 4.30 Marks for one dollar—the dollar was high. So naturally, if you got four dollars an hour and you worked eight hours at that price, you were rich in no time. He came back and we asked him what their wages were. He claimed they had said a dollar twenty or twenty-five an hour. We thought they had pulled his leg—here in the harbor, the dockworkers—they must earn good money. Impossible!

Work prospects did not improve upon his arrival in Winnipeg. Reflecting on the reasons, Maretzki remarks:

> Looking for work was very disappointing. There were too many immigrants who came at that time.
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> ...It was so full and there was little work. You could not understand why so many came at one time—later on it was for the good of the country. The people, the Germans mainly, were hard working.

Although the story of the search for that first job is remembered fondly and told in a humorous way some forty years later, the disorientation and desperation of the time are unmistakable. Left largely on their own or with only the help of family members whose time for helping immigrants was limited by their own job demands, immigrants made the best of the confusion, misunderstanding and frustration of finding work.

The help offered by family and friends is a recurring theme in the memories of the immigrants. Family and friends were quick to offer advice about where to find a job. Maretzki continues:

> I think I was offered a job, but I didn't know it. It would likely have been a good job. [When I arrived in Winnipeg] I talked to a lot of people; I met a lot of fellow Germans and some said, 'go to Hydro'. Maybe you can get a job there. You speak some English. But I could not find Hydro! You know when you come to a strange city—I saw the tall smokestacks, from the heating plant of City Hydro. I guess they are not there any more. I thought that that was where I had to go. I rode around with the streetcar, and finally I found the place, where the smokestacks were, but it was only a plant. I had no idea; I walked around and couldn't find an entrance. When I finally found a way in, I was in the middle of the generators and the machines. I thought that I had better get out of there—I might be arrested.
>
> In any event... I went on foot to find the Hydro. Before that, my brother told me to go to the grain dealers. Grain dealers always needed someone to shovel grain. Every day they hired someone new because they had to shovel for ten or twelve hours and when they were 'pooped out' on the next day they were ready for the next guy. I didn't even get on there.
>
> People had all kinds of ideas. One person told me to go to the pillow factory where he worked on Sargent [Avenue], but they only paid forty-five cents an hour. He suggested I drop by.... I went there and saw him and talked to him but he didn't want to stop working to talk to me because the foreman might come... but I didn't get a job there.

In spite of repeated attempts Maretzki was unable to land a job largely because of the confusion about how to apply and where to go. His litany of failure continued and when he seemingly had been successful, he could not recognize it:

> On another occasion I was on the streetcar downtown and I saw a sign: 'City Hydro Employment Office.' I pulled on the cord and got off the streetcar and went there. This was the place where the earlier person had said I should go. I went there and sure enough, I stood in line along with a lot of other people, alphabetically according to our names, and asked [for a job]. 'OK, you fill out this form here.' I filled it out, she helped me a little bit and told me to take it to the window over there. At that window they did all kinds of other things and she gave me a card—a calling card with a name on it. She said, 'You can report there and there and you report to this and this man.' I am pretty sure I had a job. I was supposed to report to a place of work. But I thought, 'filling out these forms?' I had done that so often—it wouldn't amount to anything.

Finally, Maretzki accidentally came upon the government employment office where he was successful in ending what had become a desperate search for work by accepting employment in a mine.

> ...on the way I passed by the Unemployment Office. I didn't know where it was either but by coincidence I went by the Unemployment Office. I thought, what the heck, I'll go in there. There were so many people in the office! I saw this man at the back sitting at a desk. He had registered me [when I arrived at the immigration hall]. I went to see him, but you were not actually supposed to go there. The people at the front, the commissioners, argued amongst themselves: 'How did you get in here?' they asked. I said that I had just walked in and they said I was not supposed to be there. 'So, you got a job? They asked. ' 'No, I haven't got a job. Can I get a job here?' 'No, no,' he said, 'no jobs.' I said, 'Nothing? Not in the bush, on the farm, in the mine, anything?' 'No bush, no farm, no mine—there are no jobs.' So as I was leaving he called back, 'Hey, come back here. You want to work in the mine?' I said, 'I don't care, as long as I get a job.' 'Yes, you go see this man there, he speaks all languages, he can talk to you.' I started to talk to him in German, but he couldn't speak any German. He asked me if I was willing to work in the mine. 'Yes,' I said, 'I'll work at any job I can get.' 'Ok,' he said, 'the job pays a dollar five an hour, you have to pay two dollars room and board; you can think about it if you want to; you show up at the St. Regis Hotel tomorrow at nine o'clock if you want to go. But you can think about it.' 'No!' I said, 'I don't want to think about it, you just put me down for it.'

> 'Ok, if you want to go you report at the St. Regis Hotel at nine o'clock. I did it, and I was so happy I had a job. Here [in Winnipeg] you were looking at fifty, forty-five, sixty-five cents and here I could get a dollar an hour. I went there and a taxi came and took me to the Red River, somewhere near St. Paul; there was an airplane docked on the river. The pilot didn't say much, just a little comment once in awhile.... After an hour or so, ...he pointed down and said, 'that's where we are going.' There were a few houses down there and that was Bissett, Manitoba.[241]

Although Maretzki's story was repeated with many variations, other ethnic Germans made the transition to employment in Winnipeg quite easily. Maria Epp had been destined for a farm southwest of Winnipeg, near Winkler, but when the sponsor withdrew the offer of employment a new placement had to be found quickly. She was placed as a domestic in the River Heights neighbourhood of Winnipeg and her letter to the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization underlines her pleasure in finding gainful employment. She writes that she had taken responsibility for the large household of a wealthy 'English' family. She goes on to say:

> The couple has two children. The husband is away on business a lot and the wife frequently takes the children away in the family automobile. [The home has] eight large rooms, first class, and elegantly furnished. I look after the whole household and I am very diligent. I have evenings free. I want to attend English classes on Monday and Wednesday. Thursday and Sundays I am off after one o'clock. It seems to me that she may even allow me to go to church sometimes on Sunday morning. ...Twice she has mentioned, in my presence, that she is pleased with my manners and behavior.[242]

Canadian views of work were informed by their particular gender attitudes. Historians of the postwar period in Canada generally describe the period as one where

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[241] Wilhelm Maretzki, *Interviews,* Winnipeg, March 28 and 30, 1995, GOH.

[242] Maria Epp to J. Gerbrandt, April 20, 1950, *Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization Collection,* vol. 1355, file 1165, MHC.

"the prevailing philosophy" was "that mothers should stay home with the kids."[243] Men were to be the 'breadwinners' while women were the mothers, homemakers and caregivers to their husbands and children. Ethnic German women arrived in Winnipeg in the middle of this era in which Canadians idealized the serenity of suburban family life. The needs of an immigrant family, however, made the 'ideal' impossible to attain for most immigrant women. Unmarried women went to work and for many of them education beyond high school or elementary school was sacrificed to contribute earnings toward paying travel debts and acquiring the family's first home. Many married women also worked and extended family members looked after children until there were too many of them and the benefits to the family of full-time housework and childcare exceeded the need for a paycheque. Anneliese (Zahn) Bessler contracted to work as a domestic in Winnipeg for one year. She was placed with a Jewish family and then assembled fishing tackle packages before landing a job in the office of the Baptist World Alliance. In her family, she explains, paying off the travel debt "was first priority. Everything else was secondary. We even fed [ourselves] and shopped accordingly."[244] Christel (Bakus) Spletzer remembers that "everyone that was able to work in our family at that time had to find a job because we wanted to have a house of our own."[245] Ella Oster worked in a sewing factory for five years until her son who suffered epileptic seizures could no longer be left alone. The income of women became particularly

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[243] Alvin Finkel, *Our Lives: Canada after 1945* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1997), 45.

[244] Annaliese (Zahn) Bessler, *Interview,* Winnipeg, March 15, 1995, GOH.

[245] Christel (Bakus) Spletzer, *Interview,* GOH, GER-W04-SPL.

important in times of financial stress such as when Ella's husband suffered an accident at work:

> Our children grew up so quickly! When I look back at those hard times, I regret that they affected Ilse's education. I was afraid that my husband might not be able to return to work. I had to work from six in the evening until midnight. Because Kurt could not be left alone, I didn't allow Ilse to go to university. She had to get a job.[246]

In Winnipeg's job market of the 1950s, women seemed to have had an easier time finding a job than did men. Adelgunde Hellman recalls that her mother worked in the laundry at the hospital but her father worked at a variety of places and had to move from job to job often.[247] Annaliese (Zahn) Bessler's memories of her family's experiences include periods of unemployment for both her father and brother but, when her mother lost her job, she quickly got another one in a sewing factory. In her work at the immigration office of the Baptist World Alliance she remembers that there was always ready employment for women in the sewing factory or in domestic service. Anna and Heinrich Hamm's letter to immigrants in Germany warned them: "for the men it is difficult [in the city]. You can find work but our women and girls are highly sought after for domestic service and in the stores and they make… good money."[248]

As the above observation illustrates, although there was ready work for women, it remained limited to occupations considered 'women's work.' In 1951, 45 percent of the 7000 women working in Winnipeg's manufacturing sector were employed in the clothing

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[246] Oster, *Memoirs,* 51.

[247] Adelgunde Hellman, *Interview,* March 28, 1995, GOH.

[248] Hamm, "Brief aus Kanada." See also Kl. Klassen, "In der Neuen Heimat," *Der Bote*, 22 September 1948.

industry and one-half of those working in the service sector were women.[249] Mary Kinnear's study of women's work in Manitoba suggests that by 1961 women's work began to diversify somewhat but certain occupational groups still accounted for most of paid women's work. Clerical work and jobs as "sales clerks, schoolteachers, dressmakers, waitresses, nurses and telephone operators... attracted much female labour," Kinnear concludes; "women came out of the home to do in the public sphere what they formerly did in the private sphere."[250]

Immigrants viewed their work as more than just a source of wages even though an immediate source of income was extremely important. Walter Koberstein of Winnipeg considered his first place of work as "a job and anything that looked like a job for us was good enough to start because we definitely needed the money and we had to start somewhere. We worked our way up the ladder." Koberstein pointed to a list of firms in Winnipeg that were owned by ethnic Germans as evidence of immigrant hard work. He also pointed to their rapid climb up the ladder and noted the many immigrants who became self-employed entrepreneurs in the Winnipeg construction industry. Reflecting on the many immigrants who had come from farm backgrounds before the war only to become contractors and construction workers, he concludes that their success was attributable in part to their wartime experiences. Immigrants may have been

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[249] *Census of Canada*, 1971.

[250] Mary Kinnear, *A Female Economy: Women's Work in a Prairie Province, 1870-1970* (Montreal, Kingston, London, Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 106 and 108. See also Raelene Frances, Linda Kealey, and Joan Sangster, "Women and Wage Labour in Australia and Canada, 1880-1980," *Labour/Le Travail* 38 (1996): 54-89.

> farmers but ...through years, like the war years—you had to survive. You had to fight for your survival and that momentum carried them forward. They saw the opportunity and they just took advantage of it. Everything was wide open. After the war the economy just blossomed here and I guess we were at the right time at the right place.[251]

Although Wilhelm Maretzki thought too many people had arrived at one time, he believed that in the long term it had been good for the country because immigrants, and ethnic Germans in particular, had been hard workers.[252] Many immigrants reflected the perception that their work had important value and had made a contribution to the country. A report of a study trip to Canada by a German employee of the C.C.C.R.R. indicated ethnic German immigrants he had talked to in Canada felt that Canadian methods of work were primitive and believed their work to be superior to that of other Canadians.[253]

The choice of a place to live was made in conjunction with finding a place to work. Most ethnic Germans could not afford cars and the availability of public transportation or walking distances dictated both working and living locations. In the early 1950s most families in Winnipeg did not own a car. In 1951 there was an average of slightly more than one car per three households distributed fairly evenly throughout the city.[254] In the first years after their arrival immigrants flocked to the West End and

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[251] Walter Koberstein, *Interview.*

[252] Wilhelm Maretzki, *Interviews.*

[253] F. Lahmer, "Report of a Study Trip to Canada from 4.7.1950 to 5.9.1950," *Canadian Lutheran World Relief Collection,* MG 28 V120, Microfilm H1393, 7, NAC.

[254] *Census of Canada*, 1951. Average car ownership was one car per 2.78 households. The City of Winnipeg had one car per 2.91 households, St. Boniface one per 2.49 and the suburbs one per 2.55 households.

Elmwood areas of the city in part because until they could afford a car, these neighbourhoods offered good public transit connections to work places.

In the 1950s Winnipeg's public transit system had streetcars and trolley and diesel buses. In the West End, the Ellice and Sargent Avenue trolley buses took passengers downtown to the city's Exchange District where factories still operated in multi-storied buildings. West End buses also took passengers in a westerly direction to the industrial areas of St. James where large employers such as Motor Coach Industries were located. Until the Disraeli Freeway opened in 1960, Elmwood residents had to take the East Kildonan transit route along Henderson Highway and over the Redwood Bridge to get downtown but there were also popular work places located in North Kildonan, many in businesses begun by fellow ethnics.[255]

Along with proximity to work places, ethnic German immigrants looked for homes in locations that capitalized on the advantages of living with others of the same cultural and linguistic origin. Some abandoned their first Winnipeg neighbourhoods quickly and sought homes all over the city. In other neighbourhoods, however, ethnic Germans, like many other immigrant groups, tended to live together much longer, establishing the church, the bakery, the meat market, the seniors' home, and other necessary institutions for social interaction and cultural reproduction. In addition to their own objectives, the approach of city, provincial and federal governments towards settlement assistance and housing policy also shaped ethnic German processes of finding places to live in the city.

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[255] John E. Baker, *Winnipeg's Electic Transit: The Story of Winnipeg's Streetcars and Trolley Buses* (Toronto: Railfare Enterprises Limited, 1982), 133-146 and Kuz, *Winnipeg 1874-1974,* 89-91.

The pioneering work of Robert E. Park and the Chicago School in the 1920s sought to explain how "poverty and disorientation in a new land... pushed immigrants to seek identification with people of their own kind and to develop residential cohesion."[256] Using the premises of the Park School, geographers and sociologists later refined analytical tools describing the tendency of ethnic groups to form enclaves in the city. Concepts such as ethnic segregation and dissimilarity indices grew out of these efforts.[257] These analytical tools focus on the tendency of ethnic groups to congregate, but their practitioners often fail to explain the nature of the connections that gave rise to ethnic concentrations and community persistence. In the 1960s Raymond Breton grappled with the problem by attempting to understand ethnic concentrations in terms of "institutional completeness," namely the role played by ethnic social institutions in assuring the persistence of an ethnic enclave.[258] Breton found the degree to which indigenous institutions developed in an ethnic community was highly dependent on language. Among "ethnic groups with a different language... the higher the proportion in the ethnic

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[256] Howard P. Chudacoff, " A New Look at Ethnic Neighbourhoods: Residential Dispersion and the Concept of Visibility in a Medium-Sized City," *Journal of American History* 60 (1973): 76.

[257] These indices use census tract data to quantify the spatial distribution of a census variable such as ethnic identity in the urban environment. One commonly used index, the dissimilarity index, calculates the percentage of any one group that would have to move for its distribution among census tracts to resemble the distribution to which it is being compared. On this basis, no ethnic segregation yields an index of zero while complete segregation would result in a theoretical index of one hundred.

[258] See for instance Stanley Lieberson, *Ethnic Patterns in American Cities* (New York: MacMillan, 1963).

group who are ignorant of native languages (French and English), the higher the degree of institutional completeness of the group."[259]

More recently North American scholars have used a greater variety of approaches and methodologies to describe urban immigrant settlement patterns. These methods seek to better explain the processes of immigrant spatial and social integration in the city. Kathleen Conzen's study of Milwaukee's Germans employed analytical tools such as segregation indices to describe ethnic group concentration but also tried to answer the question of "what influence... such concentration exert[ed] upon organized community life or even individual immigrant adjustment." Conzen's analysis delved into city directories and map collections to explore patterns of land use and connections between immigrant residences and the location and migration of businesses and work places. Stanley Nadel's study of German New York used fire insurance maps and newspaper accounts to supplement census data in describing New York's 'Little Germany' as "not merely a statistical but also a self-conscious community."[260] Discussion of the processes of finding a home in Winnipeg this chapter and in Bielefeld in the next adopts the eclectic approaches of recent urban studies of immigrant and ethnic integration into city life. In both Winnipeg and Bielefeld, ethnic Germans faced individual and group choices about where to live and how to recreate a sense of community.

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[259] Raymond Breton, "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants," *The American Journal of Sociology* 70 (1964): 204.

[260] Kathleen Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), Stanley Nadel, *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in New York City, 1845-80* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

The geographical pattern of postwar Winnipeg was shaped by the spaces allocated to working, living, getting around, and providing services and by the natural features of the city site. The Red and Assiniboine Rivers were the most formidable barriers to movement, forcing people to cross a handful of bridges to get from one area of the city to another. In addition the Canadian Pacific Railway, a major reason for the city's existence, split the urban social environment into north and south halves. In the postwar period dramatic increases in numbers of automobiles and their increased speed turned major roadways into new dividers between city neighbourhoods. Patterns of settlement within the confines of these barriers were established in the early twentieth century and resulted in relatively stable ethnic neighbourhoods that remained intact well into the post Second World War period. Germans, Jews and Ukrainians were concentrated north of the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks in the North End. Like their neighbours, most German immigrants were members of the working class with jobs as day labourers and craftsmen in the city.[261] Volga German Lutherans, interspersed with those from Hungary and Galicia, settled on both sides of the C.P.R. tracks. South of the tracks and in Point Douglas, Lutheran and Baptist Germans from Volhynia made their home. Catholic Germans from Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire settled north of the tracks. Elmwood was the preferred neighbourhood of Bessarabian and Galician Lutheran immigrants.[262] There were smaller concentrations of Icelanders and Italians in the West End and Swedes in St. James. Other neighbourhoods had the seeds of future German

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[261] Norman J. Threinen, *A Sower Went Out: A History of the Manitoba and Saskatchewan District of Lutheran Church-Canada (Missouri Synod)* (Regina: Manitoba and Saskatchewan District, 1982), 24

[262] Grenke, *German Community*, 23-24.

enclaves. Although not yet qualifying as an urban concentration, in North Kildonan there was a growing population of German speaking Mennonite immigrants from the Soviet Union who originally settled in this rural municipality in the interwar years. Elmwood

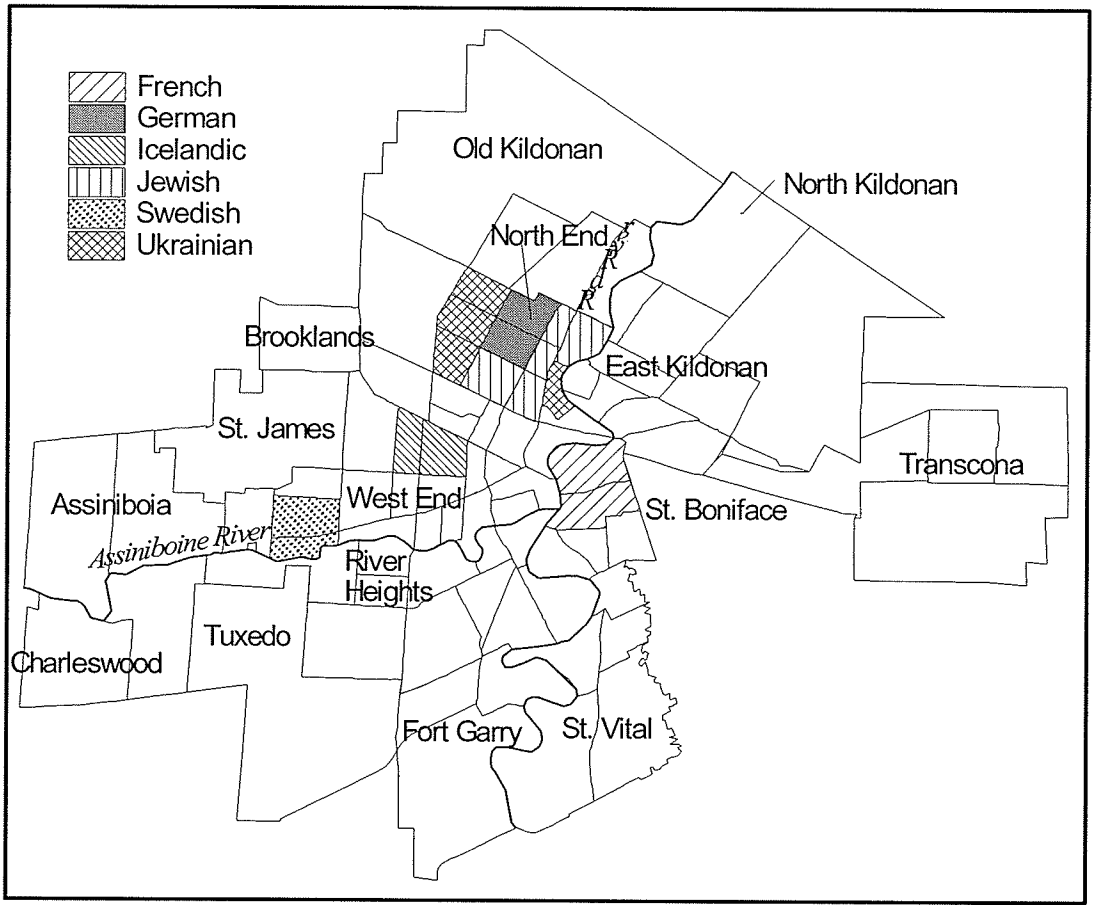

Figure 4. Ethnic Neighbourhoods in Winnipeg, 1941

would also become a German-speaking enclave after a prominent Mennonite businessman provided land to build Mennonite religious institutions in the neighbourhood in the mid 1940s.[263] In the West End some ethnic Germans also made

[263] Ibid., 21 and Leo Driedger, *Mennonites in Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1990), 34-37.

their home south of the C.P.R. tracks on streets such as Alexander, Lily, Elgin and William Avenues. Their presence and the Mennonite girls' home for single domestics located in the area provided a nucleus for later settlement by their coreligionist immigrants.[264]

The remainder of the population, primarily British, was scattered throughout the city but dominated the neighbourhoods south of the Assiniboine and West of the Red Rivers. East of the Red in St. Boniface and to some extent in St. Vital were the homes of the French. Thirty-nine percent of the city's French population lived in a small area of North St. Boniface surrounded by a group of French institutions, the headquarters of the Catholic Archdiocese, the Basilica, and St. Boniface College.[265]

After Canada opened its doors to the displaced persons of Europe in the late 1940s thousands of ethnic German immigrants created new settlement patterns in Winnipeg. Areas of German concentration included North Kildonan, the Elmwood district of East Kildonan, the blocks north of Notre Dame Avenue near the city's General Hospital, and in the following decade, throughout the city's West End. By 1961 almost ten thousand Germans lived in an area centred on Ellice and Sargent Avenues, west of Maryland Street, and extending to the Assiniboine River in the south and the Canadian

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[264] *Jubilee: 60 Years First Mennonite Church* (Winnipeg: First Mennonite Church, 1991), 23. See also Frieda Esau Klippenstein, "'Doing what we could': Mennonite Domestic Servants in Winnipeg, 1920s to 1950s," *Journal of Mennonite* Studies, 7 (1989): 150.

[265] Driedger and Church, "Segregation and Institutional Completeness," 38. While census tracts were first created for Winnipeg in 1951, experimental 'social areas' were used in 1941. Driedger and Church reworked the 1941 data to create comparable areal units and the map is based on their work. Note that although the map includes the boundaries of greater Winnipeg, data from outside the city boundaries of 1941 is not shown.

Pacific Railway tracks in the north. In 1961 most census tracts in both Elmwood and the West End had from 15 to 23 percent German residents. Due to suburban development and resulting rapid population growth, North Kildonan's percentage of Germans declined in the 1951-61 decade although the absolute number of Germans doubled from 1,451 in 1951 to 3,182 in 1961. Areas of high German concentration coincided with areas of

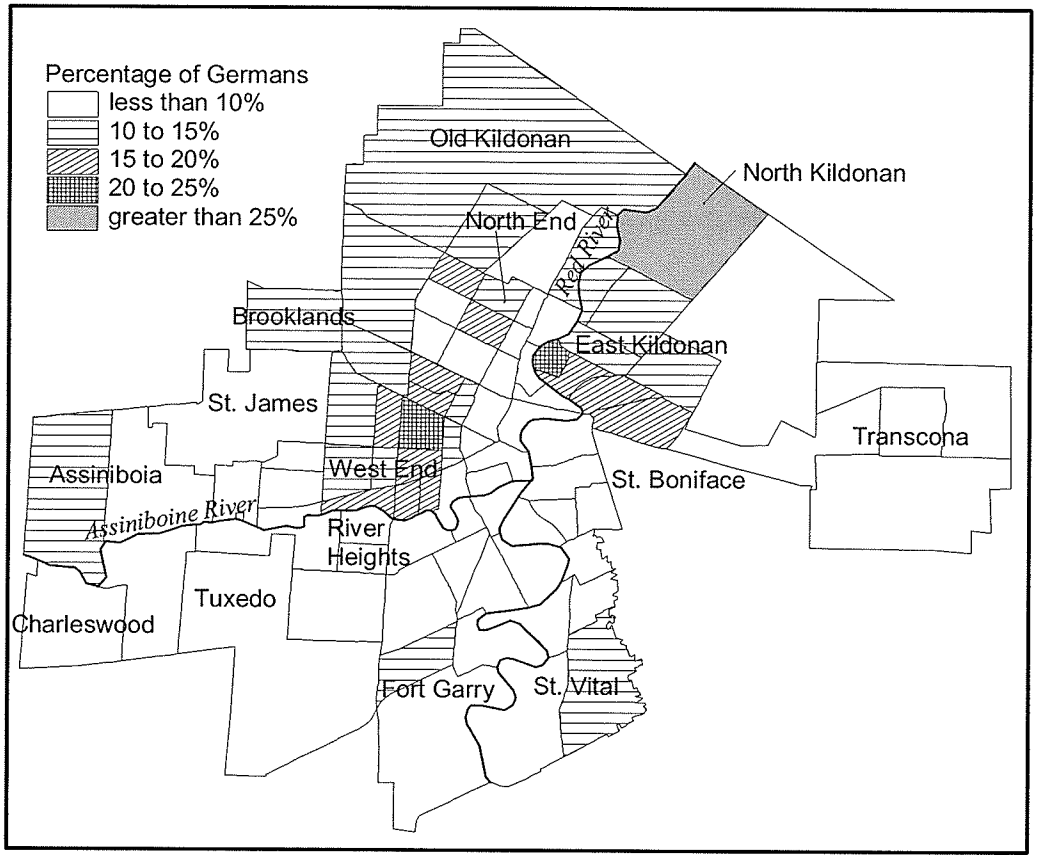

Figure 5. Distribution of Germans in Winnipeg, 1961

Mennonite concentration reflecting this particular German-speaking religious group's even greater tendency to congregate. The 1951 census indicated that 95 percent of the

Germans in North Kildonan and 74.5 percent of the Germans in census tract fourteen in Elmwood were Mennonite.[266]

Although the tendency for German segregation was partially due to the greater tendency of Mennonites to congregate, by 1961 postwar ethnic German immigrants were also contributing to German segregation. Ronald Fromson's study concluded that the high "tendency towards residential segregation" that he found for Germans in Winnipeg could be "attributed to the inclusion of the Mennonite group within the German group in 1951, and both the Mennonites and the post-war German immigrants in 1961."[267]

German speaking immigrants have not tended to exhibit a very high degree of segregation in Canadian cities compared to other ethnic groups. Jews exhibited the greatest tendency to live together with an average index of dissimilarity of .527 in the twelve Canadian urban centres examined by T.R. Balakrishnan in a 1976 study. The index for Germans was .280 in 1951 falling to .245 in 1961, the lowest of any group in the study. The high percentage of Mennonites among the German population of Winnipeg accounts for indices that point to a greater tendency for Germans to live close to each other compared with those in other Canadian cities. Although still lower than other immigrant groups, the 1951 dissimilarity index of .351 for Winnipeg's Germans reflected a strong urge to live together—particularly for Mennonites and at least initially for other ethnic German immigrants.[268]

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[266] *Census of Canada*, 1951, 1961.

[267] Fromson, "Acculturation or Assimilation," 81 and 84, Table XI.

[268] Balakrishnan, "Ethnic Residential Segregation," 492.

A host of individual factors taken together resulted in concentrations of ethnic Germans in Winnipeg's Elmwood and West End neighbourhoods. The selection of housing was an important individual and family choice. Housing availability was critically low in the immediate postwar period and emergency measures had to be undertaken to provide for returning soldiers and their families. From 1946 to the early 1950s some Royal Canadian Air Force facilities, the Naval Barracks on Ellice Avenue, and railway immigration buildings were used as emergency housing for veterans and their families. The Emergency Housing Department of the city wrestled with overcrowding and housing shortages throughout the decade after the war. In 1954 the department acknowledged that the problem of finding suitable accommodations was not limited to the poor. The department reported "an increasing number of relatively high income families applying who cannot find suitable alternative accommodation within their ability to pay and areas of the city most affected by this are the North End, Centre and West End districts."[269] In the 1961 census houses with less than one room per person were classified as crowded. According to the census 10 percent of city households lived in crowded quarters and in some districts such as the area just south of the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks, the number approached 30 percent of the houses.[270]

The general shortage of housing meant that larger houses became more affordable for ethnic German immigrants if one family could begin by renting space from another—

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[269] City of Winnipeg Emergency Housing Department, "Ninth Annual Report of the Special Committee on Housing Conditions, December 31, 1954," 12-13, City of Winnipeg Archives, File A 19 (50), and "Fifth Annual Report To Special Committee on Housing Conditions, December 31, 1950," idem, File A 19 (45), 17.

[270] *Census of Canada,* 1961.

preferably another German family. At the peak of German concentration in the West End, two families might occupy many of the larger homes. Many houses were remodelled to convert them from single to multiple family dwellings. Often two families purchased a larger home and converted it to a duplex with separate entrances and living spaces for each.[271]

Crucial to the decision of where to live was the kind of physical space needed by a family group. Before the Second World War Winnipeg's West End was home to predominantly British residents whose houses were somewhat larger than those in the German areas of the North End. After the war new neighbourhoods in suburbs such as St. James and Charleswood became attractive and affordable for West End residents. The British population of the West End was at the forefront of the move to the suburbs. This district showed the largest decrease in British population of any of the city's neighbourhoods in the 1951 to 1961 period.[272] As a result of this exodus, ethnic Germans were able to purchase at reasonable prices the larger West End homes that became available.

A closer examination of a block in Winnipeg's West End illustrates these trends. The Ellice to Sargent Avenue block of Lipton Street is located on the western side of the 1961 census tract that had the highest concentration of Germans in the West End. In 1951 the block had seventy-three residences, 82 percent of them occupied by their owners.

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[271]Ron Aird, *Notes of an Interview*, August 31, 1999. Ron Aird grew up in the West End and was a real estate agent in the area for many years. See also: Fromsen, "Acculturation or Assimilation," 87.

[272] Fromson calculates the population loss of British groups in the West End to be 6,920 persons between 1951 and 1961. Fromson, "Acculturation or Assimilation," Table VI, 56.

Judging by an analysis of surnames, the block was already home to a number of Germans in 1951. By 1961 the block had acquired five additional residences due to the 'duplexing' of the larger homes on the street. Comparing the two census years, the surnames of an increased number of owner-occupied homes sounded German. Generally families with German names replaced British residents, for example Suderman replaced Kerr, Hackbart replaced McCowan and Feser replaced McCormack. While the number of German residents on the block increased in the period, a future trend in the neighbourhood's ethnic mix was also evident. Italian names began to appear in greater numbers by 1961 with names like De Cecco and Graziano replacing Armstrong and Boniface on Lipton Street. Changes in occupancy were dramatic in the 1950s; 60 percent of the homes on this block had occupants in 1961 different from those who had lived there ten years earlier. In spite of this high turnover, 82 percent of the block's residents lived in their own homes in 1961, the same percentage as in 1951. Nearby Toronto Street had a similar pattern of residence changes: 65 percent of the 1961 residents had not lived on the street ten years earlier and 31.5 percent of those moving to the street in the 1950s had German sounding names and replaced non-German residents.[273] Lipton and Toronto Streets were typical of the West End and Elmwood in the 1950s. Ethnic German immigrants replaced British residents at a rapid rate while home ownership levels remained stable.

Home ownership was a goal for many ethnic German immigrant families. With the whole family, including teenage children, working and with all of the resources

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[273] *Henderson City Directories,* 1951 and 1961. Average home ownership in census tract twenty-five was 55 percent in 1951 and 59 percent in 1961. This was lower than the city average of 61 and 67 percent for the two years. *Census of Canada,* 1951 and 1961.

focused on paying travel debts and the purchase of a home, many immigrant families achieved home ownership in a very short time. Rudolf and Ella Oster arrived in Quebec in July 1954 and came to Manitoba where they worked on a farm in the Portage la Prairie area until April 1955 when they "dared the move to Winnipeg." They found accommodations on Simcoe Street in the city's West End where half of the ninety dollars left over from farm work was used to pay the first month's rent. In 1959, five years after arrival in Canada and four years after making their home in the West End, Ella Oster reports that they were able to move into their own West End home at 964 Ingersoll Street.[274] Many immigrant stories are like that of Christel (Bakus) Spletzer whose first home was with the family of her future husband in a large two story house in the West End. The five members of the Bakus family who lived at home occupied three rooms on the second floor of this house, taking all their water from the single bathroom. Within nine months, however, the family had acquired sufficient resources to purchase their own two-story house on Home Street.[275] In one of Baptist immigration worker William Sturhahn's reports to his church he claims:

> A good number of families with several working children often succeed in getting their own house after one year. Mr. and Mrs. G. came to Winnipeg in May 1952. They have two sons of 19 and 21 years. All four of them began working. Because of their cheerful Christian character they rose quickly in their places of work. After one year they made a down payment on a house. After 18 months they have wiped out the second mortgage and are now leisurely paying in small installments. They are exceedingly happy and grateful.[276]

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[274] Oster, *Memoirs*, 46.

[275] Christel (Bakus) Spletzer, *Interview*.

[276] "Some of our New Canadians," *Baptist World Alliance*, MG 28 V18, vol. 1, file 7, NAC.

Combining resources with other family members made housing more affordable for many immigrants. To Walter Koberstein it seemed "houses were not that expensive." He bought a house together with his parents:

> It was a seven-room house and we bought it for $4000 with an $800 down payment. So we borrowed the money. I had some money already. ...From my uncles—from family members and made a down payment. Paid the monthly mortgage fees. Paid off the loans. Stayed there for four years, then we sold that. ...After four years we sold that house and we each bought a house, separately.[277]

Joint ownership or taking in family as boarders and tenants helped pave the way to individual home ownership, and with bright employment prospects, immigrants did not have to share accommodations with others for very long.

The policies of the state played only a small role in the choices about where to live for most immigrants. Ethnic Germans made their choices within the framework of a market economy in which housing availability and cost and the immigrant's resources fluctuated in relation to supply and demand factors in both labour and housing markets. In one area, however, government housing policies did play a significant role. In 1944 the federal government had created the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), which made available house mortgages at low interest rates and with low down payments. Although there were conditions for the lender, including a maximum loan-to-value ratio, ceilings on the amount that could be borrowed, specific amortization periods, and debt servicing requirements, the program made mortgages available for up to 90 percent of a home's value. A CMHC mortgage made home ownership possible for many

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[277] Walter Koberstein, *Interview.*

ethnic Germans and proved to be one important government policy affecting their quest to achieve that goal.[278]

The Germans' desire to live together in Elmwood or the West End was reinforced by the proximity of homes in these neighbourhoods to other important institutions in ethnic German community life. Thus the concentrations of ethnic Germans and the location of ethnic institutions mutually reinforced the formation of ethnic neighbourhoods. Walter Koberstein explains:

> In the beginning there were very few people that could afford a car. So you relied on public transportation. The West End was the gathering point for the immigrants, especially the German-speaking immigrants of the time. You did not have to travel too far—to go to church—except for work. Everybody had a different job and a different direction. So they hopped on a bus and went to work. They came back, went to church—went to sleep. There was not much you could do at the time.[279]

As Koberstein indicates, for many ethnic Germans the location of the church was very important to the choice of location for their home. At the same time, churches relocated to be nearer to the neighbourhoods of their present or future parishioners. The Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church began as an immigrant mission effort organized by Mennonites who had immigrated to Manitoba in the 1870s and 1920s. In 1951 after a brief period in temporary facilities the fledgling congregation that arose from these efforts bought a church at Sargent and Furby in the city's West End. Increasing numbers of ethnic German immigrants settling in the area assured continued growth and in 1959

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[278] John R. Miron, *Housing in Postwar Canada: Demographic Change, Household Formation, and Housing Demand* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 243-244.

[279] Walter Koberstein, *Interview.*

the congregation built a new church at Sargent and Garfield.[280] The Lutheran Church of the Cross relocated from its original home on Alexander Avenue in the North End to a site on Arlington Street in the West End in the mid 1960s, reflecting the increased numbers of Germans living there. Another example was St. Peter's Lutheran Church on Sherbrook and Ellice. When the church moved in the 1970s it chose a location in the Wolseley neighbourhood across Portage Avenue from the West End, reflecting the gradual southward shift in the concentration of Germans.[281] Winnipeg immigrant neighbourhoods also attracted businesses that catered to ethnic German customers. The German Book Store on Notre Dame Avenue and the Ellice Market and Lange's Bakery on Ellice Avenue in Winnipeg's West End were important in the neighbourhood as they supplied ethnic language reading materials and familiar meat, bread and pastries.[282] North Kildonan and Elmwood also had many stores and shops providing goods and services to an ethnic German clientele.

Although the cost of housing and its location relative to family, church and fellow ethnic Germans were very important in choosing a first home, they were less important in the immigrant family's decision to move to new neighbourhoods. Scholars have argued that immigrants initially preferred low cost housing areas and demonstrated a keen desire to live among their fellow ethnics. As their socio-economic position improved and familiarity and interaction with the host society increased they devoted more resources to

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[280] *25 Jahre Sargent Avenue Mennoniten Gemeinde, 1950-1975* (Winnipeg: Anniversary Committee, 1975), 8-9.

[281] Grenke, *German Community in Winnipeg*, 304-305 and Oster, *Memoirs,* 46.

[282] *Henderson's Directories,* 1955.

housing and moved to more upscale neighbourhoods. Implied in this analysis is their progressive adaptation to the host society and their declining need to live near those of the same ethnic group. Geographers and sociologists have referred to this pattern of ethnic neighbourhood formation and change as ecological succession. As Peter Matwijiw suggests, "evolution of ethnic communities" can be explained as "graduated movements of ethnic populations away from initial areas of concentration, followed by their replacement by other groups."[283]

While ethnic German immigrants in Winnipeg demonstrated aspects of this model their choices about places to live were, in the longer term, more complex. In the 1950s and 60s ethnic German immigrants contributed significantly to German enclaves in the city. By the 1971 census, however, Germans had moved out of some neighbourhoods and had become widely distributed throughout the city. Other neighbourhoods, however, remained as areas of ethnic German concentration.

East and North Kildonan continued to be home for high numbers of ethnic Germans and became the neighbourhoods of choice for many of them who moved out of the West

End. The pattern in Winnipeg's West End, however, was more like the ecological succession pattern suggested in the secondary literature in the 1960s and 1970s. The West End was used by ethnic Germans to establish themselves; there they stabilized work, family, and religious life before venturing out to other neighbourhoods. For many, changes in family structure were the driving force behind a change of residence. Younger

[283] Matwijiw, "Ethnicity and Urban Residence," 45. A recent review of the spatial assimilation model is: Fong and Wilkes, "Spatial Assimilation Model Reexamined," 594-595.

family members getting married, increased family size due to the birth of additional children, or the death of elderly parents were causes for moves to new neighbourhoods. For other ethnic Germans increased financial resources and the mobility of the car made new housing options and neighbourhoods possible.

The car became particularly important in the decade after ethnic German immigrants arrived in Winnipeg. In 1951 automobile ownership in the West End, where many ethnic Germans were buying homes, was .37 cars per household, approximately the same number as for the entire city. Ten years later automobile ownership in the West End had grown considerably. In 1961 there were .60 cars per household in the West End but the growth throughout the city had increased even more to .66 cars per household. Automobile ownership in some of the suburbs that were becoming the location of the "next" or second home for many ethnic German immigrants increased even more dramatically. Automobile ownership in the newer areas of Elmwood had increased to .78 cars per household and in North Kildonan car ownership was .85 cars per household by 1961.[284]

By 1971, the changes in economic status, family structure and mobility contributed to a dispersion of ethnic German immigrants across the entire city. When the Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1974 its commemorative book included photos and addresses of members of the church. About one-third of the membership still lived in the West End or Wolseley and another third

[284] *Census of Canada,* 1951, 1961.

lived in East or North Kildonan. The rest of the membership was scattered over the remainder of the city.[285]

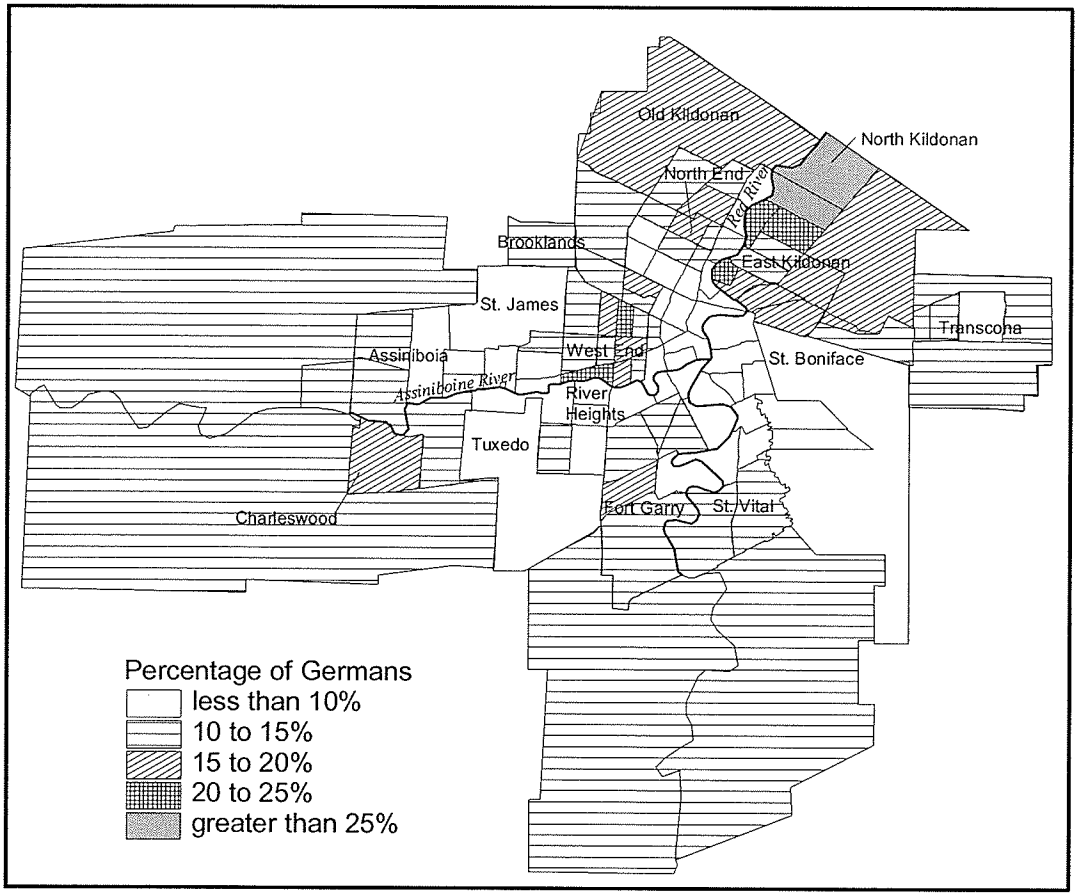

Figure 6. Distribution of Germans in Winnipeg, 1971

One immigrant's experience of finding places to live in Winnipeg's neighbourhoods illustrates many of the patterns outlined above. When Maria (Bartulei) Rogalski came to Winnipeg with her mother and sister in 1950 they found their first accommodations in the 'L flats', a staff residence at the General Hospital. When her sister married the next year, Maria and her mother rented rooms from a fellow ethnic

[285] *25 Jahre Sargent*, 7.

German in a house across the street from the young couple's first home on Elgin Avenue and near the hospital where her mother still worked. When Maria married in 1954 she moved with her mother and new husband to a house on McDermot Avenue in the same neighbourhood. A friend of Maria's husband then offered them a house on Newton Avenue in North Kildonan for one dollar and an agreement for them to assume the mortgage payments. They lived there for a few years before purchasing a house in the mid 1960s on Bannatyne Avenue where they lived only briefly because the house was in poor condition. In 1965 they were able to purchase a house at 380 Toronto Street in the city's West End for $12,000. The West End was home for Maria's growing family until the mid 1970s when, because of the small house and yard and a sense that the "neighbourhood was starting to deteriorate a little bit," they moved again. They purchased a house for $17,500 in Crestview in the northwest part of the city. This "newer type house with a bigger yard" was purchased with the help of a CMHC mortgage and a second mortgage from the previous owner.[286]

A job and a place to live were critical to the process of integration for ethnic German immigrants. In Winnipeg their working worlds could not be transplanted from earlier experiences in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union. Rather they had to be recreated and in Winnipeg this happened almost entirely outside the purview of the state. Although under Canadian immigration policies the privilege of admission was tied to perceived needs in the labour market, immigrant integration into the Winnipeg economy was left to the vagaries of the market. The local employment office pointed some immigrants to potential work places but to get that first job quickly, a family member or

[286] Maria (Bartulei) Rogalski, *Interview*, GOH, GER-W01-ROG.

acquaintance often provided the necessary connection or recommendation. As a result, self-created networks of family, friends and fellow-ethnics were an important feature of immigrant integration in Winnipeg. Fortunately for the immigrants, the buoyant economic situation during the time of migration to Winnipeg lessened the difficulties of finding and retaining employment. It also allowed many ethnic Germans to make the transition from hired labour to independent contractors and in some cases to relatively large business owners. For women, work outside the home was viewed as necessary to achieve the financial objectives of the immigrant family. Ethnic German women worked outside the home to get the immigrant family on its feet. They helped acquire the financial resources to buy a house and eliminate travel debts. Since women experienced shorter periods of unemployment than men in the 1950s their work became very important in the adaptation of many immigrant families. In spite of the flexibility required of them and in spite of their importance to immigrant adaptation, women's work in Winnipeg was viewed not as primary, but rather was a temporary additional resource needed to achieve the immigrant family's objectives.

Finding a home in a neighbourhood alongside other immigrants also helped ease the way into life in Winnipeg. The West End seemed to function as such a neighbourhood, albeit temporarily. The West End was used by ethnic German immigrants to make an initial adjustment to the city, while Elmwood, North, and East Kildonan became more permanent ethnic enclaves. By the 1970s many ethnic Germans were dispersing throughout the city as rapidly as life cycle demands dictated and socio-economic achievement allowed. The West End gradually lost its attraction for ethnic

Germans and the neighbourhood became a receiving ground for new waves of immigrants of other nationalities and races.

Ethnic and kinship networks were important in cushioning the harshness of the market when ethnic Germans sought homes and jobs. However, the favourable economy during the critical first few years of adjustment to life in Winnipeg meant they did not rely on family and friends for long. For the state, the combination of immigrant family supports and a buoyant economy was fortuitous. The settlement of ethnic German immigrants came at a low cost to public coffers.

Chapter Four: Bielefeld: Settlement Processes and Welfare State Programs

Like their Winnipeg counterparts, Bielefeld's ethnic German immigrants also sought places to live and work. In contrast to that of Winnipeg, however, settlement in Bielefeld took place in the context of comprehensive state-initiated programs and policies that governed and supported settlement. These programs also limited individual choice.

Studies of historic spatial patterns of settlement in European cities are rare because immigration is a recent phenomenon. In Germany, scholarly analysis has also responded to the considerable public apprehension about and resistance to 'ghettoization' of immigrant populations in its cities. Studies of settlement patterns of ethnic and racial groups rely heavily on North American literature and most often examine the contemporary situation rather than historic patterns. In keeping with contemporary concerns about the role and future of foreign guest workers who arrived in its cities after 1961, German studies focus on foreigners rather than on the segregation of ethnic German immigrants.[287]

It must be recognized at the outset that in comparing the integration of immigrants into the living and workspaces of Winnipeg and Bielefeld there are important differences in the timing and duration of immigrant flows. Most of Winnipeg's ethnic German immigrants arrived in the 1950s and their immigration coincided with a period of economic expansion fuelled by postwar reconstruction. Bielefeld's ethnic Germans came

[287] See the 1998 special issue of *Urban Studies,* in particular: van Kempan and Ozuekren, "Segregation in Cities," and Friedrichs, "Segregation in Cologne." For an earlier analysis of foreigner segregation in Germany, see O'Loughlin, "Foreigners in German Cities."

in the 1970s after the German economy's postwar spurt, the so-called *Wirtschafts Wunder*, so immigrants had to find their way in a mature economy.

The signal for this new era of migration to Bielefeld was the arrival of small numbers of ethnic Germans from Paraguay in the 1960s, some ten years after the period of expulsion had ended and shortly after the building of the Berlin Wall closed off the flow of refugees fleeing East Germany. The new immigrants began to enter Bielefeld's public consciousness in 1968 when the *Westfalen Blatt* reported the situation of a woman from Paraguay who must have arrived in 1964 because she indicated she had lived in temporary housing for four years. The report also mentioned another seventeen families from Paraguay that were living in the Bültmannshof neighbourhood at the time. Between 1957 and 1970 numbers of migrants remained low; only 2100 arrived in Bielefeld during the entire thirteen-year period.[288] The first Polish and Soviet immigrants began arriving after the Willy Brandt government normalized German-Polish relations with the signing of the 1970 Warsaw Treaty. That same year a treaty was also signed with Moscow opening slightly the possibility of emigration for Soviet ethnic Germans. Numbers of ethnic Germans arriving in Bielefeld ranged from 300 to 600 per year for the first half of the 1970s, then climbed further to 1100 to 1300 per year for the last three years of the decade. In the 1970s the city accepted just over 7000 ethnic German immigrants, a large

[288] "Nach vier Jahren 'Übergang' hofft Mennonitin auf ihre eigene Wohnung: 80 mennonitische Rückwanderer in Bielefeld," *Westfalen Blatt,* 27 August 1968 and "2100 Aussiedler fanden eine neue Heimat in der Leinenstadt: Mit dem letzten 'Transport' kam im November auch Familie Wiebe an," *Westfalen Blatt*, 8 December 1970. Most immigrants from Paraguay were Mennonites who had migrated there either because they failed Canadian medical requirements or, in the case of German soldiers, could not wait for a change in Canadian rules that barred their entry. Frank H. Epp indicates that by the spring of 1962 about five hundred Mennonites from Paraguay had returned to Germany. F.H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 441.

number for its population.[289] In the 1970s Bielefeld became home for three times as many ethnic Germans immigrants as other cities of similar size. In absolute terms, in Nordrhein-Westfalen the number of immigrants settling in cities was only exceeded by the larger city of Köln and the Ruhr industrial cities of Düsseldorf and Dortmund. In the 1980s the numbers of arrivals fluctuated but increasing restrictions by their countries reduced the number arriving in the later 1980s to the levels of the early 1970s.[290]

The pattern of arrivals in Bielefeld had implications for the work and settlement experience of ethnic Germans. Winnipeg's ethnic German immigrants shared a war experience that was still fresh in their memory and they began their path to integration from that shared experience. They were still in a state of dislocation when they arrived, having established no permanent cultural or physical attachments since their uprooting during the war. Bielefeld's immigrants had more diverse histories depending on when they arrived and whether they came from Poland, the Soviet Union directly or after a sojourn in Paraguay. In the Soviet Union they had been punished as Germans and had suffered severely restricted mobility, both socially and physically. This experience reinforced the benefits of living together as families and as part of an ethnic community. In Paraguay they had tried to tame the jungle together and knew what it meant to rely on

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[289] See Table A-6 in the Appendix.

[290] The numbers in this summary are taken from the city's Social and Housing Committee reports or from various newspaper reports where they are attributed to that committee. See: "Aus der UdSSR kamen bis 30. Juni weniger Aussiedler nach Bielefeld: Zahl der deutschstämmigen Übersiedler aus Polen blieb gleich," *Neue Westfälische,* 29 July 1982; "Die Aussiedler und ihr Deutschland: Vertriebenenbeirat zu Engliederungsfragen," *Neue Westfälische*, 15 April 1981; "Spätaussiedler wollen fast nur nach Baumheide, Sieker und Sennestadt: Sie gehen by der Vergabe von Sozialwohnungen vor/Notlösung," *Neue Westfälische*, 16 September 1987, and *Sozial u. Wohnungsausschuß, Protokolle, 18.12.1979*, BSA.

neighbours while in Poland they had shared the intense pressure to adopt Polish identities. Since Bielefeld's ethnic German immigrants missed the postwar reconstruction surge in the economy their search for work in a more mature economic environment revealed few opportunities for the entrepreneurial initiatives taken by some of their Winnipeg counterparts.

The desire to live close to each other was even more important for Bielefeld's ethnic German immigrants than that observed for their counterparts in Winnipeg. As Susanna Koop, a Mennonite immigrant put it, "our people want to live together. Those that want to go to church stick together even more."[291] The desire to live near each other was observable both at the neighbourhood level within cities and in the pattern of regional concentrations. As Susanna Koop's sentiment illustrates, sectarian ethnic Germans exhibited the greatest tendency to live near to each other. A 1976 German contributor to the Winnipeg based *Der Bote* estimated three quarters of all Baptist and Mennonite immigrants in Germany could be found within a hundred kilometre radius of Bielefeld. Smaller centres such as Lage, Espelkamp and Paderborn, all within this circle, also became nuclei for settlements of ethnic Germans.[292] Although neighbouring communities were also attracting immigrants, in 1980 the *Neue Westfälische* assured its readers that Bielefeld remained the preferred home for ethnic German immigrants and

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[291] Susanna (Regier) Koop, *Interview*, Bielefeld, January 28, 1999.

[292] Isaak Thiessen, "Umsiedler aus Russland," *Der Bote*, 13 January 1976.

had received the highest number of immigrants in the area the previous year despite the claims of neighbouring Paderborn.[293]

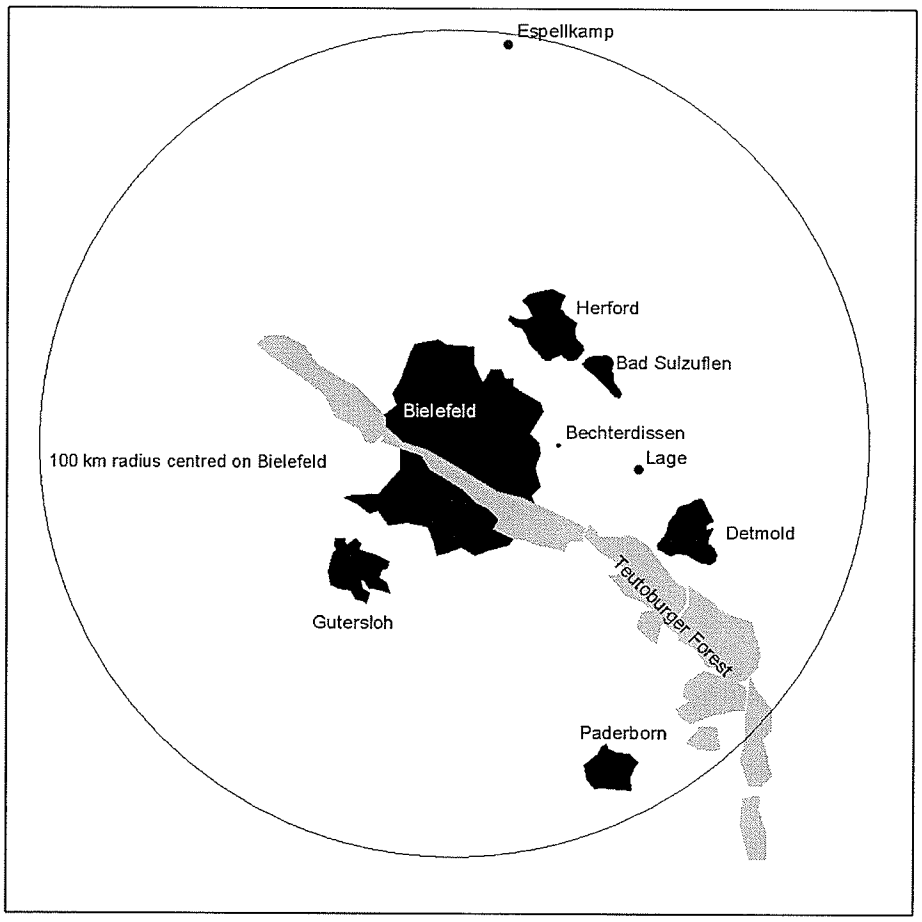

Figure 7. Bielefeld and Surrounding Area

The reason for Bielefeld's attraction seemed to be the connection between ethnic German immigrants and the expellee population that had preceded them. When ethnic Germans who had migrated to South America in the late 1940s began returning in the early 1960s

[293] "Paderborn liegt nicht and der Spitze: Spaetaussiedler zeigen Vorliebe fuer Bielefeld: 1178 kamen 1979/Heime sind voll," *Neue Westfälische,* 3 January 1980. See also the map in Horst Gerlach, *Die Rußlandmennoniten: Ein Volk Unterwegs* (Kirchheimbolanden: by the author, 1992, inside back cover.

they concentrated in the small community of Bechterdissen not far from Bielefeld. A part of the area's appeal seems to have been a small community of Mennonites from Prussia who had settled in the Bielefeld area as part of the refugee movements of the immediate postwar period. The refugees who settled in Bielefeld immediately after the war and the South American immigrants of the 1960s attracted more immigrants to the area in later decades.

Bielefeld's spatial organization differed from that of Winnipeg.[294] Prior to 1973, Bielefeld was a city of some forty-eight square kilometres laid out in a fan shape, with its base nestled along the edge of the Teutoburger Forest, a wooded series of hills running in a northwest to southeasterly direction. Very much like Winnipeg's amalgamation of thirteen municipalities in 1972, Bielefeld's surrounding areas were incorporated into the city a year later. The city almost doubled in size, adding 154,513 people to its population and swallowing the city of Brackwede and a large number of smaller centres. While the population almost doubled, the physical size of the city grew more than five times to encompass an area of 259 square kilometres.[295] The Teutoburger Forest became the main geographic barrier for the new city, dividing it in half. Unlike Winnipeg, where the boundaries of the amalgamating municipalities were hardly observable, Bielefeld became a patchwork of settlements. The city retained a distinct spatial pattern with areas of high population densities separated by large areas of unsettled space.

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[294] For a qualitative comparison of the patterns of spatial organization in U.S. and German cities, see Hans Paul Bahrdt, "Stadtentwicklung in der Bundesrepublik und in den USA: Gesichtspunkte und Hinweise," *Amerikastudien/America Studies* 33 (1988): 11-20.

[295] Statistisches Amt Der Stadt Bielefeld, *Statistisches Jahrbuch,* 1973.

While ethnic concentration in particular neighbourhoods had been a part of Winnipeg's fabric throughout its history, in Bielefeld programs and policies assumed that ethnic German integration would only be successful if immigrants were dispersed throughout the city. Background papers for a 1979 meeting of Bielefeld's Social and Housing Committee outlined the city's policy. The Housing Department was "determined to supply housing to ethnic Germans throughout the city's neighbourhoods" rather than permitting development of concentrations in specific neighbourhoods or ghettoes. The report acknowledged there were limits to applying the policy because of the lack of housing stock in various city neighbourhoods, but maintained that granting requests for "the wished for neighbourhoods (Baumheide and Meyer in Sieker) would lead to undesirable concentrations of *Aussiedler*" in the city. The report assured its readers that the department was "working against this development as much as possible."[296]

Despite the official policy to spread them throughout the city, ethnic German immigrants preferred to settle close to each other. The greatest tendency to live close to each other was again demonstrated by Mennonites and Baptists who seemed even more inclined to live together than did their fellow Lutheran and Catholic immigrants.[297]

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[296] *Sozial und Wohnungsausschuß Protokolle*, 18.12.79, BSA. The desire to live in these two neighborhoods came out often in the committee's deliberations. See also *Sozial und Wohnungswesen Protokolle*, 14 June 1976, 7, BSA.

[297] "Paderborn liegt nicht and der Spitze: Spaetaussiedler zeigen Vorliebe fuer Bielefeld: 1178 kamen 1979/Heime sind voll," *Neue Westfälische,* 3 January 1980. Mennonite and Baptist religious affiliations are intertwined among ethnic German immigrants from the former Soviet Union. According to a report by the long-time Mennonite settlement worker Hans von Niessen approximately 49 percent of those indicating Baptist as their religion are ethnically Mennonite as determined by surname analysis. See also Peter J. Foth, "Umsiedler in Zahlen," *Alexander Neufeld Papers* and Gerlach, *Die Rußlandmennoniten*, 170.

Although ethnic German immigrants were not accounted for separately in most city statistics, some idea of their settlement pattern is indicated by reports in the minutes of the city's Social and Housing Committee. A 1979 report prepared for the committee included statistics for the previous three years of settlement activity. The report showed that in spite of official policy there were concentrations of immigrants in particular neighbourhoods (See Figure 8.). The Baumheide neighbourhood in Heepen and the Meyer neighbourhood in Sieker, where a large social housing complex was located, proved to be popular among ethnic Germans from the East. Baumheide was a separate statistical area in the Northeast part of the city south of the main route to the neighbouring city of Herford and along what would later be the Milse section of the city's light rail transit line. In 1975 its population was just over 7000 people. Over one-quarter of the 2945 immigrants in the three years examined in the report made their home in Baumheide.[298]

From the late 1960s through the 1980s Bielefeld newspapers frequently drew attention to the ethnic German tendency to live together. One newspaper article reported on the work of a cultural geographer who claimed that three-quarters of ethnic German migrants settled in the three neighbourhoods of Baumheide, Sieker and Stapelbrede.[299] Other articles speculated that the desire to live near each other was part of the process of adjustment. It was implied that ethnic Germans had to be encouraged to get used to their

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[298] *Sozial und Wohnungsausschuß Protokolle*, 18.12.79, BSA. Population figures are from Statistisches Amt der Stadt Bielefeld, *Statistisches Jahrbuch*, 1975.

[299] "Aussiedler suchen in den Nachbarn die alte Heimat: Wissenschaftler fragt nach Gruenden fuer Umsiedlung und Wohnungssuche, " *Westfalen Blatt,* 12 January 1978.

surroundings—left on their own they would create ghettoes. In 1987 newspaper reports still pointed out that Mennonites in particular wanted to live near their coreligionists;

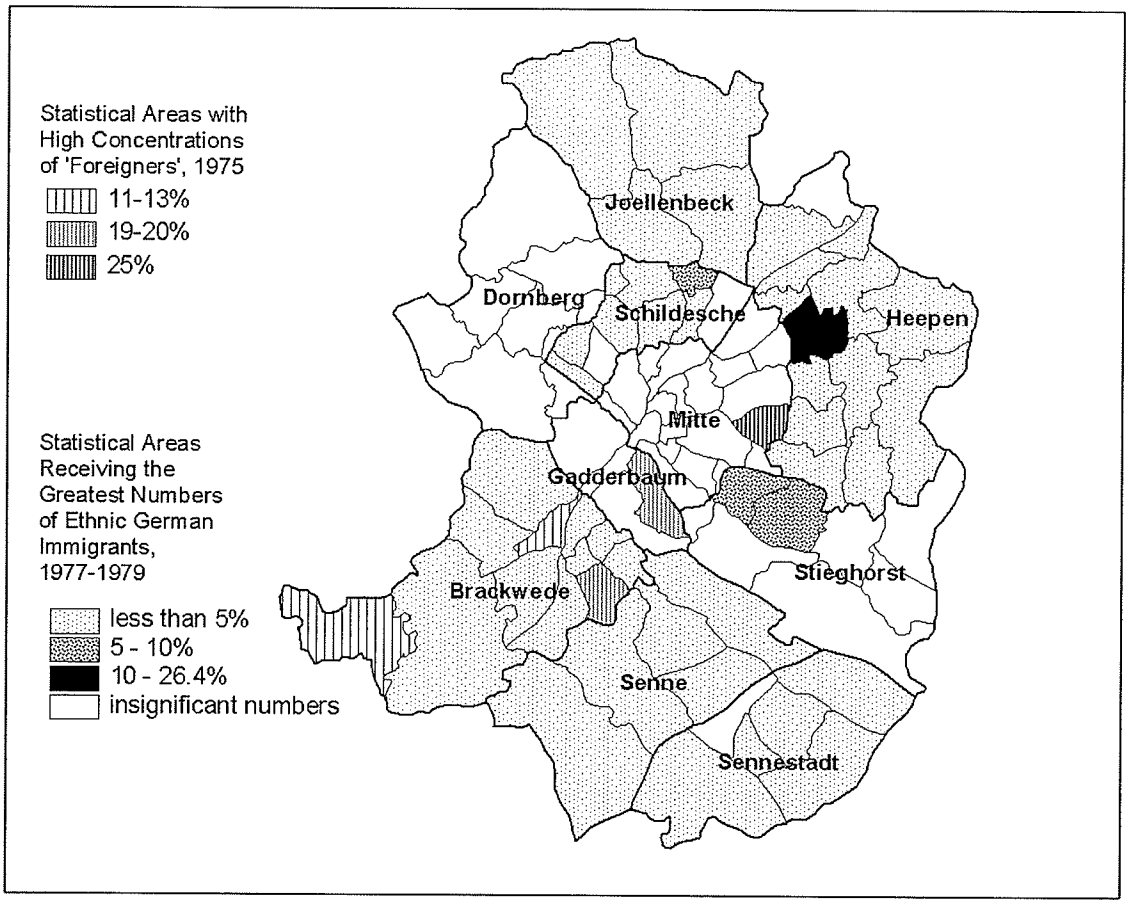

Figure 8. Distribution of Foreigners and Ethnic Germans in Bielefeld, 1970s.

Baumheide, Sieker or Sennestadt were listed as the neighbourhoods of choice.[300]

Patterns of ethnic German settlement paralleled those of Bielefeld's foreign population, although the two groups did not share neighbourhoods. After the strong German economic recovery—the so-called *Wirtschafts Wunder* of the late 1950s and

[300] "Spätaussiedler wollen fast nur nach Baumheide, Sieker und Sennestadt: Sie gehen bei der Vergabe von Sozialwohnungen vor /Notlösung," *Neue Westfälische*, 16 September 1987.

early 1960s—the city became home to guest workers brought in to supply labour after the closing of East German borders. Unlike that of ethnic Germans, the distribution of the 'foreign' population has been carefully documented. As in most German cities, Bielefeld's foreign population was concentrated in neighbourhoods with older, less attractive housing. In Bielefeld, foreigners lived primarily in the city centre districts. In 1975, the group of statistical areas making up the city centre averaged over 12 percent foreigners with one area, Stauteiche, reporting 25.4 percent of its population as foreign.[301]

Ethnic Germans with the memory and experience of being a threatened minority in Eastern Europe reverted to the safety of living near each other when confronted by a new and strange German society. Sectarian Mennonites and Baptists had the added problem of facing a secular German population perplexed by their devotion to religion. Bielefeld newspapers, at least, attributed the tendency to congregate to the still strong attachments of ethnic Germans to family and religion; those values, the newspaper suggested, had regrettably long been left behind in modern Germany.[302]

Winnipeg's ethnic Germans were on their own in selecting housing and the city could have done little to prevent ethnic segregation. In Bielefeld, the process of choosing housing had a very different character and the choices facing ethnic Germans arriving in

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[301] The data for the foreign population comes from tables in: Statistisches Amt der Stadt Bielefeld, *Statistisches Jahrbuch*, 1959 to 1980. The areas of settlement of ethnic Germans is from *Sozial und Wohnungsausschuß Protokolle*, 18.12.79, BSA. The map is also based on these sources.

[302] "Mindestens 5000 Aussiedler wollen nach Bielefeld Mittel für 165 Wohnungsneubauten sichergestellt: Bislang kamen knapp 100 Personen / Individuelle Beratung im Übergangsheim Teichsheide," *Neue Westfälische*, 5 May 1977, "'Wohnungen für Aussiedler gibt es genug': Stadt Bielefeld: 'Auch Arbeitsplätze vorhanden/Probleme liegen auf einer anderen Ebene'," *Neue Westfälische,* 24 April 1976.

Bielefeld were very much influenced by the settlement policies of various levels of government.

Most ethnic Germans came with few financial resources and the city was obligated under law to provide them with social housing. Ethnic German immigrants were, in fact, to be given preference in the allocation of suitable housing.[303] Homes were offered on the basis of availability and suitability with respect to family size and to some extent immigrant preference. Availability was always a problem. Providing funds for constructing new housing was the responsibility of the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen but city officials complained in 1979 that allocations had fallen so far behind that over the previous eight years of providing housing, Bielefeld was short 899 living spaces. Of the housing that became available in the 1970s the number of spaces given to ethnic German immigrants steadily grew as a percentage of the total. In 1974 ethnic Germans received 2.5 percent, or 25 of 990 available spaces. Four years later 24.8 percent, or 318 of the 1283 spaces that became available were given to ethnic German immigrants.[304]

Housing availability determined many immigrant choices and invited government regulation and control. Ethnic German immigrants arriving in Germany did not simply move to the city of their choice and bunk in with family or acquaintances for a few months before striking out on their own in rented or purchased accommodations. Those arriving from Poland or the Soviet Union brought little more than a few handbags with them. For Bielefeld-bound immigrants, the first home after stepping off the airplane was

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[303] Thomas Faist and Hartmut Häuberman, "Immigration, Social Citizenship and Housing in Germany," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 20 (1996): 88 and *Sozial und Wohnungsausschuß Protokolle*, 18.12.79, BSA.

[304] *Sozial und Wohnungsausschuß Protokolle*, 18.12.79, BSA.

a federal processing facility at Friedland, then usually a further stay at the Nordrhein-Westfalen processing facility at Unna-Massen. Due in part to their special status, their stay there lasted a few weeks while an extensive process of documentation was carried out. As part of the processing, ethnic German immigrants selected the city in which they wanted to live. Even when the immigrant family's processing was complete and it was on its way to Bielefeld, getting a home could involve more waiting. Owning a home remained a dream for some time.

A family's first home was the city's temporary housing facilities on *Teichsheide Strasse*. During periods of increased arrivals, other temporary housing facilities were used but the abiding memory for most ethnic Germans was the shelter at *Teichsheide*. The apartment-like structure located on a short street just off Herforder Strasse between Baumheide and City Centre, had suites for immigrants and offices for various settlement agencies. The facility was used to provide shelter while immigrant needs were assessed and matched with available housing. Immigrants were provided with a hot meal, cash, public transportation passes, furniture, bedding and an initial consultation with social workers.[305] Ethnic German memories of life in the processing facilities and temporary housing were for the most part unpleasant. Life at *Teichsheide* meant cramped quarters, shared kitchen, laundry and bathroom facilities and a lack of privacy.

In spite of having to live in temporary housing upon their arrival, ethnic Germans received preferential treatment in the allocation of permanent housing compared to foreign guest workers. They received "special help from housing and social welfare

[305] *Sozial u. Wohnungswesen Protokolle*, 21. 12. 1976, BSA. The cash amounted to 126 DM for single people, 227 DM for a couple and 57 to 101 DM for each child depending on their ages.

authorities in finding accommodation" and were highest in priority for social housing stock apartments. In fact, in some cases ethnic German immigrants could get an apartment ahead of local families who had been looking for housing for years.[306]

Making the choice of a permanent home was stressful for immigrant families. Their aim was to strike a balance between housing costs, adequate physical space and proximity to family and church. Like their Winnipeg counterparts, proximity to church was important, particularly for sectarian Mennonites and Baptists. The combination of the city's policy to disperse immigrants and their own preference for locations near their own people sometimes prolonged their stay in temporary housing.[307]

For sectarian immigrants the choice of neighbourhood was often a product of earlier decisions made about the location for the group's church building. Mennonite settlement patterns provide an example of this link. Mennonites living in Bielefeld who still attended the original Mennonite church in Bechterdissen decided in 1978 to build a new church in Bielefeld. They chose a location in Baumheide, where many of them lived. This location added to the attraction of the neighbourhood for other immigrants.[308] The proximity to church seems to have been important for Baptist and Mennonite immigrants but less so for Lutheran and Catholic immigrants. Since the Catholic and Lutheran churches dominated the German national religious scene there was always a church in the neighbourhood no matter where an immigrant settled.

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[306] Faist, "Immigration, Social Citizenship and Housing," 87-88.

[307] *Sozial u. Wohnungswese Protokolle*, 18.05.1976, 3, BSA.

[308] Peter Epp, "Jubiläumsfest in der Mennonitengemeinde Bielefeld," *Der Bote*, 17 February 1999.

Unlike the importance of the location of their church, ethnic businesses played a minor role in immigrant choices about where to live. In Winnipeg businesses catering to ethnic Germans found a ready market because of the rapid establishment of German neighbourhoods and the communication difficulties of immigrants. In contrast, up to the late 1980s, the development of ethnic establishments in Bielefeld was limited. A number of factors may have contributed to this difference. Limited potential for entrepreneurship under the Soviet system, a rural culture with a history of consumer goods shortages, the resulting reliance on cooking and baking at home, and limited knowledge of how to navigate the official regulatory system, may have contributed to the lack of business and service establishments founded by newcomers.

Ethnic Germans were also afraid of the high costs they faced in Bielefeld's housing market which, while regulated, was still less sheltered than in the Communist states where they had come from. According to one newspaper report, a cause of long stays in temporary housing was the inability of the immigrant family to reconcile themselves to a commitment of 600 DM per month in rent when they still had no work. High rents were one of the concerns raised with city officials in the occasional joint meetings held to hear immigrant complaints and problems. In spite of rent subsidies, ethnic German immigrants found rents in Bielefeld to be high and lacked confidence in their ability to pay.[309] Financial considerations and the rejection of offers of housing in less attractive neighbourhoods were important reasons underlying stays of as long as a

[309] "Bei Aussiedlern fehlt es oft am ganz Alltäglichen: Bielefelder CDU um tatkräftige Hilfe bemüht," *Westfalen Blatt,* 20 July 1976. See also representations to the Social and Housing Committee at joint meetings in 1977 and 1978. *Gespräch des Sozial- und Wohnungsausschusses mit Aussiedlern am 15.03.1977*, 2, BSA and *Gespräch des Sozial- und Wohnungsausschusses mit Aussiedlern am 13.06.1978*, 3, BSA.

year in temporary housing. In 1976, the Social and Housing Committee considered eliminating temporary housing by directing immigrants to a permanent home upon their arrival. The committee concluded, however, that this would be "hardly possible or sensible." In spite of this decision, one committee member maintained that a certain amount of pressure would have to be exerted on immigrants to speed their transfer to permanent housing.[310] Necessity, in the form of more immigrants at one time than the temporary housing facilities could accommodate, drove the committee to place sixteen families directly in their permanent homes in 1977 and 1978. The committee remained persuaded, however, that this "bureaucratically complicated undertaking" could only be used in emergency situations.[311]

Officials increased pressure on immigrants by limiting the number of times an ethnic German family could reject housing offered to them. In a 1977 public meeting with the Social and Housing Committee, ethnic German immigrants expressed their displeasure at having to accept housing after three offers.[312] In spite of the urgent attempts by the Housing Committee to place immigrants in permanent housing quickly, stays in temporary housing could drag on and could have demoralizing effects on immigrants. One woman, whose stay extended to four years, believed that she "would never feel completely at home in Bielefeld."[313] When the flow of immigrants increased in

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[310] *Sozial und Wohnungswesen Protokolle*, 14.06.1976, 8, BSA.

[311] *Sozial und Wohnungauschusses Protokolle,* 18.12.1979, BSA.

[312] *Sozial und Wohnungswesen Protokolle,* 15.03.1977, 2, BSA.

[313] "Nach vier Jahren 'Übergang' hofft Mennonitin auf ihre eigene Wohnung: 80 mennonitische Rückwanderer in Bielefeld," *Westfalen Blatt,* 27 August 1968. See also Boll, *Kulturwandel*, 155.

the latter half of the 1970s and temporary housing space was at a premium the issue of the length of stay became particularly urgent. In the spring and summer of 1976, both Bielefeld newspapers, the *Neue Westfälische* and the *Westfalen Blatt* puzzled over the problem of lengthy stays in temporary housing, concluding that the desire to choose housing that would satisfy the need to have "a feeling of belonging together," and the fear of housing costs were the main reasons for extended delays in accepting permanent housing.[314]

Usually permanent housing was an apartment in a social housing development. Ethnic Germans received apartments sized to match the numbers and structure of the immigrant family. In rare cases homes were traded in order to achieve particular objectives such as ensuring that a household was closer to relatives, work, or more suitable physical arrangements. The pressure on the city's available social housing was at times acute. Since ethnic Germans were granted preference, the housing problem caused "massive complaints from the population."[315]

Like their counterparts in Winnipeg, ethnic Germans in Bielefeld wanted to live in a home of their own. Klaus Boll's oral history study suggests that for ethnic Germans "an owned home symbolized… a guaranteed retreat with highly valued privacy; a secure way of retreating from German public life as experienced while shopping or in the

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[314] See for instance: "Genügend Sozialwohnungen für die Spätaussiedler vorhanden: Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl und Wunsch nach billigen Wohnungen erschweren die 'Umsetzung'," *Westfalen Blatt*, 24 April 1976, "'Wohnungen für Aussiedler gibt es genug': Stadt Bielefeld: 'Auch Arbeitsplätze vorhanden/Probleme liegen auf einer anderen Ebene'," *Neue Westfälische,* 24 April 1976 and "Mehr Aussiedler—kürzere Verweildauer: Teichsheide in unbefriedigendem Zustand," *Neue Westfälische,* 15 June 1976.

[315] *Sozial und Wohnungwesen Ausschuß, Protokolle,* 18.12.1979, 5-6, BSA.

workplace."[316] In the case of many older immigrants, however, it would have to be their children who realized the dream. Johann Hamm helped build a house for his son Peter and family in neighbouring Schloß Holte two years after arriving in Bielefeld in 1973 while he and his wife remained in their social housing home.[317] Susanna Koop lived economically to save a little money to help her children build their own home.[318] Like their counterparts in Winnipeg younger ethnic German immigrants in Bielefeld devoted their first resources to acquiring their own home.

The aspiration to own a home seemed to serve as evidence of the finality of the decision to emigrate. As Klaus Boll puts it, owning one's own home was, for most ethnic Germans, concrete evidence of "the final decision to stay in Germany and not to return to the USSR."[319] Immigrants from the Soviet Union in particular, carried on the traditions of mutual aid that had been common in their former country. They joined together to build homes for each other, exchanging labour and skills and often financing the purchase through funds borrowed or gifted from parents and grandparents. When Johann Hamm's son Peter moved to Detmold his father again purchased an old house that they "jointly renovated and remodelled."[320] This time Johann was able to live in the home in Schloß Holte vacated by his son. Usually the 'housing bees' that provided the labour for building a new home did not involve an exchange of money but assumed repayment in kind. Klaus

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[316] Boll, *Kulturwandel*, 160.

[317] Johann Hamm, "Ein kurzer Überblick über unsere Ankunft und das Einleben in Deutschland," in *Eine Familie mit über 700 Kindern*, eds. Gerhard Hamm and Bernhard Hamm (Großwallstadt: Bibel Mission, 1993), 139-140.

[318] Susanna (Regier) Koop, *Interview.*

[319] Boll, *Kulturwandel*, 157.

[320] Johann Hamm, "Ein kurzer Überblick", 139-140.

Boll maintains that the prospect of returning labour was not considered "a burden; it is internalized so strongly that there is no question of breaking out of this system."[321]

By jointly building a house, many younger ethnic Germans realized their dream of home ownership. A 1975 study of ethnic German immigrants who had returned to Germany from Paraguay found that 34.7 percent of respondents lived in their own home. The writer concluded that this was a high level of ownership in light of the average nine-year stay of respondents and the fact that the average for all of Germany was 36 percent at the time of the study.[322]

The pattern of dispersion that accompanied home construction is not easily uncovered. Because they had immediate rights to citizenship, ethnic Germans were not identified separately in housing statistics. It is clear, however, that dispersion of ethnic Germans in Bielefeld was driven by the desire for home ownership. To achieve this goal, families were forced to move to where homes or building sites were available. Though many older immigrants remained in their social housing apartments, younger family members acquired their own homes. In some cases children and parents combined resources and built duplexes with accommodation for both. Although the acquisition of homes and the increased mobility permitted by the automobile seem to have caused some

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[321] Boll, *Kulturwandel*, 176.

[322] Hans Durksen, "Mennonitische Rückwanderer aus Paraguay: Ergebnisse einer Befragung" (Köln: photocopy, 1975), 13. Located in MHC Vertical File. The author interviewed ninety-five persons, 65 percent of whom lived in or near Bielefeld.

changes in the residential pattern of ethnic Germans, strong ties to family and church limited settlement to many of the original neighbourhoods.[323]

Bielefeld's immigrants also needed to work. Finding work, like finding housing, was also pursued in an environment where the state was heavily involved even if Germany's economy was much more market oriented than that of the Soviet Union or Poland. Ethnic Germans emerging from a centrally planned socialist economy were not familiar with job searches in a market economy.

Though economic growth in Germany was even more remarkable than that of Canada between 1945 and 1970, a less robust economic environment awaited immigrants during the 1970s and 1980s when most ethnic Germans arrived in Germany. After 1973, the country's economic growth, while still better than many other European countries, was poor. Bielefeld's immigrants, like those in Winnipeg, entered a work force with a growing service sector, but the city continued to have high levels of industrial employment, much higher than in Winnipeg (See Table 2). By 1970, when ethnic Germans began arriving in Bielefeld in larger numbers, 49 percent of workers in the city were employed in the service sector, a percentage that was rising but still lower than the 54 percent recorded in Winnipeg nineteen years earlier when ethnic Germans started arriving there. By 1971 Winnipeg's service sector accounted for almost 65 percent of the city's jobs. More important for Bielefeld was the shift to higher skilled jobs within the industrial sector. Not surprisingly, by the time ethnic German immigrants arrived, Bielefeld's industrial base in sewing machine and bicycle manufacturing had all but

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[323] Alexander Neufeld, *Interview* and Hans von Niessen, *Interview*, Neuwied, January 27, 1999.

disappeared. Although the German economy suffered less than many other countries in the downturn of the 1970s and 1980s, it accelerated the trend towards microelectronics industries at the expense of the old heavy industries common in the Ruhr industrial

Table 2. Employment by Sector, Winnipeg and Bielefeld.[324]

Industry	Bielefeld			Winnipeg	
	1950	1970	1980	1951	1971
Agriculture	1.3%	.6%		.6%	.5%
Service, Trade and Financial	42.1%	49.4%		54.1%	64.8%
Manufacturing and Industrial	55.6%	50.1%		45.3%	34.7%
Total number employed	70735	75009		109227	243800
Distribution of Industrial Employment by Sector					
Machinery	31.2%	26.9%	25.5%	-	3.0%
Transportation Equipment	16.1%	1.2%		11.9%	8.5%
Electrical and Electronic Equipment	1.4%	6.7%	14.3%	1.1%	2.2%
Metal Fabricating	-	-		6.5%	4.7%
Chemical Products	1.5%	3.8%	4.6%	1.3%	1.1%
Wood, Furniture and Fixtures	-	-		3.4%	2.8%
Paper Products	7.6%	5.3%	6.7%	1.8%	1.8%
Printing, Publishing and Allied	2.9%	8.1%	3.3%	4.6%	4.9%
Textiles, Leather, Knitting Mills	8.7%	6.9%	5.5%	1.2%	1.8%
Clothing	21.5%	15.4%	10.0%	9.9%	7.0%
Food Products	-	-	9.3%	9.7%	10.0%
Construction	-	-		13.2%	14.8%
Transportation, Storage, Comm.	-	-		31.0%	32.6%
Other	9.1%	25.7%	20.7%	4.4%	4.9%

[324] Karl Ditt, "Industriellen Revolution," Tables 1 and 2, 492 and *Census of Canada*, 1971. Note that Winnipeg data includes a more detailed breakdown of sector employment and categories have been combined in some cases to provide a rough comparison of the economies of the two cities. The total numbers of persons in the labour force do not reflect the 1973 amalgamation of greater Bielefeld while the data for Winnipeg includes the entire Census Metropolitan Area.

areas.[325] Immigrants faced job searches in a labour market dominated by the new electronic equipment and food manufacturing industries. In Bielefeld, the electronics industry in particular, grew dramatically after 1955 with output in 1960 exceeding that of 1950 by eleven times.[326] A few immigrants still found employment in the once important textile and clothing industry that continued to shrink during the period until it accounted for just over 15 percent of industrial employment in 1980.[327]

In the 1973 to 1982 period, growth rates in all Western economies shrank. Germany's growth averaged 1.66 percent; Canada's a meagre .84 percent.[328] Unemployment in Germany, which had fallen to less than one percent in the 1960s rose to 2.6 percent in 1974 and then steadily climbed to a peak of 9.3 percent in 1985.[329] Job prospects for immigrant families in Bielefeld paralleled these global economic cycles.

For ethnic German immigrants international economics was understood in terms of how it affected them personally; they mainly felt the pressing and immediate need to find a place in the rapidly changing working world. Canada and Germany were both part of an increasingly global economic structure with similar patterns of opportunities and constraints for immigrants looking for that elusive 'good job'.

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[325] Fulbrook, *History of Germany*, 212-213.

[326] Statistisches Amt der Stadt Bielefeld, *Statistisches Jahrbuch*, 1960, Appendix, unpaged.

[327] Ditt, "Industriellen Revolution," 492-494.

[328] Norrie and Owram, *Canadian Economy,* 404. See also Fulbrook, *History of Germany,* 212.

[329] Wolfgang Glatzer et al., *Recent Social Trends in West Germany 1960-1990* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag; Montreal; Kingston; London; Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 149.

There were significant changes in the occupational profiles of ethnic German immigrants between the early 1950s when they arrived in Winnipeg and the 1970s when they came to Bielefeld. Many Bielefeld–bound immigrants were the children of ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union who had never come under German occupation or who had been repatriated to Soviet territories after the war. The combined stresses of forced collectivization, deportation and exile placed many of these ethnic Germans in prison work camps. When relocation became possible after 1955, many moved to Kazakhstan where a return to agricultural life was not possible.[330] By 1977 half of the working ethnic German population in the Soviet Union was reported to be in factories, in coalmines, in the construction industry, or driving trucks, almost the same proportions as that of the Soviet population at large. These realities were reflected to an even greater extent in many immigrant work histories. The *Ost-Europa Institute* interviewed ethnic German immigrants who arrived in Germany in the 1970s and early 1980s and found that only 10.7 percent had been involved in agriculture in the Soviet Union. Over one-half indicated occupations in industry and construction.[331] Most ethnic Germans arriving in Bielefeld in the 1970s and 1980s thus had work experience in non-agricultural industries.

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[330] The German population in the Soviet Union rapidly became urbanized in the postwar period. The urban population comprised 18 percent in 1939, 39.3 percent in 1959 and 45.4 percent of all ethnic Germans in 1970. Benjamin Plinkus, Ingeborg Fleischhauer and Karl-Heinz Ruffman, eds., *Die Deutschen in der Sowjetunion: Geschichte einer nationalen Minderheit im 20. Jahrhundert* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1987), 398.

[331] See Ingrid Reule, "The Germans from Russia and Their Resettlement During the 20th Century," trans. Maria Reule, *Heritage Review* 25 (1995): 23 and Barbara Dietz, "Deutsche Aussiedler aus der Sowjetunion: Sozialer Hintergrund und Ausreisebedingungen am Ende der achtziger Jahre," *Arbeitsbericht Nr. 3, Forschungsprojekt "Deutsche in der Sowjetunion und Aussiedler aus der UdSSR in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Munchen: Ost-Europa Institute, 1990), 16.

In spite of their different work experiences in the years after the war, ethnic German immigrants coming to Winnipeg and those arriving in Bielefeld from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union adjusted to their respective working worlds in remarkably similar ways.

Their histories and mid-sized populations shaped both Winnipeg and Bielefeld's economic conditions. Both cities experienced structural economic change because of the worldwide recession and oil crises of the 1970s. Both cities witnessed continuing growth in service industries at the expense of manufacturing. Both endured competition from low-wage economies in the developing world. Both had to deal with a rapid decline in farm employment.

In Germany, the suitability of ethnic German immigrants for the country's labour needs was decidedly a secondary consideration for the entire period of ethnic German migration. Although Bielefeld, like the rest of Germany's cities, became home to many foreign guest workers during the same time as ethnic German immigration occurred, ethnic Germans were being admitted for other reasons than their ability to remedy shortfalls in the country's labour market. The skills brought by ethnic Germans were not usually those sought in the German work world. One newspaper report suggested that for every two immigrants with skills in the commercial sector there were eight with experience in heavy industry—very different from the profile of the German labour market. Ethnic Germans were rarely professionals or managers because of the discrimination practiced against Germans in the Soviet Union and Poland. The same

article pointed out that most ethnic Germans chose Bielefeld not for its work opportunities, but because of family and kinship connections in the city.[332]

If an immigrant met the criteria for German citizenship, the particulars of work experience became a problem of integration, not admission. Work history, for instance, was very important in determining the amount of government financial support immigrants received to ease their economic adjustment to life in Bielefeld. It also influenced the scale and kind of retraining they would be offered, or compelled to participate in.

Assistance provided to ethnic German immigrants included generous provisions to ensure that their economic status came close to that of other Germans who had benefited from the prosperous postwar economy. In the period up to 1989, those who had been employed in their countries of origin were granted unemployment insurance benefits according to criteria that would have prevailed if they had performed the work in Germany. On the basis of this policy, immigrants who did not secure employment upon their arrival were entitled to unemployment benefits immediately. A similar approach was used in the provision of pensions. Paying ethnic Germans pensions based on their employment history in Poland or the Soviet Union was justified on the basis that these Communist countries did not export the pensions of emigrants. Another adjustment provision was the official policy of permitting qualifications obtained in their former home to be transferred to Germany without cost. In practice, however the "qualifications and certificates received in the country of origin frequently [had] no value in the

[332] "Aussiedler werden Vermittlern 'aus den Händen gerissen': Hohe Arbeitsmoral/Viel gewerbliche Arbeiter/Meist Sprachnote," *Neue Westfälische,* 30 January 1978.

employment market in Germany." As a result, ethnic Germans were offered upgrading or, when there was absolutely no market for the immigrant's occupation, complete retraining.[333] A 1973 newspaper article offered some examples. Albert Barke, a thirty-nine year old former sawmill worker in the Soviet Union became a postal worker.[334] Heinrich Harder, originally from the Soviet Union, was an immigrant from Paraguay who had emigrated there from Germany as a refugee in the 1940s. He came to Bielefeld with his wife and six children after having lived in the Chaco of Paraguay where he had managed to build up a small farm but had no other job skills. His retraining began while at the reception centre at Friedland where he took welding courses. After arriving in Bielefeld, he got a job working as a welder for the city public works department.

The state was prepared to invest substantial resources in retraining younger immigrants. Alexander Neufeld, who was twenty-two when he came to Bielefeld, indicated that most of the younger immigrants arriving with him were given opportunities to upgrade or to begin training in a trade. A few took extensive training programs and entered highly skilled professions but as Neufeld reported, "most of them are workers."[335] Entering the job market was more difficult for specific groups of immigrants. Those women, who in their former homes had held jobs considered to be 'men's work' in Germany, were unable to get jobs in areas for which they had training and experience. Other workers with particular difficulty were those with ideologically incompatible

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[333] Hermann-Pfandt, "Eingliederung der Aussiedler," 6.

[334] "350 Übersiedler leben in Bielefeld: Keine Schwierigkeiten an den neuen Arbeitsplätzen: Froh, wieder in Deutschland zu sein—Lob für Kollegen und Vorgesetze," *Westfalen Blatt*, 12 January 1973.

[335] Alexander Neufeld, *Interview*.

training, such as an economist or a history teacher.[336] Though they were unable to fill gaps in the labour market, ethnic Germans arriving in Bielefeld regarded the admission to the work world as an important step. It was also a critical part of the German government's program for integrating them into society.

In spite of some problems with transferability of training, ethnic Germans were generally satisfied with their employment situation. At joint meetings between them and the Social and Housing Committee of the city or with politicians they were usually asked whether suitable "employment had been arranged for them in their profession." The summary of answers indicated that the majority had been placed in a work situation for which they had training while others had taken satisfactory alternative employment. At one meeting the situation of truck drivers came up as a problem and it was indicated that a change in the law was underway to make their qualifications transferable; the situation of white-collar workers remained difficult, "often leading to long periods of unemployment." Some immigrants complained that their bosses displayed a lack of understanding of immigrant problems; others complained of their lack of knowledge of technical terms, which was giving them trouble in their work places.[337] In spite of these difficulties the relatively low numbers of arriving ethnic German immigrants, as well as the prevailing circumstance of labour shortages, meant that most ethnic Germans found work relatively easily. Heinz Ingenhorst makes the point that the presence of guest

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[336] Hermann-Pfandt, "Eingliederung der Aussiedler," 6.

[337] *Sozial u. Wohnungswese Protokolle*, 13.06.1978 and *Sozial u. Wohnungswesen Protokolle*, 15.03.1977, BSA. See also "Vom Schwarzen Meer nach Bielefeld: 20 Jahre Warten auf die Ausreise: Sozialausschuß sprach mit Umsiedlerfamilien," *Westfalen Blatt*, 15 June 1976 and "Aussiedler klagten Politiker ihr Leid: Vogelsang besuchte Umsiedlungsheim Teichsheide," *Westfalen Blatt*, 21 July 1976.

workers in Germany actually facilitated ethnic German integration into German working life. In the hierarchy of desirability as established by German employers, guest workers were lower than ethnic Germans. Ingenhorst argues that ethnic Germans ended up being pushed out of the role of a lower class by increasing numbers of Turkish worker migrants.[338]

In Bielefeld, immigrants were officially and practically entrusted to the care of the *Arbeitsamt*. This Employment Department took a large measure of responsibility in providing them with a suitable work placement. However, the period of emigration to Bielefeld was at a time when the economy was undergoing structural changes because of the competition of low-wage economies in the developing world. In spite of *Arbeitsamt* involvement, immigrants in Bielefeld struggled with the vagaries of the economy and their ultimate place in the working world of the city. The closing down of their first work places was a recurring problem for immigrants such as Elizabeth Peters and her future husband, Hans Warkentin. Peters had worked at a variety of jobs in Russia, including a stint as an air quality technician in a coalmine. When she and her mother arrived in Germany in 1973, they could not decide where to settle. They ended up in Gronau, near the Dutch border, because relatives that lived there had made the family reunification request that had eventually been the ticket for emigration. Elizabeth describes their initial period in Gronau:

> We were there for one and a half years. I enjoyed it there; I had work. I worked in the kitchen. Although it wasn't my strength—I always thought I was not suited for the kitchen. The von Delden factories were located there. ... They closed down overnight—suddenly from one day to the next. [The closure meant that] there was 40 percent unemployment in that

[338] Ingenhorst, *Die Rußlanddeutschen*, 89.

> city. I said to my mother, 'logically we cannot stay here.' I said, 'I have work—you don't need any work, but when the rest of our people come, when *Mariechen* comes, she has five children, when *Gretel* comes, she has five children. The men need work; the children need places to learn a career. ...We have to leave here.

Hans Warkentin also faced difficulties in finding work due to the closure of factories:

> We came here in 1977 with two children. ...We came to my sister's and lived there for one month and then we got this apartment. The good thing was that I found work fairly quickly. I worked in a furniture factory. ...through the *Arbeitsamt*. They sent me to a furniture factory. ...but I had a reasonable job and I was satisfied, but then the furniture factory shut down. Since I had worked in a furniture factory they [the *Arbeitsamt*] sent me to a different one. That furniture factory—I would not wish it on anyone to have to work there. It was really not a good place to work and I was not there long. ...I sanded. I had to learn the job. ...At that time the furniture factories were closing down and they only wanted 'masters'. They laid me off because I had no training. I was unemployed for about 11 months. That was all right; of course I received unemployment benefits, but this was no way of living—collecting insurance; a person has to have work. But we were involved in the church and there were many visitations to make. But after eleven months, I said, 'that is enough. Now I am going to go down the street and wherever I find a firm, I am going to walk in and ask if they have work.' I came to this place just down the street. I walked in and asked about work. [The receptionist] said I should wait and soon the personnel manager came—and it was a woman. 'Yes,' she said, 'come.' Well she said I could come, but I didn't earn very much there—it was a low-paying job. At that time it was the lowest level; it was 8.50 DM. ... We could live off of it but in comparison to other wages it was not enough. 'But', I said, 'I want to have work now.' ...It was a little modest but I had my work.[339]

As these immigrant memories illustrate, the process of finding stable employment was important in shaping perceptions of their new homes in the city. In both the

[339] Hans Warkentin and Elizabeth (Peters) Warkentin, *Interview,* Bielefeld, January 17, 1999. Elizabeth and Hans were married in Germany.

unfettered, but also unsupportive situation in Winnipeg and the structured environment of Bielefeld, immigrants had to demonstrate persistence and flexibility in their approach to work. A willingness to accept employment very different from what they had done before and at cross-purposes with their interests and abilities was a feature of successful adaptation to new work worlds. Winnipeg immigrant Wilhelm Maretzki ended up in the mines of Bissett for a few years before moving back to Winnipeg. Elizabeth Peters moved from Gronau to Frankental where she worked in a laundry before finally ending up in Bielefeld. Hans Warkentin kept his job as a caretaker at the firm down the street from his home in Bielefeld even though it paid little and was perceived as being of low status.

When ethnic Germans arrived in Bielefeld in the 1970s, Germany did not present a powerful, seductive image of the suburban ideal comparable to that in North America. Even the idealized postwar German women, the *Trummerfrauen*, hard working women reclaiming the bricks of bombed buildings, were part of the past. It did maintain strong divisions between careers considered suitable for women and those limited to men. Along with gendered career expectations, German society favoured women staying in the home, doing housework and caring for children. A summary of social trends in Germany as determined by survey research indicated that, even in 1985, 57 percent of women believed that a woman could either work or raise children, but not both. The same summary also suggested "92% of men living with a woman claimed not to be inconvenienced by housework—because they were doing almost nothing—and this fact

was usually accepted without conflict."[340] In spite of attitudes favouring women's place in the home and as primary care givers for children, many German women worked outside the home. An educational program for ethnic German immigrants warned them that they should not expect their German neighbours to be especially helpful to them. A lot of the reason for this was attributed to the work and consumer worlds of modern Germany where, because of the shorter workweek, both men and women had to work harder to achieve the same production. The desire for comfortable homes, televisions and other appliances, the costs of holidays and of children meant that many women had to work. As a result, one settlement worker suggested, "the entire family is under stress and is preoccupied with themselves with little time or energy to actively help their neighbours."[341]

Policies regarding the transfer of qualifications exposed differences in the perception of appropriate work roles for men and women in Germany and the immigrants' former homelands. A German educational circular suggested: "women, for instance, have difficulties in cases where they had a career which we here consider to be limited entirely to male workers, such as a street construction worker or a crane operator."[342] Klaus Boll argues that after the 1930s the 'double harness' became a feature of an ethnic German woman's experience in the Soviet Union when "to her continuing household duties came the added obligations of a career." The changes in gender roles in the home were reflected in a reduction in the father's influence over his wife and

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[340] Glatzer, *Social Trends,* 105.

[341] *Westfalen Blatt,* "Deutschlehrgang fuer Aussiedler begonnen: Arbeitslose Aussiedler gibt es nur sehr wenige," 8 September 1977.

[342] Hermann-Pfandt, "Eingliederung der Aussiedler," 6.

children. Indeed, Boll suggests, "the wife's acceptance of a paid career makes her considerably more independent."[343] The somewhat greater equality of ethnic German women in the Soviet Union and Poland as a result of their careers presented them with special adjustment challenges when they emigrated.

When ethnic German women arrived in Bielefeld two factors affected their place in the working world of their new home. First, the difficulties of getting their former homeland qualifications recognized in Germany and of finding a job in their own field resulted in many leaving the work force. Those who resisted the trend by seeking employment usually did so because the family "had decided to build or buy their own home, an automobile or other costly consumer goods."[344] Second, the lack of day care in Germany meant that child-care responsibilities kept many women at home and contributed to a return to earlier male-dominated family structures.[345]

While the adjustment to new working situations in both Winnipeg and Bielefeld was difficult for many immigrants, ethnic Germans were confident of their ability to satisfy employers and to get and keep jobs. A belief that they were better workers than other groups was part of ethnic German self-perception. German scholarly literature as well as Bielefeld newspapers echoed these self-perceptions. Ethnic Germans in general were characterized as having a "strict work ethic" and as being well received by their employers.[346] Newspaper headlines lauded the ethnic German work ethic and glowingly

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[343] Boll, *Kulturwandel*, 47.

[344] Ibid., 47-49.

[345] Ibid., 49.

[346] Klaus Boll, "Kultur und Lebensweise der Deutschen in der Sowjetunion und fon Aussiedlern in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Erste Untersuchung mit Aussiedlern

reported that career counsellors were pleased to discover that ethnic German immigrants were productive, efficient and willing workers who demonstrated flexibility in adapting to German working conditions.[347]

Susanna (Regier) Koop of Bielefeld recalled how a native German woman at her work place seemed to think that "she was better than we were." When Susanna and a fellow ethnic German employee consented to help out their supervisor on a holiday the woman's attitude changed. Susanna used the story to illustrate how "at work we were always recognized as good workers." Her husband Heinrich added that ethnic German men "rarely had any problems at work. The employer needs the workers. If they do their work well the boss is good to them."[348]

Finding work and a place to live in both Bielefeld and Winnipeg involved making difficult choices. In Germany, immigrants were admitted for other reasons than providing 'labour capital', but their integration into the job market was managed more directly by the state. Indeed, the government took responsibility for making them productive members of Bielefeld society. The state, through the *Arbeitsamt*, assumed responsibility for providing immigrants with their first work places. The state also provided resources for skills and language training to insure immigrant employability. The slowdown in the

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aus der UdSSR," *Arbeitsbericht Nr. 4, Forschungsprojekt "Deutsche in der Sowjetunion und Aussiedler aus der UdSSR in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,* (München: Ost-Europa Institut, 1991), 16.

[347] See "Aussiedler werden Vermittlern 'aus den Händen gerissen': Hohe Arbeitsmoral/Viel gewerbliche Arbeiter/Meist Sprachnote," *Neue Westfälische,* 30 January 1978; "Beratung junger Spätaussiedler: 120 Neu-Bielefelder suchten Rat bei Berufsberatung," *Westfalen Blatt*, 28 January 1977, and Hermann-Pfandt, "Eingliederung der Aussiedler," 6.

[348] Susanna (Regier) Koop, *Interview.*

economy in the 1970s and 1980s likely caused immigrants to change work locations frequently, but the state's intervention and their own work ethic assured them almost continuous employment. Ethnic Germans of the immigrant generation in Bielefeld were mostly unable, however, to move to more senior positions in the job market.

Women were required to demonstrate more flexibility than men in adapting to working life in both cities, albeit under very different circumstances. In both Winnipeg and Bielefeld women's work outside the home was viewed as necessary to achieve the financial objectives of the immigrant family and not as a requirement of a desired identity. Women from Eastern Europe although members of a patriarchal family structure had, by necessity, gravitated to careers and accepted work outside the home as a normal situation. For them the transition to Bielefeld life required an adjustment—their work outside the home was now seen as a supplement to male earnings, especially in cases where the family was building a house or purchasing a new automobile. When family objectives required them to work they found that German views of appropriate activity left them with fewer options than they had had in the Soviet Union or Poland.

Comparing how ethnic Germans found homes in Winnipeg and Bielefeld reveals similarities and differences. In both cities immigrants wished to live among their fellows. In Bielefeld this desire was much more pronounced and became a point of conflict between immigrants and their receiving society. Sub-groups of ethnic Germans possessing strong religious identities were inclined to seek neighbourhoods where they could live with their co-religionists in both Winnipeg and Bielefeld. Neighbourhoods with the highest numbers of ethnic Germans in both cities were also neighbourhoods where very high percentages of residents were Mennonite or Baptist. Compared to their

Lutheran, Catholic and non-religious counterparts, these sectarian immigrants were more distant from the society that surrounded them. Mennonites and German Baptists responded with a heightened desire for the reinforcement provided by others who shared their faith and outlook. In both cities, existing communities provided a point around which a concentration of immigrants could coalesce. Winnipeg's West End and Bielefeld's Baumheide became not only centres of ethnic Germans but more particularly, Mennonite and Baptist communities.

The state-coordinated and subsidized housing service in Bielefeld and Winnipeg's uncontrolled and market oriented system offered few barriers to the integration of immigrants in the two cities. The newcomers pursued housing choices in the context of variables established by the housing market in one case, and by government policy in the other. In Bielefeld, government-supplied temporary housing and the formalized allocation of permanent housing eliminated a large part of the individual initiative that ethnic Germans in Winnipeg had to exhibit in finding a home. In Winnipeg the housing system was informal, based on the market and driven by individual buyers, sellers, landlords and tenants. Immigrants had to be more resourceful than their Bielefeld counterparts and tended to use kin, church and acquaintance networks to find, and often share housing. The need to negotiate housing arrangements in this environment made ethnic concentration a natural response, even if temporary, and helped ease the transition to the new world of a Canadian city. In Bielefeld the state took responsibility for providing immigrants with housing, which also limited choices for newcomers. Although Bielefeld immigrants were unable to use their own initiative to secure housing their even greater desire to live together largely overcame the state's plans for their dispersal

throughout the city. The constraint of lack of choice in finding a home increased the anxiety of sectarian immigrants in particular because of their overriding desire to live among their coreligionists.

It is much more difficult to understand the processes of dispersion in the two cities. In both, the dispersion of immigrants was related to life cycles and economic prospects. Many older immigrants in Bielefeld remained in the social housing that had been allocated to them upon arrival. In both cities they were less able to move and remained in their original communities, close to the church to which their children now commuted from the suburbs. Others with young families used their kinship networks to acquire sufficient resources to build a home as close as possible to the preferred neighbourhoods. In Winnipeg the West End German community dispersed quickly as the demands of growing families and rapid movement up the economic ladder helped younger ethnic Germans to join the flight to the suburbs within a few years of their arrival. Increased mobility brought about by the burgeoning use of the automobile in both cities lessened the need for the intimacy of the neighbourhood and allowed churches and other institutions to remain in their old locations even when members of their constituencies dispersed.

Neither the influence of different receiving society approaches to housing, or their own differing experiences seems to have influenced ethnic German immigrant attitudes towards home ownership. In both cities ethnic Germans demonstrated a strong desire to own their homes. In Bielefeld the tradition of helping each other build a home was transplanted from the Soviet Union. Living in social housing was a necessity because of lack of resources but their own home was the objective. In Winnipeg homes were bought

very quickly, made possible by a buoyant economy and by pooling the family's resources.

Immigrants in Winnipeg were left to fend for themselves when finding work and had to rely much more on family and other immigrants to gain access to that all important first job. Economic opportunity in Winnipeg resulted in many more immigrants becoming independent business owners, particularly in the construction and related industries where many got their start. In Germany the state took much more responsibility for providing work for immigrants, but there was also much less opportunity for entrepreneurial initiative. In both cities, ethnic German memories of their work experiences emphasized that they were hard workers, prepared to make sacrifices to get ahead. This self-perception was usually set against attitudes in the dominant society rather than those of other immigrant groups. Ethnic Germans believed they had earned a place in their new societies by virtue of their hard work and diligence.

In terms of finding work and a home, Winnipeg and Bielefeld offered differing degrees of state support and intervention in these first steps to becoming integrated. In Winnipeg, newcomers were at the same level as others in their quest for jobs and homes. Host society expectations for ethnic Germans did not differ significantly from those for other immigrants or native residents of the city. In Bielefeld, ethnic German immigrants were special clients of the state and in need of specific attention and services. The special status conferred upon Bielefeld's immigrants raised the host society's expectations for the degree and speed of their integration into the physical and economic landscape.

PART THREE: REPRODUCING THE COMMUNITY

Chapter Five: The Family: Strategies of Adaptation and Resistance

Karl Fast, a Winnipeg ethnic German immigrant, was separated from his wife and young daughter in German-occupied Poland in November 1944. He received the last letter from his wife in January 1945. He would not see either of them for five years. In his autobiographical novel *Gebt der Wahrheit der Ehre,* he uses the third person voice of Siebert to describe the anticipated reunion with his family:

> He could not comprehend that he was now supposed to be at home. The long separation had done its part to dull the notion of 'being at home.' What would it be like to meet Ella? And Lilli? Would she accept him as her father? When he had last seen her she was three weeks old. And now? She was five years old. How big would she be?[349]

Karl Fast was fortunate to be able to reconstruct his family from the upheaval of the Second World War. Not all ethnic Germans could.

Tamara Hareven's review of the literature on the history of the family points to a movement away from the limited view of the family as a static unit at a specific point in time to one of "family as a process." Along with studying the family over the entire life of its members this approach has stimulated works that examine the "family's interaction with the worlds of religion, work, education, correctional and welfare institutions, and with processes such as migration, industrialization, and urbanization."[350] This chapter examines some of these interactions. Internally, however, family is also the site of intense

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[349] Karl Fast, *Gebt der Wahrheit der Ehre*, *Dritter Teil* (Winnipeg: Author, 1952), 175.

[350] Tamara K. Hareven, "The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change," *American Historical Review* 96 (1991), 96.

cultural reproduction. It is where language and religion are first learned and where the stories that connect us to an ethnic group are first heard. Stories of family in Winnipeg and Bielefeld shared memories of disruption, separation and trauma. But subsequent developments contributed to unique patterns of cultural and ethnic reproduction. This chapter examines family disruption during the Stalin era and the Second World War. It also explores the reconstruction of families and the relationship between family formation and integration processes in Winnipeg and Bielefeld.

In both groups of immigrants, the disruption of families and villages brought on by war and pre-war events removed many earlier restrictions on available marriage partners. The resulting marriage patterns reshaped ethnic boundaries. In the dominant society of both cities ideas of family underwent significant change in response to what Canadian historian Doug Owram calls the "most profound of all the revolutions of the 1960s –the one between the sexes."[351] The sexual revolution occurred after the initial adjustment of Winnipeg's immigrants but was a reality of German society for arriving immigrants in Bielefeld in the 1970s. Patterns of marriage and intermarriage were important indicators of ethnic German integration. As historian Stanley Nadel claims in a study of New York's Germans, "marriage is the one form of social interaction that probably reveals more about people's perceptions of social distance than any other."[352]

Family was central to social and ethnic relations in German communities throughout Eastern Europe. During the nineteenth century, a more tranquil time in ethnic

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[351] Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 249.

[352] Nadel, *Little Germany,* 156.

German communities in Imperial Russia, family has been characterized as ordering "one's very life: it determined the people with whom one would interact most often and most intensely during the course of life; it influenced the most important decisions in life; it shaped village settlement patterns; it comprised the sphere of influence and power for… women."[353] Family continued to be important for ethnic German life in the Soviet Union even after the disruptions of the Second World War. Surveys among ethnic German immigrants conducted by the *Ost-Europa Institute* prompted Barbara Dietz to conclude that "for Germans in the Soviet Union, the family and the attachments to an ethnic group cultivated in families plays an exceptionally important role."[354]

Strict gender divisions also characterized the ethnic German family. Marlene Epp suggests in her history of refugee families that ethnic German Mennonites in the Soviet Union were "oriented around a nuclear household." Extended family connections were important and gender "roles were clearly defined within a patriarchal framework that assigned headship to fathers and in which wives deferred to their husbands."[355] Klaus Boll agrees that well into the Soviet period the "strict division of roles in the home and outside on the fields" remained a feature of ethnic German family life. Women cared for

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[353] Royden K. Loewen, *Family, Church and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 32.

[354] Barbara Dietz, "Erwartungen an die neue Heimat: Deutsche Aussiedler aus der Sowjetunion vor dem beruflichen und sozialen Neubeginn in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in *Forshungsprojekt "Deutsche in der Sowjetunion und Aussiedler aus der UdSSR in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland" Arbeitsbericht Nr. 5 Erwartungen and die neue Heimat: Deutsche Aussiedler aus der Sowjetunion vor dem beruflichen und sozialen Neubeginn in der Bundesrepbulik Deutschland* (Munchen: Osteuropa Institut, 1991), 4.

[355] Marlene Epp, *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 18.

children and farm animals and did most of the work around the house while men performed the work on the fields.[356]

Stalin's program of collectivization in 1929 placed intense pressure on traditional ethnic German family life in the Soviet Union. A wave of arrests accompanied the push to establish collective farms and many ethnic Germans were branded as *kulaks* and imprisoned, exiled, or executed.[357] The next wave of family disruption and hardship and a further skewing of the demographics of the ethnic German population was occasioned by the Stalin purges of the late 1930s. Although damage to village life was significant during the earlier collectivization drive, family life was disrupted to a greater extent in the late 1930s because of the great number of arrests of adult males. One estimate places the number of males arrested during this time between a third and one-half of all adult ethnic German males. Although the experience in individual villages varied, the pattern left by the two waves of family disruption was essentially the same throughout the German settlements of the Soviet Union. On the eve of the German attack on the Soviet Union half of the households in many ethnic German communities were without adult males.[358]

The trauma of arrests was quickly followed by the Second World War and the 1941 Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, which altered yet again the ethnic German family unit. The Soviet decision to evacuate German settlements ahead of Hitler's advancing

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[356] Boll, *Kulturwandel*, 46.

[357] *Kulak* literally means 'fist' and was the label loosely given to more wealthy farmers considered to be the 'class' enemy in the peasant village.

[358] Georg K. Epp, "Mennonite Immigration to Canada after World War II," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 5 (1987), 110.

armies and their transport to the East was taken in haste and without regard to maintaining family units. During the mass deportation of the Volga Germans in 1941, for instance, "villages were surrounded by military troops and machine guns to deter escapes. Then large groups were assembled, where fathers were systematically separated from mothers and grown children were separated from their parents before being transported to camps."[359] In Black Sea areas evacuation was frustrated by the rapid advance of German armies and some family members had to leave earlier with cattle and farm equipment while their families stayed behind and often fell under German occupation. By 1942 the growing disruption of ethnic German families was reflected in a compilation of village reports prepared by special units that followed on the heels of the German advance into Ukraine to document and preserve ethnic German community life. Of the 10,066 families enumerated in the Black Sea area by the special unit, 45.1 percent had no male head.[360]

Extended periods of separation came to characterize ethnic German family life during the later stages of the war. The remaining fragmented families were further divided when the tide of the war turned against the Germans in 1943. Ethnic German settlements were evacuated to the Warthegau in Poland where most adult males including

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[359] M—r, A.. "Unsere Landsleute unter dem Sowjetregime und in der sowjetische Verbannung," in *Heimatbuch der Deutschen aus Rußland* (Stuttgart: Landmannschaft der Deutschen aus Rußland, 1957), 123. A personal account is in Erna Weber, "Jede Nation muss in ihr Land," in *Die Fremden Deutschen: Aussiedler in der Bundesrepublik,* eds. Barbara Malchow, Keyumars Tayebi and Ulrike Brand (Reinbek by Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1990), 104-120.

[360] The tabulation of the *Sonderkommando Stumpp* is taken from Richard H. Walth, *Strandgut der Weltgeschichte: Die Rußlanddeutschen zwischen Stalin und Hitler* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 1994), Appendix 19, 377. See also Peter Letkeman, "Mennonite Victims of 'The Great Terror,' 1936-1938," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 16 (1998): 37 and M—r, "Unsere Landsleute", 117-131.

Polish and Soviet ethnic Germans were conscripted into German armies after being granted German citizenship. Many were never reunited with their families even if they survived the battles on the Eastern front. When Bielefeld immigrant Peter Epp faced conscription into the German military during the war his wife was not very happy because "staying behind in a Polish village with five children and facing an unknown future was not easy for her." Peter Epp would not see his family for ten years, during which time he served in the German military and in the Gulags of the Soviet Union.[361] He and his family both remained in the Soviet Union however, and were eventually reunited, but other families were not so fortunate. In the war's aftermath a family might be spread over three continents and have little hope of reunification.

The story of Katharina Krüger's family was typical. Her brother Gerhard was drafted into the Soviet army in 1939. He then fell into German hands and was drafted into the German army where he served until the end of the war. After the war he married a German national, a widow, and they immigrated to Canada. Katharina's mother and younger brother Heinrich who had been living with their sister Anna and her husband were forcibly resettled in Siberia in 1941. Her brother Hans, a schoolteacher in the Volga region suffered a similar fate and ended up in the Yenissei River region of the far north. He was the only one in the extended family not separated from his wife and children during the war. Abram, the oldest brother died while working in a coal mine in the infamous *Trudarmiia*, Stalin's work army during the war, while Jakob was imprisoned and released to join his Russian wife and family in the last year of the war. Katharina's

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[361] Peter Epp, *Ob tausend fallen: Mein Leben im Archipel Gulag* (Weichs: Memra-Verlag, 1988), 35 and 197.

husband, a schoolteacher, was taken away in 1941 to dig tank defence trenches; he did not return and his whereabouts remained a mystery although it was rumoured he had not survived. She would learn in 1968 from his fellow prisoners that he had died in December 1941 in work camps of the far north. Katharina herself became a refugee, travelled to Poland in the 1943 evacuations ahead of retreating German armies, was caught by the Russian forces, and was repatriated after the war to Archangelsk. She eventually moved to Germany, arriving there in 1976.[362]

The war did not stop people from wanting to marry. Many couples, uncertain of the future, rushed into wartime marriages. Often the period of courtship was brief and many simple wedding ceremonies were performed when a soldier came home on leave or just before he complied with his draft into the army. A variety of motives were apparent in such marriages. Women and men longed for the mutual attachment of a spouse in a world where everything seemed fleeting and transitory. With her first husband rumoured to have died in the Soviet Union after he was taken away in 1941, Katharina Krüger agreed to marry a fellow ethnic German from Yugoslavia whom she met in occupied Poland. Reflecting on those days some forty-five years later it seemed to her that it was the "disturbing times," the "unknown future," and the terrible prospect of facing that future alone that had driven her to accept his advances. Despite his assurances and those of his friends, the man had a wife and young son. When the wife suddenly appeared to protest the planned marriage and when Yugoslav Germans in the camp were subsequently relocated, the wedding was called off. Katharina had however become

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[362] Katharina Krüger, *Schicksal einer Rußlanddeutschen: Erlebnisbericht* (Göttingen: Verlag Graphikum, 1991).

pregnant, but she did not despair because, as she recalls, "I had overcome the horrible prospect of being alone. I would now have a child, my very own child."[363]

The end of the war left ethnic Germans with memories of family and family roles and relationships made more complicated by the events of the previous decade. Along with the psychological and emotional trauma of the period, disruption and separation wrought changes in traditional concepts of family. Many families had difficulty resuming family life even if their husbands and fathers returned from the war.

Karl Fast's autobiographical novel tells of the experience of a fellow prisoner in the Soviet Union. His friend was about to leave for home in Germany when he received a letter from his wife expressing her second thoughts about their relationship:

> I do not want you to return to me; I would like us not to see each other again. You will ask and it is your right to know why this is my wish. I will tell you. When you became a soldier, we had been married for one year. Our young son was still in diapers. Rolf is nine years old today. And me? I have become much, much older. Then I was young and not ready for life. Today I am mature and completely independent. I do everything on my own. I do what I want to do. No one criticizes my inclinations. In short Werner I am free and want to stay free. I am not angry with you. Rather, I do not care about you and you have become a stranger to me. It seems to me that our being together was not real; it seems more like a dream.[364]

Even for those prepared to attempt the rebuilding of a relationship, years of separation often proved too difficult to overcome. Peter Dyck, a worker for the Mennonite Central Committee, a refugee-aid organization, tells of an ethnic German woman who had immigrated to Paraguay after the war. When her husband reappeared while on a visit in Germany she "immediately borrowed money, bought a ticket, and flew

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[363] Krüger, *Schicksal,* 40.

[364] Fast, *Gebt der Wahrheit*, 124-125.

to Germany to meet her husband." The husband meanwhile had a common-law wife and two children whom he had left behind in Russia; "they met numerous times over a period of several weeks. In the end he returned to his new family in the Soviet Union, and she came back to Paraguay, alone."[365]

Contradictions between reality and families' mythological view of their missing husbands and fathers complicated the resumption of family life after the war. Annemarie Tröger's study of German women argues that the construction of men as protectors, preservers, and providers for the family remained unshaken for most of the war. With the end of the war, however,

> the German masculine mystique fell apart both privately, for individual women, and publicly. This collapse seems to have occurred suddenly and not as a result of a slow erosion caused by women's assumption of stronger roles in German society from 1942 on. Significantly, women clung to their protective fantasy men until they could no longer avoid facing reality.[366]

In many cases marriages could not survive the strain of the war. The Iron Curtain of the postwar period negated the need for formal divorces in many cases. However, the pattern of formal divorces in Bielefeld offers an indication of the immediate postwar struggle to come to terms with the disruption of family. Among the general Bielefeld population, the divorce rate from 1947 to 1950 averaged over twenty divorces per ten

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[365] Peter and Elfrieda Dyck, *Up from the Rubble* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1991), 341. Peter and Elfrieda Dyck worked in postwar Germany with immigration and relief efforts for the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

[366] Annemarie Tröger, "German Women's Memories of World War II," in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, eds. Margaret Randolph Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel and Margaret Collins Weitz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 294. Marlene Epp's study of Mennonite refugee families echoes Tröger's observations. She suggests, "Mennonite families began to create an idealized place in their memories for departed husbands and fathers...", M. Epp, *Women Without Men*, 18.

thousand people. It dropped in 1951 and remained below fifteen for the 1950s before gradually climbing to twenty per ten thousand again in 1962.[367]

The gap left by missing men also forced women into new roles and often required them to make great sacrifices if they were to keep intact the remnants of their family. Ethnic German women certainly faced new challenges during the war and were forced to be strong in order to protect themselves and their children. In Marlene Epp's words, "women were compelled to take on roles traditionally allocated to both genders. They had to be brave and strong—physically, emotionally, and intellectually—and also be nurturing and care for their families."[368] Women were forced into exchanging all their resources—both physical and emotional—for survival.

In some cases women were forced into situations where their sexuality became interwoven with survival strategies. Another of Karl Fast's fellow prisoners received a letter from his wife in Germany who confessed:

> It was very hard. The children were cold and hungry. I did not know what to do. During this time I learned to know a man. He generously offered me assistance. He gave us money and food. The children recovered and were preserved for us. ... Forgive me Franz. I did it for our dear children because I wanted to save them for us, for you, to preserve them for you. I have a child from that man. It is already more than a year old. His father is gone without a trace. Can you forgive me?[369]

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[367] *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Bielefeld*, annual issues, 1947-1962, Statistisches Amt der Stadt Bielefeld. Divorce on a national basis in Germany peaked in 1948 at 18.6 per ten thousand persons. See Glatzer, *Social Trends,* 70. A similar pattern, but at lower rates occurred in Manitoba where divorces peaked at 9 per ten thousand in 1947 and declined to 3.4 per ten thousand in 1961 (See Appendix One). Statistics Canada, *Statistics Catalogue 84-202, Vital Statistics*, 1962.

[368] M. Epp, *Women without Men*, 69.

[369] Fast, *Gebt der Warheit*, 126.

Stories of women fleeing to the West have threads of male involvement at a variety of levels in spite of the primarily female composition of many families. A capable male to fix the wagon, to help with the constant loading and unloading, and to manage the unruly horses, was a valuable asset on the refugee flight. Women were forced to attach themselves to certain men for survival and in many cases to secure protection against other men. Elizabeth Wiens, a refugee from the Danzig area received valuable assistance from *Herr* Rehfeld when she arrived at his estate with her wagon and children. She did not know, however, how to interpret his suggestion that she stay longer. Helene Latter, an eventual immigrant to Canada, and her sister relied on Carl, an asthmatic administrator for help until he fled in order to escape imminent capture by Soviet armies. Helena Wiens's memories of 1945 as told in her contributions to *Der Bote* mentions a handicapped veteran who brought them "through everything."[370]

During the absence of their husbands many women were thrust into unaccustomed leadership roles in keeping family together under difficult circumstances. When Adelgunde Hellman's father entered the military her mother, part of a group of resettled ethnic Germans from Volyhnia, organized the family's move to a different area where they would be closer to her relatives. When they received three small farms that

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[370] Elizabeth Wiens, *Schicksalsjahr 1945: Erlebnisse nach Tagebuchnotizen* (Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario: By the Author, 1993), 36; Helene Latter, *I do Remember* (Morden: Walter F. Latter, 1988), 77, and Helena Wiens, "Die Erinnerungen eines 17jährigen Mädchens aus dem Jahre 1945," *Der Bote*, 19 April 1989. In spite of their efforts, for women on the Eastern front the end of the war brought a period of widespread rape and other atrocities. The plight of female ethnic German refugees at the end of the war is poignantly captured by Marlene Epp, *Women without Men*, particularly Chapter Two. See also Günter Böddecker, *Flüchtlinge: Die Vertreibung der Deutschen im Osten* (München: F.A. Herbig Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1980) and Schieder, *Expulsion of the German Population.*

had been taken from their previous Polish owners by the Nazis, her mother was in charge of managing the enlarged farm. Hellman remembers her being "fairly good at it. She started building right away. She had a new storage building built where we had torn down the old one." When the time came to flee advancing Soviet armies, her mother was afraid the Polish servant would take the horses so she left him at home and took charge of the wagon with their belongings herself.[371]

Ethnic German women also became leaders of religious activities during and after the war. Johann Wichert a Canadian pastor working in Germany visited a group of refugees where he was surprised to find that "this time a sister Derksen was the director of the choir. The singers, however, made a brave effort." At another location a woman was in charge of a group of refugees and served as the church resettlement agency contact person for the group.[372]

The expanded role forced upon women during the war and postwar years came to an abrupt end when life returned to normal. With improved housing in Germany, women's place changed again. Annemarie Tröger argues that the interlude in which women experienced "a short period of individual assertiveness and informal social power," was replaced in the early 1950s by "a seemingly sudden reversal of women's emancipation, . . . traditional familial roles and gender relationships were re-established

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[371] Hellman, *Interview.*

[372] J. Wichert, "Unter den Flüchtlingen," *Der Bote*, 21 April 1948 and 12 May 1948.

and the majority of German women adapted without resistance."[373] Women's wartime roles in family and religious life were not only taken from them but, in some cases, they were forced to acknowledge the error of these ways. Harry Loewen's collection of stories, *No Permanent City*, includes the story of his mother, an immigrant to Canada from the Soviet Union. Loewen relates how in Germany after the war, "the few men who had survived the 1930s and 1940s—some had served in the Soviet, German, or both armies—now took over leadership in the refugee congregations." Loewen goes on to say: "women, who had come through difficult times, submitted and followed as they had before. One day my mother had to appear before the congregation and repent for the 'worldly' life she had lived during the war years."[374]

In Winnipeg, immigrant family formation bore the mark of wartime and immediate postwar experiences. Ethnic German immigrants arrived in the city in the late 1940s and early 1950s seeking stability and security for their families. They encountered a Canadian society embarked on a similar quest. Doug Owram's history of the baby boom generation in Canada highlights the increasing importance of the home in postwar culture. He claims that the "idea of home ...had very powerful connotations by the end of the war, ranging from material comfort to renewed relationships, to peace itself.

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[373] Tröger, "Women's Memories," 294. The return to earlier constructions of gender is also examined in: Eva Kolinsky, *Women in West Germany: Life, Work and Politics* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1989).

[374] Harry Loewen, *No Permanent City: Stories from Mennonite History and Life* (Waterloo, Ontario: Herald Press, 1993), 204-205. For a review of the place of women in Canadian Mennonite history see Marlene Epp, "Women in Canadian Mennonite History: Uncovering the 'Underside'," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 5 (1987): 90-107.

Underlying it all was a search for stability on the part of a generation that had known nothing but instability." Central to the idea of home was "the formation of the family as a point of reference in an unstable world."[375] Melinda McCracken's memoirs recall how pervasive the desire for security was when she was growing up in the middle class neighbourhood of Riverview in Winnipeg. Home and church were the "two secure refuges in life" and even in school, "each teacher stayed in her room with her class from September till June, like a mother, and thus increased the sense of security in her pupils."[376] The cultural ideal of family also had specific roles considered proper for male and female family members. As Doug Owram puts it:

> Women remained in the home. Men worked. At mid-century this ideal was pervasive. Every magazine, every marriage manual, every advertisement, and the entire cultural milieu—from store hours to the absence of such institutions as day-care facilities –indicated a society that assumed the family was based on the single, male wage-earner and the child-rearing, home-managing housewife.[377]

The drive to re-establish what was believed to be the 'ideal' of family also idealized women. Such a woman was epitomized by a National Exhibition women's contest in 1949. The *Winnipeg Free Press* provided its readers with the requirements of potential winners: "She must, as a wife and mother provide for her family 'a rich and interesting life,' and herself be 'a vital and loving person.'"[378] In Melinda McCracken's

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[375] Owram, *Born at the Right Time,* 12.

[376] Melinda McCracken, *Memories are made of this* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1975), 11 and 24.

[377] Owram, *Born at the Right Time,* 22.

[378] "Wanted: 'Ideal' Woman Or Closest to Perfection," *Winnipeg Free Press,* July 22, 1949, 10.

memory, couples raising their children in Winnipeg's middle class Riverview neighbourhood tried to live up to this ideal. Starting out after the war, a family's "standard of living was raised by the young man's efforts out in the world and the young woman's sewing, baking, mothering and housekeeping abilities at home."[379] Ethnic German immigrants' recent memories of family life were in stark contrast with this ideal but they seemed to share the desire for the stability and security of family.

To what extent immigrants had begun families depended to a large extent on when they arrived in Winnipeg. Those arriving in the late 1940s still bore the marks of the fragmentation of the previous fifteen years but later arrivals had begun forming new families or had been reunited with parts of their previous families in Germany before they left for Canada.

Females still frequently headed the families, gradually filling the houses of Winnipeg's West End and the pews of its German language churches. Children, including teenage boys who had been too young to serve in the military, accompanied them. The old and infirm, unfit for military service but survivors of the refugee experience, were represented. However, noticeable gaps existed among the ranks of young men and middle age fathers. There were a few young couples, married in Germany in the aftermath of the war. There were many women, single and of marriageable age, who would start their families in Canada. All of these newcomers had to adjust to a new environment in the city. Family represented an important arena of integration, a locus in which ethnic values and meanings were passed on to the next generation.

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[379] McCracken, *Memories are made of this,* 11-12.

The separation of spouses continued to be a feature of ethnic German families in the postwar years. In occupied Germany in 1946, women outnumbered men by seven million. In 1952, when many ethnic Germans were already in Winnipeg, the whereabouts of 1.3 million former German soldiers remained unknown and it took until 1955 for the last German prisoners of war to be released from the Soviet Union. Thus the strong desire to recreate family life and the fact that women outnumbered men changed the normal patterns of courtship and marriage. A satirical article in a German woman's magazine suggested that the "hunt for a man has assumed unprecedented proportions: 'a kingdom for a man,' –regardless of how he is!"[380] Ethnic Germans who would come to Winnipeg had to come to terms with the impact of war on traditional patterns of choosing marriage partners and resulting implications for reproduction of religious and cultural values.

Like so many families in postwar Germany, the most immediate problem for immigrating families concerned those with missing husbands. A report from the Emigration Transit Centre in Fallingbostel, West Germany, a camp for ethnic German immigrants on their way to Canada, outlined the problem. The report describes the demographic profile of 1,594 persons in the camp in 1948. As was general for ethnic German populations, the writer reported that 40.6 percent of families had no father and 9.3 percent of families had no mother.[381] The demographic profile in the camp foreshadowed the pattern in immigrant families. Women whose husbands were missing also dominated the profile of immigrants arriving in Canada. From 1947 to 1949, 896

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[380] Helga Prolius in *Constanze*, 1949 as quoted by Eva Kolinsky, *Women in West Germany*, 30.

[381] Cornelius J. Dyck to C.F. Klassen, J.J. Thiessen and Wm. Snyder, 8 July 1948, *Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization*, vol. 1331, file 996, MHC.

Mennonite women with dependant children and either dead or missing husbands had immigrated to Canada while there were only 150 immigrant men with children who were missing their wives.[382]

In Mennonite circles missing men and fatherless families presented real problems for the church's sanction of remarriage.[383] The initial approach to the problem had been proposed earlier at a meeting in the camps of Canada-bound immigrants in occupied Germany. A Mennonite church brotherhood meeting in the camp at Fallingbostel in 1948 determined that the church could not sanction the remarriage of anyone unless there was reliable evidence that the missing spouse was no longer living.[384] North American Mennonites concurred with this interpretation of the nature of Christian marriage. Such a rigid approach could not be maintained, however, in the face of a deepening Cold War that made reunification more and more unlikely. The problem appeared to reach a climax in 1949 when Canadian church leaders joined counterparts from the United States, Brazil, and Uruguay at a special conference in Paraguay. The conference dealt with four issues: determining a standard number of years of separation before remarriage could be considered, deciding on the status of married persons who knew that their former partners were remarried in the Soviet controlled east, assessing the status of those living in unsanctioned common law relationships including some that had begun in Europe, and

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[382] From a tabulation by M. Epp, *Women without Men,* 198.

[383] The problem had been most apparent in Paraguay where in the colony of Neuland there were thirty-seven common law arrangements in 1951. See F. H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 453.

[384] "Protokoll der Bruderberatung der Mennonitengemeinschaft im Emigr.-Lager Fallingbostel am 30 Mai 1948", *Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization*, vol. 1331, file 996, MHC. Usually 'brotherhood' literally meant that women were not present.

formulating a policy for the future for those with spouses known to be in the Soviet Union or its satellites but who had not remarried. In summary the conference decided that where a spouse had been missing for seven years, or where it was known that the absent spouse was remarried, the church would sanction remarriage.[385]

Winnipeg Mennonite churches accepted the directive. They also faced the problem of sanctioning relationships involving immigrants who had waited until their arrival in Winnipeg to begin or to reconstruct family life. In 1955 Sargent Avenue Mennonite church initially rejected a married couple's request for membership because it was known that both of them had previous spouses still alive in the Soviet Union. By 1959, however, Winnipeg's First Mennonite Church sanctioned the remarriage of a woman whose husband had been arrested in the Soviet Union in 1938 and had not been heard of since. Time seemed to be the one factor that could overcome the reluctance of churches to sanction the re-forming of immigrant families. In many cases, however, immigrants were not prepared to wait or to face the scrutiny of the church and simply left the Mennonite church to become Lutherans where remarriage was less of a concern.[386]

The protracted separations and the emphasis on family formation appeared to instil a strong desire for family among ethnic Germans in Canada. Marlene Epp's study of postwar ethnic German refugee women suggests "adult children who arrived after the

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[385] *Der Mennonit*, September 1951, 141 and F.H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 453-454. See also Pamela E. Klassen, *Going by the Moon and the Stars: Stories of Two Russian Mennonite Women* (Waterloo: Waterloo University Press, 1994), 47-48.

[386] M. Epp, *Women without Men,* 152-154.

war seemed eager to establish the normal family unit they themselves were robbed of."[387] Wilhelm Maretzki, a Winnipeg immigrant, recalled how they had a longing for

> a home, for companionship. Our generation was in the war, in the camps and everything—never family, you looked for your family—you wanted an attachment. The boys who were eighteen or nineteen were a lot older at that time compared to today; they had aged—due to the war. The girls had stayed at home—there were so many girls—they wanted to marry.[388]

As a result of this desire and a concentrated period of migration, many ethnic Germans formed families almost immediately upon arrival.

The rush to begin family life was reflected in the number of marriages performed and the children that followed soon after. The high points in the tenure of Rev. H. J. Waltereit, a minister in the McDermot Avenue Baptist Church in the 1950s, were the "frequent wedding ceremonies, at times almost every Saturday during spring and summer, and the numerous baby dedications." With forty babies being dedicated on one occasion the church was forced to schedule two dedication ceremonies annually.[389] In starting their own families immediately, ethnic Germans were following patterns prevalent in postwar Manitoba and Canada generally. In 1946 and 1947, marriages in Manitoba totalled 11.8 and 10.4 per thousand inhabitants and although the rate gradually declined, marriage rates in the province remained high, averaging 9 per thousand in the first half of the 1950s, then falling to 7.7 per thousand in the second half of the decade. The drop in marriages rates was only reversed after a low of 6.8 marriages per thousand

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[387] Ibid., 160.

[388] Maretzki, *Interview*.

[389] Marie Rogalski, *McDermot Avenue Baptist Church: 100 years and Growing: Celebrating a Century of Grace* (Winnipeg: McDermot Avenue Baptist Church, 1989), 40.

in 1962. The maturity of the first postwar baby boom children prompted a recovery of the rate in the later 1960s and 1970s.[390]

Immigrant desire for stability and marriage was to some extent thwarted by the lack of available marriage partners within the community. The extreme shortage of eligible men for the surplus of women contributed to many marriages outside the community—a breakdown of the former endogamous pattern that had characterized German settlements in Eastern Europe before the war. The statistical summary from Fallingbostel noted above concludes that the "large percentage of families without fathers and the girls of marriageable age with no prospects of finding a marriage partner from within the group, presents a difficult social and moral problem."[391] In Winnipeg, the McDermot Avenue Baptist Church had so many single girls among the swelling numbers of immigrants that special programming was begun for them in 1951.[392]

In their search for marriage partners, immigrants preferred their co-religionists first, then other ethnic Germans, and finally German nationals.[393] Mennonites, in spite of having the strongest endogamous tendencies, were unable to prevent many women from marrying outside their religious group. The European newsletter for Mennonite refugees

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[390] Statistics Canada, *Catalogue, 84-205, Vital Statistics Volume II,* 1977.

[391] Cornelius J. Dyck to C.F. Klassen, J.J. Thiessen and Wm. Snyder, 8 July 1948, *Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization*, vol. 1331, file 996, MHC.

[392] Rogalski, *McDermot Avenue*, 34.

[393] There is no specific analysis of the extent of exogamy for Winnipeg's ethnic Germans. Andrea Koch-Kraft's study of 261 first generation German immigrants in Edmonton found a slight tendency for ethnic Germans to be more conservative in their choice of outside marriage partners than their national German counterparts. Ethnic German women were the least likely to marry out of language boundaries. See Andrea Koch-Kraft, *Deutsche in Kanada--Einwanderung und Adaption, Mit Einer Untersuchung Zur Situation der Nachkriegsimmigration in Edmonton, Alberta*, (Bochum, 1990), 195.

repeatedly bemoaned the tendency of young people to marry outsiders. The issue was complicated by the special status enjoyed by Mennonites that granted them admission to Canada as I.R.O. refugees ahead of other ethnic Germans. In some cases a Mennonite camp director thought it "appeared one wanted to become a Mennonite only to be able to emigrate."[394]

Once in Canada, the problem of a lack of suitable partners was usually solved. Mennonites were rapidly reintegrated into church life alongside their Canadian co-religionists, which increased the number of potential marriage partners from within their group. Baptist and Lutheran ethnic Germans also had larger and less demographically skewed communities from which to select mates. They would find, however, that their native co-religionists were increasingly marrying outside of their group. On a national basis, Mennonite men marrying within their group declined from 83 percent in 1951 to 73 percent in 1966. Baptist endogamy remained more stable but at a much lower level of 46 percent in 1951 and 42 percent in 1966 while Lutheran husbands marrying Lutheran wives declined from 50 to 38 percent in the fifteen-year period.[395] However, even Lutheran ethnic German immigrants appeared to prefer marrying other Germans. A 1971 study examining endogamy in relation to ethnic identity found that the rate of endogamy among foreign-born Lutheran Germans was 68 percent while native-born husbands only married German wives 38 percent of the time.[396] Immigrant exogamy, which had been encouraged by the demographic and social pressures emanating from the war, turned out

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[394] Siegfried Janzen, "An die Jugend," *Unser Blatt*, 2 (2), 1 February 1948.

[395] Statistics Canada, *Catalogue 84-202*, 1951; idem, *Catalogue 84-205*, 1966.

[396] Madeline A. Richard, *Ethnic Groups and Marital Choices: Ethnic History and Marital Assimilation in Canada, 1871 and 1971* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1991), 110.

to be in step with trends ethnic Germans would observe among their co-religionists upon their arrival in Canada.

Although ethnic German parents and certainly their respective church immigration organizations had an interest in having ethnic Germans marry within their religious group the second choice, if this was not possible, was another ethnic German regardless of religion. Often, however, separation from other members of the village or church had helped to change views about acceptable marriage partners. Separation from their families or former spouses, fear of abuse by soldiers, and the lack of available partners from within their pre-war milieus had already contributed to marriages with non-Germans in Germany. The varied social contacts acquired from these earlier experiences seemed to widen the circle of possible marriage partners in Canada as well.

For immigrants, family became one of the strongest links to their Winnipeg home. The disruption of the Second World War started them on a path that redefined their worlds to include much more than the village, the church and the family of their Eastern European experience. The world for the next generation was even less limited. By the 1970s families formed after arriving in Winnipeg had children who were choosing their own partners and beginning their own families. For the descendants of ethnic German immigrants the circle of potential marriage partners had expanded greatly. Although exact numbers detailing the pattern for ethnic Germans are not available, episodic evidence suggests that ethnic Germans were not an exception to trends prevalent among their coreligionists. Christel Spletzer's daughters all married non-German husbands. Of Wilhelm Maretzki's five children only one married someone of German ethnic background. Adelgunde Hellman married a fellow Lutheran ethnic German; her two

children married non-Germans, one a Scottish husband and the other a wife of Chinese and Ukrainian descent.[397] In the case of Mennonites, a 1976 study found that intermarriage between Mennonites and other ethnic groups was dramatically higher in Winnipeg than in rural Manitoba and "took place especially in older, larger churches that still conduct some German services and emphasize German values." Reflecting a pattern reminiscent of the experience of the mothers of many ethnic German women, the study also determined that the "major contributors to mixed marriages performed in Mennonite churches in Winnipeg are Mennonite females marrying non-Mennonite males."[398]

Bielefeld's immigrants shared the yearning for the stability of family that was expressed by those who came to Winnipeg. Ethnic Germans left behind in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe suffered further fragmentation of their families even though, as in the case of the Volga Germans, entire families and villages were evacuated at the same time. After arriving at their work camps in Archangelsk, Barnaul, or on the banks of the Yenessei River, the remaining men were almost immediately taken away to serve in the *Trudarmiia.* As in the case of immigrants to Canada, women, young boys and old men soon dominated the population profile of those evacuated ahead of advancing German armies or those repatriated after the end of hostilities. Lucia Kaa, who ended up at Sawmill 32-33 near Archangelsk, was part of a family of eight, "our mother, us five

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[397] Christel (Bakus) Spletzer, Wilhelm Maretzki and Adelgunde Hellman, *Interviews.*

[398] Leo Driedger, Roy Vogt and Mavis Reimer, "Mennonite Intermarriage: National, Regional, And Intergenerational Trends," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 57 (1983): 142.

girls, my brother Waldemar and our Grandmother." The ethnic Germans at the camp were "almost exclusively women and children. A few very old men were also part of the group."[399] Elsa Winter who came to Germany in 1988 was born in Volhynia; her husband disappeared during the Stalin purges and during the Second World War she and her young son ended up in the trek west to the Warthegau. On the journey a distant relative died leaving two young orphaned children. Elsa became the mother to these children and together with the two orphans and her own son was repatriated to the Soviet Union at the end of the war. Like so many others she ended up in the forest felling trees and dragging them to loading points. The camp's population was almost devoid of men and the work "was done only by women."[400]

The reconstruction of family for immigrants to Germany differed from their Canadian counterparts. For many of Winnipeg's immigrants the arrival in the city marked the beginning of a path to constructing family based on the nuclear model believed to be 'normal' in postwar Canada. In the Soviet Union, ethnic German women were isolated in remote camps with no freedom to move. Many held on to the hope of being reunited with their husbands and for some the easing of restrictions after 1955 made this possible. Others simply remained widowed. In both Poland and the Soviet Union the common label of 'Fascist' and 'enemy of the people' polarized identities, forcing ethnic Germans to chose either Slavic or German, rather than multiple, identities. Marriage patterns often reflected the depth of commitment to earlier ethnic identities. Ethnic Germans either

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[399] Lucia Kaa, "Großmutter, Mutter, Tochter," in *Alle Spuren sind verweht: Rußlanddeutsche Frauen in der Verbannung*, ed. Nelly Däs (Stuttgart: Kulturamt der Deutschen aus Rußland e.V., 1997), 12 and 25.

[400] Ella Schmidt, "Ein Leben voller Güte, in Däs, *Alle Spuren,* 148.

reinforced their connections to fellow ethnics through marriage or separated themselves from their ethnic roots and accepted Slavic identities, and often Slavic marriage partners.

Although many children of marriageable age continued to seek out fellow ethnic German partners, prewar limitations that had dictated that eligible partners be drawn from the same colony, faith background and often the same village, lost their validity. Analysis of names on lists kept by the *Mennonitsche Umsiedler Betreuung*, a settlement agency for Mennonite immigrants in Germany, suggests that even among Mennonite immigrants approximately 36 percent of families had either a non-Mennonite father or mother.[401] Similar patterns were found among other ethnic German groups. Anna Straub's sister, a Volga German whose first husband was arrested and exiled in 1938, married an ethnic German from Ukraine. Her own situation was similar. While searching for her brother, she came into contact with and eventually married Hans Straub, an ethnic German prisoner of war originally from Yugoslavia.[402]

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[401] The *Mennonitische Umsiedler Betreuung* maintained lists of all immigrants believed to be of Mennonite ethnicity regardless of their religious adherence. The lists were started in 1972 and up to 1992 contained 82,913 names, grouped by family with birth dates, place of origin, the maiden names of married women, and the names and birth dates of children. Approximately twenty-eight percent of the families on the list arrived before 1989. For analysis a sample of 699 families (2,469 persons) was drawn from those arriving before 1989 representing ten percent of such families. To determine Mennonite ethnicity, surnames were compared with lists of the original Mennonite immigration to Russia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Non-Mennonite husbands were in 18.9 percent and non-Mennonite wives in 18.7 percent of families. Included in the above were 5.2 percent of families where both husband and wife had non-Mennonite surnames indicating earlier intermarriage with other ethnic Germans. *Mennonitische Umsiedler Betreuung, Umsiedlerliste, 1972 bis 1992,* June 4, 1993, Neuwied, 5 vols, MHC. The lists of original immigrants are in Benjamin Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitschen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe: By the Author, 1955).

[402] Anna Straub, "Wenn die Hoffnung nicht wär," in Däs, *Alle Spuren,* 95 and 97.

Shared punishment and labelling as enemies of the Russian people reinforced ethnic German endogamy for some but the demographic profile of ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union meant that not all women desiring marriage could find an ethnic German husband. Marriages with Russian men were common but had serious implications when children and siblings involved in these *Mischehen* (mixed marriages) were confronted with the emigration to Germany of other members of their family. Although in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union children with non-German spouses had been included in the extended family, they were cause for sharp divisions at the time of emigration. Many Bielefeld families continued to have ties to their former homelands through family members who had stayed behind because they had chosen Russian or Kazakh identities ahead of their German ethnicity.

Unlike the situation in Canada, where a marriage of people from two different ethnic groups had implications for their respective ethnic identities but not for their status as Canadians, mixed marriages among ethnic Germans migrating to Bielefeld challenged both ethnic and national identity. German citizenship laws permitted the non-German spouses of immigrants to become citizens providing one of the partners had a right to citizenship on the terms granted to ethnic Germans. In reality, however, Germany's ethnoculturally based definition of citizenship meant that for non-German partners, acquiring German citizenship implied a complete change from a Slavic or Asian identity. It occurred rarely among immigrants arriving in the period up to 1989.[403] One example

[403] For an overview of the applicable German legislation see: Lederer, *Integration in Zahlen,* 227. The numbers of ethnically mixed families migrating to Germany increased dramatically after 1989 when the movement was dominated more by economic than by ethnic motives.

was Eva Olschewski who married a Ukrainian in spite of opposition from her family. He consented to emigration for economic reasons even though he was trained as a doctor in the Soviet Union. She claimed that in earlier times marriage with non-Germans had been even more difficult than it was for her. Her father's youngest sister had wanted to marry a Russian but her grandmother had simply not permitted the marriage and the sister remained single. For Eva's husband the move to Germany was eased because of his limited family connections. His only remaining relative was a sister whose consent he had to obtain in order to emigrate. The difficulties of integration for mixed marriage families becomes apparent in Eva's claim that she could not say that Russia was really her homeland, but acknowledged; "it is closer to me than Germany."[404]

Prior to 1989, however, most ethnic German immigrants to Germany were not part of mixed marriages. Analysis of family names in the *Mennonitische Umsiedler Betreuung* immigrant lists suggests that approximately 94 percent of Mennonite immigrant families were the products of marriages between two ethnic German partners, even if in some cases they were not both Mennonite.[405] Slightly lower rates of endogamy were reported by a survey of ethnic German immigrants conducted by the *Ost-Europa Institute* where 89 percent of respondents immigrating to Germany had ethnic German spouses. Bettina Strewe argues that part of the reason for high rates of endogamy among immigrants was that "Germans married to partners from other ethnic groups develop

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[404] Eva Olschewski, "Rußland ist mir näher als Deutschland," in Malchow, *Fremden Deutschen,* 127 and 134.

[405] *Mennontische Umsiedler Betreuung, Umsiedlerliste, 1972 bis 1992,* June 4, 1993, Neuwied, 5 vols., MHC.

more contact with these groups and hence have a lower tendency to emigrate" to Germany.[406]

The high rate of endogamy that had characterized ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union before the Second World War steadily eroded in the period up to 1989. Strewe quotes Soviet sources suggesting that only 40 percent of ethnic German men and 35 percent of ethnic German women who were married in 1989 entered into marriages involving their own ethnic group. Although, as these numbers would indicate, intermarriage became progressively more common among ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union, the incidence of intermarriage was not reflected in the immigrant flow to Germany and Bielefeld. Ethnic Germans arriving in Bielefeld in the 1970s were the product of a process that selected ethnic Germans with a high level of endogamy and who viewed 'mixed marriages' as undesirable. In surveys of ethnic German immigrants conducted by the *Ost-Europa Institute,* the social distance maintained between themselves and the non-German groups among whom they lived came through clearly. When asked about the desirability of potentially having a son or daughter-in-law from various ethnic groups ethnic Germans clearly favoured fellow Germans, Kazakhs were favoured least, and Slavic groups most among the non-German ethnic groups.[407] In her memoirs, Katharina Krüger expresses the consternation of many ethnic Germans confronted by the prospect of the mixed marriages of their children:

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[406] Bettina Strewe, *Forschungsprojekt "Deutsche in der Sowjetunion und Aussiedler aus der UdSSR in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland" Arbeitsbericht Nr. 6, Was ist deutsch and den "Rußlanddeutschen"? Uberlegungen zur ethnischen Identität der Deutschen in der fruheren Sowjetunion* (Munchen: Osteuropa-Institut, 1992), 14.

[407] Ibid., 12.

> My sorrow was that of many German mothers, particularly when surviving children reached marriageable age and lived in an area where there were few or no Germans and they married Russians. These mixed marriages of the late postwar years were destined to end in pieces. .... In these cases it was the hatred arising out of the war that played a role. It was the Germans who were to blame for the unholy war, started by Germany who had attacked Russia and as a result it was clear that the blame in such a marriage always rested with the German.[408]

Since ethnic German immigrants are not identified in German population data it is not possible to assess the degree of intermarriage over time between ethnic German immigrants and the native population of Bielefeld. Based on observation it would appear, however, that the rate at which native Germans became possible marriage partners was related to religious orientation. Among sectarian Mennonite and Baptist immigrants there appears to have been a high rate of endogamy; marriage partners from the same religious group were the preferred partners for the children of ethnic German immigrants. These attitudes towards marriage with German nationals were reflected in Hans Warkentin's comment that he had "imagined Germans to be something else. ...For instance if my daughter came to me and said, 'I have met a German on the street here...I want to marry him,' I would have grave second thoughts about it, I would say 'No, be careful'." For Lutheran immigrants the circle of potential marriage partners expanded more rapidly to include native Germans.[409]

By the time ethnic German immigrants arrived in Bielefeld, German society had been through a number of changes in its view of women and family. In the immediate

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[408] Krüger, *Schicksal,* 190-191.

[409] Hans Warkentin, *Interview.* This observation is based on interaction with various ethnic Germans and attendance at ethnic German churches in Bielefeld and other cities while the author conducted research in 1998, 1999 and 2000.

postwar period the emphasis had been similar to that in Canada. Family had suffered immeasurably during the war and had to be reconstructed and protected.[410] Protection and reconstruction implied a return to a model based on a husband working and providing for his stay-at-home wife and their children. The model only lost its coherence in the 1960s when, as sociologist Eva Kolinsky suggests, women "began to seek equal opportunities through careers." She maintains, however, that in spite of more women pursuing a career, "West Germany clung to a traditional concept of the family and its classical role divisions."[411]

By the late 1960s and 1970s, when most ethnic Germans arrived in Bielefeld, ethnic German migration and subsequent family formation in Bielefeld had very different dynamics from that of Winnipeg some twenty years earlier. For these ethnic Germans initial postwar family formation had occurred in their former homelands in the Soviet Union, Poland or Paraguay. These factors contributed to most immigrants arriving in Bielefeld as part of families and extended family groups. These groups might include an older widow or couple. Married children with large families, some with five or more children, would be part of the group. To the casual observer, these reconstructed families seldom betrayed the turmoil out of which they had been fashioned.

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[410] For an analysis of immediate postwar views of family see: Elizabeth Heineman, "Complete Families, Half Families, No Families at All: Female-Headed Households and the Reconstruction of the Family in the Early Federal Republic," *Central European History* 29 (1996): 19-60.

[411] Eva Kolinsky, ed., "The Family Transformed: Structures, Experiences, Prospects," in *Social Transformation and the Family in Post-Communist Germany*, 208. London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1998).

In spite of the presence of large extended family groups among arriving immigrants, they also left family behind. Some had to stay behind because of the unpredictability of receiving a *Wysov* to emigrate.[412] There were many examples of people such as *Herr* Steinert who had remained in Germany after the war and was reunited with his wife in 1976. His children, however, had to stay behind. Or others like *Frau* Zilke who had to leave two of her ten children behind when she immigrated to Germany in 1978. Her son was drafted into the military just prior to their gaining exit visas and her recently married daughter could not gain permission for her new husband.[413]

Ethnic Germans faced adjustments to their notions of the family unit when they arrived in Bielefeld. One important adjustment concerned family size. As has been noted earlier, immigrants had noticeably large families. In the sample of Mennonite immigrants from the *Mennonitische Umsiedler Betreuung* lists, the average number of children in the 1972 to 1988 period was 1.9 per family while the desired number of children for West Germans as indicated by their responses to survey research dropped from 2.5 to 1.45 between 1965 and 1975 and remained at the lower level.[414] If families without children and those with only one adult member are eliminated from the sample, the number of

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[412] The *Wysov* was a much-coveted document issued by the Soviet government granting permission to emigrate. The application for a *Wysov* was made with a non-refundable fee and there are reports of immigrants applying many times before being granted permission to leave.

[413] Herbert Wiens, *Volk auf dem Weg: Deutsche in Rußland und in der GUS 1763-1997* (Stuttgart: Landmannschaft der Deutschen aus Rußland, 1997), 23.

[414] Glatzer, *Social Trends,* 118, Table 3.

children in Mennonite immigrant families rose to just under three (2.94). Most noticeable were the very large families; 18 percent of families with children had five or more.[415]

The tendency to have large families diminished almost immediately upon arrival. A fertility study based on immigrant surveys found that ethnic German women had significantly fewer children during their fertile years after arriving in Germany compared to their fertile years in their former homes. Demographers, R.H. Dinkel and U.H. Lebok found that "fertility of former migrants did not only adapt immediately to the much lower level in the new host country, it dramatically declined to a level of only about 40 percent of the German rates at the same age periods." The decline for Mennonites and Baptists, which traditionally had higher fertility rates than other ethnic Germans, was even greater.[416] Dinkel and Lebok suggest that the process of adapting to the more competitive labour market of Germany for both men and women might "have caused an overreaction in family formation procedures."[417] In addition to economic factors identified by Dinkel and Lebok there may, however, have been cultural influences that were just as important for further family formation.

Ethnic German attitudes toward family formation were affected by constant media references to their large families. Although ethnic German immigrants also had older family members among their numbers, Bielefelders took note of their large number of children and the positive influence they would have on the population profile. As has

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[415] *Mennontische Umsiedler Betreuung, Umsiedler Listen, 1972 bis 1992,* MHC.

[416] R.H. Dinkel and U.H. Lebok, "The Fertility of Migrants Before and After Crossing the Border: The Ethnic German Population from the Former Soviet Union as a Case Study," *International Migration* 35 (1997): 258-259.

[417] Ibid., 260.

been noted earlier, ethnic Germans were valued in Germany because of their potential contribution to correcting the aging population profile of German society. However, media references to their large families also highlighted how different they were from the host society. Initially there was considerable optimism about integrating the young into society. In the 1970s, Bielefeld newspapers suggested that the larger families of ethnic Germans would surely hasten their adjustment to life in their city. A 1971 article in the *Neue Westfälishe* suggested that the children would integrate quickly but "for the older immigrants it might never be completely successful."[418] The paper was still optimistic six years later when it argued that the lower average age of immigrating families would "ease their integration and increase their mobility."[419] By that time, however, it had become apparent that younger immigrants had no less difficulty adjusting to life in Bielefeld than did their parents and grandparents. At a meeting of immigrants and city officials in 1976, ethnic German immigrants noted that their children had many problems in adjusting to their new home.[420] The state was responsive to the problems of immigrant children. Many integration programs were directed specifically at younger immigrants. The headline of a lengthy article in a 1977 issue of the *Neue Westfälishe* proclaimed that: "*Aussiedler* children must be integrated into society: Serious problems caused by Western lifestyles." The article quoted schoolteachers who claimed "they knew about

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[418] "Aussiedlerfamilien kamen an: wie Fremdlinge von einem anderen Stern: Keinem von ihnen hat das Leben etwas geschenkt," *Neue Westfälische,* 14 December 1971.

[419] "Mindestens 5000 Aussiedler wollen nach Bielefeld Mittel für 165 Wohnungsneubauten sichergestellt: Bislang kamen knapp 100 Personen / Individuelle Beratung im Übergangsheim Teichsheide," *Neue Westfälische,* 5 May 1977.

[420] "Aussiedler klagten Politiker ihr Leid: Vogelsang besuchte Umsiedlungsheim Teichsheide," *Westfalen Blatt,* 21 July 1976.

these problems from earlier years," and believed that "integration is most successful if children are forced to make new contacts."[421] The constant attention given to the size of their families accompanied by what they perceived as coercive socialization programs for their children may have also contributed to ethnic Germans' decisions about further family formation and size. They often found themselves in a contest over the socialization of their children. The uneasiness felt about family formation in this new environment may have contributed as much to declining fertility as did labour market factors.

An important arena of conflict between ethnic Germans and the dominant society was the different conception of family and sexuality. Bielefeld newspapers claimed that immigrant families were much more intimately connected than their German counterparts, but also patriarchal. The *Neue Westfälische* commented that among Bielefeld's ethnic German immigrants there was till a "strong feeling of family connectedness," a characteristic that the paper believed was "sadly missed in West German cities."[422] Some of the disillusionment that ethnic German immigrants felt upon their arrival in Bielefeld was, however, attributed to their 'incorrect' ideas of what it meant to be 'German'. Among other characteristics it was noted that immigrants

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[421] "Assiedlerkinder müssen in die Gemeinschaft integriert werden: Schwerwiegende Probleme durch westliche Lebensweise," *Neue Westfälische,* 25 February 1977.

[422] "Die ersten Umsiedler aus Polen: Acht Jahre auf Ausreisegenehmigung gewarted Dann kosteten die Pässe ein kleines Vermögen," *Neue Westfälische,* 25 February 1971.

erroneously thought that respect for parents was part of what it meant to be German.[423] Ethnic German immigrants held to what they believed were German traditions of order and authority, traditions they found sorely lacking in the German society in which they now were making their home. Respondents in a 1976 study of ethnic German immigrants portrayed their own families as ones where "all the relatives are part of the family;" "families do things together;" the "guidance of the family head has validity;" and "old and young live together." In contrast, in native German families "individual family members did not stick together," and "everybody does whatever they want to."[424] Rita Knobel-Ulrich, a language teacher, indicated that in her classroom immigrant parents "could not comprehend that here [in Germany], criticizing a teacher is permitted and that school friends of their children had serious arguments with their parents." In contrast to the situation in native German families, all the immigrant families of the teacher's experience were characterized by "patriarchal authority: The father is the supreme unshakeable and unquestioned authority."[425]

The problem of sexuality and its portrayal in the media, and particularly in school, also challenged immigrant views of appropriateness. The problem was examined in a lengthy *Westfalen Blatt* article in 1973. The newspaper quoted from a letter sent by a Soviet ethnic German immigrant who had been shocked by portrayals of sexuality in the

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[423] "Die Aussiedler und ihr Deutschland: Vertriebenenbeirat zu Eingliederungsfragen," *Neue Westfälische,* 15 April 1981.

[424] Hans Harmsen, "Probleme der inneren Beheimatung deutscher Spätaussiedler: Ein wissenschaftliches Kolloquium der Deutschen AWR-Sektion," *AWR Bulletin: Vierteljahreshefte für Flüchtlingsfragen,* 21 (1983): 94.

[425] Rita Knobel-Ulrich, "Das 'neue Leben' der Spätaussiedler," *Volk auf dem Weg,* 5 (May 1980), 9. A printed version of a radio broadcast. Also reprinted in *Wegweiser,* 1-2 (1980), 8-12.

books her son brought home from school. According to the article the problem was an ethnic German "attitude to all questions of human sexuality that was rooted in their patriarchal family structure." The issue, the newspaper went on, "had obviously been missed in the preparation for their resettlement and at the time of their initial contact" with German society. In a somewhat patronizing tone, the paper suggested that changes in ethnic German attitudes should be evolutionary; newcomers would have to "catch up on their development" in order to "affirm sexuality as an integral part of humanity."[426] The problem did not go away quickly, however, and ethnic German immigrants repeatedly raised the issue when they were invited to meet with city officials. On one occasion, when immigrants met with SPD politician Kurt Vogelsang, he responded that maybe the method of teaching the curriculum could be changed and that exemption from sex instruction could be considered.[427]

Ethnic German families were deeply scarred by the events of the Stalin era and the Second World War. Both Winnipeg and Bielefeld immigrants experienced the disruption of family life and, for many, permanent separation from family members. In both groups women were forced into roles outside their previous experience and outside the norms of ethnic German village life. They had to protect and sustain the family, often at great sacrifice and without the help of their family's men. Many fathers, husbands and older brothers were either lost to the family forever or only returned to the family after

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[426] "'Sind wir denn hierhergekommen, daß man unsere Kinder verdirbt?': Für manche Umsiedler-Familien wirkt 'sexuelle Freizügigkeit' wie ein Schock," *Westfalen Blatt,* 23 January 1973.

[427] Waltraut Sax-Demuth, "Freiheit schafft manchmal Probleme," *Westfalen Blatt,* 13 November 1979.

many years of separation. In both groups the decade before the war and the years immediately thereafter broke down traditional notions of eligible partners and in both groups marriage outside religious, village and ethnic boundaries became common.

In spite of these shared memories, family life and the processes of recreating family influenced the integration of immigrants differently in the two cities. Bielefeld immigrants recreated families in the context of postwar Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union where ethnic boundaries were sharp and choosing a non-German partner had serious implications for the family's ethnic identity. The process of immigrating to Germany was highly selective, however, because most of those immigrating had married within the ethnic German group. Although endogamy within village and former religious boundaries was undermined for Bielefeld's immigrants, marrying within the ethnic German group was greatly reinforced. Ethnic German immigrants in Bielefeld maintained these boundaries during their initial integration in Bielefeld. They favoured marriage with other ethnic Germans with whom they shared a religion and a history.

Winnipeg's immigrants were exposed to expanded social contacts during the war and because of the scarcity of male partners, endogamy broke down while they were still in Europe. Although the move to Winnipeg greatly increased the number of eligible marriage partners within their group they arrived in a social environment where endogamy was rapidly disappearing among their fellow ethnics and co-religionists. Undoubtedly the strangeness of a new country and language barriers fostered in-group marriage initially but many ethnic Germans married outside religious, and in many cases outside ethnic boundaries. By the time their Canadian born children were contemplating marriage the circle of eligible marriage partners had widened even more.

The separation of wives and husbands had particular implications for the marriage of immigrants in Winnipeg. They arrived in an environment preoccupied with marrying, having children and establishing family life. As the example of Mennonite struggles with remarriage of separated individuals illustrates, the recreation of family was often painful for immigrants. In the case of sectarian immigrants remarriage proved to be a barrier to integration. Bielefeld's immigrants had faced these struggles in their former homelands and by the time they arrived patterns of family had been re-established.

There were other significant differences in family formation that arose out of the timing of immigrants' arrival in their new homes. Winnipeg's ethnic Germans arrived in the city before the sexual revolution of the 1960s and their subsequent family life was shaped by its challenges to traditional gender relations and sexuality. Bielefeld's immigrants were isolated from these events and in the years before their immigration they had recovered the patriarchal assumptions and the extended family world of their pre-war experience. They imagined Germanness to include this notion of family. When they arrived in Bielefeld they were shocked and disillusioned to discover that post-sexual revolution Germany had very different ideas of family. Offensive portrayals of sexuality in schools and the media, the disregard for the authority of teachers, parents and particularly fathers, and media attention focussing on their attachments to family, reinforced their sense of being different from their German neighbours. Ethnic Germans in Bielefeld retreated to their families and, as had been their experience in the Soviet Union and Poland, family remained important in resisting integration into the surrounding society.

Chapter Six: Religion: Faith Worlds as Bridges and Barriers to Integration

The visitor to a well-attended Sunday morning service in a Bielefeld Baptist or Mennonite church in the 1980s could not help but be moved by the sound and atmosphere of the ethnic German congregation singing a Russian language hymn. Although for the assembled immigrant families German was quickly becoming the preferred language of church, connections to faith experiences of their previous world were refreshed most effectively by the plaintive melody and familiar intonations of a Russian hymn. Like the hymn, the murmur of individual contributions to the congregational prayer, sometimes in Russian, evoked the faith experiences of the past. The almost exclusively immigrant assembly, men with close-cropped hair sitting on one side and women with full length hair and kerchief covered heads on the other, would hear reminders of church services scheduled for later that day and for the following week. For Bielefeld's ethnic German immigrants the church served more as a preserver of old world values and practices than as an agent of education about the different practices of a new world. Here, Clifford Geertz's suggestion that religion is "an attempt… to conserve the fund of general meanings in terms of which each individual interprets his experience and organizes his conduct" seems particularly appropriate.[428]

A very different atmosphere would have greeted the visitor to German immigrant churches in Winnipeg in the 1970s. Like their counterparts in Bielefeld, those parishioners attending the first of two services held on a typical Sunday would be

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[428] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 127.

worshiping in the language of the 'old world'—in this case, German. Many, however would be at the better-attended English language service later in the morning where a short meditation or a German hymn would be all there was to betray the congregation's German immigrant origins. A few of those attending may have been able to walk to the church located in an older neighbourhood, but many would have driven from their recently purchased homes in the suburbs. Fashionably dressed parishioners would also be reminded of the church's full program of activities—boys' and girls' clubs, youth camp-outs and music nights. There might, however, also be an announcement about the cancellation of the Sunday evening service for the summer due to dwindling attendance. In Winnipeg the visitor might have a sense of what Herbert Gans called "symbolic religiosity." In Gans's terms these worshipers were consuming German language "religious symbols in such a way as to create no complication or barriers for dominant secular lifestyles."[429] Ethnic German immigrant church practice in Winnipeg was, by the 1970s, constructed in ways that were no longer in conflict with the dominant society. The immigrant church had helped immigrants 'find their way' into the dominant culture while itself being refashioned to provide for religious expression without challenging that culture.

The two illustrations are not examples of specific ethnic German religious events but composites illustrating the aesthetic and cultural nexus of religious expression and its relation to the dominant culture of the two cities. They are not intended to diminish the religious devotion of immigrants in either city, or to minimize denominational and

[429] Herbert J. Gans, "Symbolic ethnicity and symbolic religiosity: towards a comparison of ethnic and religious acculturation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17 (1994): 585.

historical differences in their experience. They are, rather, to suggest that faith worlds have played a very different role in the two experiences of adaptation. This chapter argues that religion was an important factor in the way ethnic German immigrants adapted to the worlds of Winnipeg and Bielefeld. It seeks to account for the social and the metaphysical meanings of religious life for immigrants in the two cities. Both levels of experience, the social and the metaphysical, influenced the patterns of adaptation among sectarian immigrants in Winnipeg and Bielefeld and shaped their perceptions of their new city homes.

Scholarly discussion of religion's role in immigrant life can be placed into two broadly defined groups. The immigrant church has often been described, along with immigrant associations, as fulfilling a social purpose. Much less common, and more narrowly restricted to the church, has been the scholarly analysis of religion's metaphysical role in immigrant life. Socially centred studies of immigrant religious life have pointed to the role of the church as an institution that either enhanced or impeded entry of immigrants into the city. Analysis of church activities suggested that the immigrant church provided a congenial place to speak one's language, to make contact with potential employers, to find compatible marriage partners, and to share information about finding a doctor or getting a document deciphered. In other cases internal church conflicts and the intersection of church and associational life have been emphasized. As a category of analysis the socially centred approach sees little difference between

immigrant church and ethnic association. Both are amenable to analysis using class and status-based models of immigrant interaction.[430]

Often sociologists and historians have concluded that as immigrants adjusted to life in their new country and were subjected to the modernizing influences of urban environments their attachment to old world religion diminished. Since the 1960s scholarship emphasizing the social dimension of church and religious life has, however, had to account for the continuing persistence of religious affiliations. Timothy L. Smith's seminal 1978 article pointed out that ethnicity and religion were intertwined, giving "both to faith and to the sense of peoplehood a fluid and instrumental quality." Smith advocated abandoning "the notion that a set of fixed primordial realities lies behind the changing ethno religious relationships we are able to observe and analyze." He argued that religion was used as a "cultural resource" that could continue to be mobilized in the quest to achieve the essentially political goals of an immigrant group.[431]

In his survey of immigrant experiences in American cities, John Bodnar casts aside Smith's earlier analysis as well as the characterization of the church as both facilitator of adaptation and promoter of old world values. Bodnar argues that churches tended to have entrenched 'old world' leadership. Continuous religious disagreement among these leaders prevented churches from adapting to new realities in American

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[430] Examples include: Kathleen Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*; Nadel, *Little Germany*; John E. Zucchi, *Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity, 1875-1935* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) and Laura Jean Beattie, "The Ethnic Church and Immigrant Integration: Social Services, Cultural Preservation and the Re-Definition of Cultural Identity," (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1998).

[431] Timothy L. Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America," *American Historical Review* 83 (1978): 1185 and 1159.

cities. The resulting "fragmentation left immigrant attitudes divided and really insured that immigrant communities would not last."[432] Bodnar, like Smith, is concerned with the social context of religious life but reaches quite different conclusions about its value in the integration process.

In addition to these socially centred studies, other works explore the metaphysical dimensions of immigrant religious and church worlds. These have been limited much more specifically to a cultural analysis of religion. This cultural approach argues that for immigrants religion was imbued with the additional qualities of providing a worldview and cultural framework that explained the fundamental mysteries of human existence. Scholars in this school have criticized the social historians' emphasis on the social dimension of church life because, they say, it leaves out the role of religion as a "belief system or [of] churches as wielders of institutional power." Kathleen Conzen has recently attributed historians' neglect of this aspect of the immigrant church to "the secularism of our own era and guild but also to its inheritance of sociological and neo-Marxian interpretive traditions that assume the long-term incompatibility of urbanization, modernization, rationalism, and religion."[433] Renewed interest in the role of religion is informed by anthropological works that have provided many of the conceptual tools for describing the metaphysical dimension of religion's role in immigrant culture. In Clifford Geertz's cultural analysis "a religious system seems to mediate genuine knowledge, knowledge of the essential conditions in terms of which life must, of necessity be lived."

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[432] John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 167-168.

[433] Kathleen Conzen, et al., "Forum: The Place of Religion in Urban and Community Studies," *Religion and American Culture* 6 (1996): 109-110.

The cultural meaning of a people's religion, as suggested by Geertz, comprised an 'ethos' and a 'worldview,' where the former was defined as the "tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood," and the latter as "the picture of the way things in sheer actuality are... the most comprehensive ideas of order."[434] Geertz emphasizes meaning over function. More recently it has been suggested that both must be examined. E. Brooks Holifield, who argues that urban historians have found "it difficult—or unrewarding—to take religion seriously as religion," has encouraged them to "unite function and meaning," maintaining the two are not mutually exclusive.[435] The analysis of ethnic German religious life in the following pages attempts to take into account the Geertz, Conzen and Holifield approaches in examining religion's role in immigrant integration.

The stream of immigrants to Winnipeg and Bielefeld, while not identical, shared common Eastern European and wartime experiences and belonged to the same church denominations. Ethnic German immigrants to both Winnipeg and Bielefeld included a much higher percentage of Baptists and Mennonites than the national averages. Although detailed statistics for the religious affiliations of immigrants are not available for Bielefeld in the 1970s, immigrants arriving in 1987 consisted of 39 percent Catholic, 24 percent Baptist, 21 percent Mennonite, 14 percent Lutheran and only 2 percent declaring

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[434] Geertz, 126-129.

[435] Holifield's argument is in his contribution to Conzen, et. al., "Forum": 120-121. This thrust is evident in recent studies of English Catholics in Toronto and immigrants to the rural Midwestern United States. Mark G. McGowan, *The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish, and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999) and Jon Gjerde, *The Minds of the West: Ethnocultural Evolution in The Rural Midwest, 1830-1917* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), Chapter Four.

no religious affiliation.[436] The religious affiliations of Winnipeg immigrants paralleled those of Bielefeld. Religious affiliation data for Winnipeg's immigrants is also fragmentary, however, based on 1961 Census data almost one-half of Winnipeg's ethnic German immigrants were Mennonite.[437]

Baptist religious affiliations among Germans in Poland and the Soviet Union can be traced back to the nineteenth century. Baptist religious communities appeared in Poland in 1858 and the influence of the *Stundists* in Ukraine led to the eventual establishment of Baptist congregations there.[438] Before the Second World War, German Baptist converts in the Soviet Union and Poland came from Lutheran ranks although the influence of pietism produced the Mennonite Brethren movement among Mennonites, a movement with similarities to Baptist groups. When the Revolution and Civil War ended, Baptists enjoyed an initial period of acceptance by the new Communist regime. The new Soviet government regarded them as possible allies in reducing the power of the Orthodox Church, but by 1923 their pacifism was causing a noticeable strain in their relations with the state. The number of Baptists in the Soviet Union continued to grow, however, and by 1927 there were reported to be 500,000 adherents scattered in 4,000

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[436] Drexler, Wulf, Burkhard Hoffman and Hans Georg, *Probleme und Chancen des Integrationsprozesses: Aussiedlerfamilien aus der ehemaligen Sowjetunion* (Bielefeld: Stadt Bielefeld and Ministerium fur Arbeit, Gesundheit und Soziales des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1992), 7.

[437] See Table A-3, A-5 and A-7. Since Mennonites were the only religious group where the entire immigrant cohort was ethnic German it is the only group where a reasonable estimate can be made. Baptists, Lutherans and Catholics may have had non-German immigrants among their numbers.

[438] Walter Sawatzky, *Soviet Evangelicals since World War II* (Kitchener, Ontario and Scottdale, Pennysylvania: Herald Press, 1981), 33. *Stundists* was the name given to Mennonite and Lutheran colonists who as the result of pietist influences met weekly for hours (*Stunde*) of Bible study.

congregations.[439] Many Polish Baptists became part of the Soviet Baptist diaspora during the Second World War because of Stalin and Hitler's partition of Poland. Although German Baptists were important in the religious revival of the 1950s, an awakening that stimulated growth in the group's numbers, Soviet Baptists were predominantly of Slavic ethnic origin.[440]

Mennonites were doctrinally similar to Baptists, although few were Slavic, and they had a much longer history in areas that would later become the Soviet Union and Poland. Mennonites were the spiritual descendents of the Anabaptists of Reformation times and had migrated to the Vistula Delta area of Poland from German and Dutch regions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and then to Imperial Russia at the invitation of Catherine the Great in the eighteenth. Although many of their ancestors were Dutch they became identified as German because of their sojourn in Prussia and their adoption of the High German language for church and writing. Low German, a closer relation to Dutch, was retained as the language of everyday use. Large migrations of Mennonites to Canada in the 1870s and 1920s reduced the number of Mennonites in Russia; however, in 1940, an estimated 100,000 remained in the Soviet Union.[441]

German religious denominations were not limited to sectarian groups. A large percentage of the population in those German territories that would be lost to Poland after the Second World War was Lutheran and there were significant Lutheran populations in

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[439] Christel Lane, *Christian Religion in the Soviet Union: A Sociological Study* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), 139. At the Toronto Congress of the Baptist World Alliance in 1928 a Baptist leader reported there were 4000 congregations in the Soviet Union. Sawatzky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 42.

[440] Sawatzky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 66.

[441] F. H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 351.

Russia proper. The German Lutheran population in Russia was a legacy of migrations to the Black Sea and Volga regions in response to the invitation of Catherine the Great in the eighteenth century. In 1924 there were an estimated one million Lutherans in the Soviet Union.[442] The deportation of the Volga Germans to Siberia in 1941 also shifted the concentration of Lutherans to the Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union.

Regardless of religious denomination, Soviet German religious life suffered immensely after the Revolution, particularly after forced collectivization began in 1929. All groups suffered the arrest of their leadership and ministers, churches were closed, and religious activity for children was banned. The severe repression effectively brought "evangelical church life to a standstill."[443] Although Lutherans, Baptists and Mennonites in the Soviet Union suffered greatly, most investigators suggest that religious life was not completely stamped out. Mennonite "religious life was seriously undermined, though not completely destroyed," and Baptist "numbers declined drastically by about half but rose again when persecution subsided."[444] Although not completely decimated, religious groups had all suffered serious erosion of organization and leadership on the eve of the Second World War.

The events of the war mark the point of divergence in the religious histories of ethnic German migrants. Those ethnic Germans who would come to call Bielefeld home had faced years of religious repression in the Soviet Union or, if they came from Poland,

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[442] Lane, *Religion in the Soviet Union,* 195.

[443] Sawatzky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 46. For descriptions of the severity of the religious repression from 1929 onwards see also Lane, *Religion in the Soviet Union,* 195 and 201 and John B. Toews, *Czars, Soviets & Mennonites* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1982).

[444] Lane, *Religion in the Soviet Union,* 201 and 139.

experienced religious tension and compromise during the Nazi regime and then ethnic and religious conflict with the new postwar Communist Polish government. Canadian ethnic German immigrants shared the early Soviet and the Nazi experience but were spared the later repression of their religious organizations and entered an environment in Winnipeg where religion was an accepted part of the dominant culture. As Melinda McCracken remembers, in the British, Protestant and Catholic Winnipeg neighbourhood where she grew up religious traditions were "so familiar in the lives of people they were more or less taken for granted."[445]

In the postwar Soviet Union, churches that were not specifically German enjoyed a period of increased tolerance. Baptist numbers began to grow dramatically. Lutherans and Mennonites, however, were subjected to increased persecution and, as a result of the combined identification of religion and German ethnicity, "it appeared as if the Lutheran Church and faith had been completely extinguished among Soviet Germans." Mennonite religious life was similarly devastated.[446]

The greater tolerance that Baptists enjoyed was important for sectarian revival of church and faith practices in the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Baptist religious expression became the nucleus for the new adherents recruited in the religious revival of the 1950s. Many Lutherans and Mennonites either became, or affiliated themselves with, the Baptist church and a distinctive religious-cultural expression was

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[445] McCracken, *Memories are made of this,* 18.

[446] Lane, *Religion in the Soviet Union,* 195, 201. See also Edgar C. Duin, *Lutheranism under the Tsars and the Soviets, Volume II* (Ann Arbor: Lutheran Theological Seminary and Xerox University Microfilms, 1975), 761.

forged. After 1955, the removal of some of the restrictions on Germans also revived Lutheran and 'Church' Mennonite religious practice.[447] Toleration and eventual official registration by the Soviet state did not imply religious freedom, even for Baptists. The various waves of anti-religious policies included restrictions on teaching the young, on public assembly, on promotions and opportunities in education and in the work place, and on distribution of Bibles and other religious literature. As a result, the almost complete loss of earlier traditions coupled with the vagaries of Soviet religious policies stimulated the invention of new systems of religious symbols, meanings and practices.

The social cost of being baptized and becoming a member of a Baptist or Mennonite church sharpened the sense of group membership and hardened boundaries between adherents and their non-adhering neighbours and fellow ethnics. A person becoming a church member faced the prospect of being immediately disadvantaged in Soviet society. Baptism required state approval and the identity of the applicant became known at work, frequently resulting in a prematurely terminated career path or denial of an application for an apartment. Colleagues at work were encouraged by the Communist Party to influence applicants for baptism to reverse their decision. A 1973 law forced marrying couples to pledge to raise their children in the spirit of Communism. In Gerhard Hamm's experience not signing the pledge because of religious conviction led to a

[447] Mennonites remaining in Russia after the emigration of the 1870s comprised two main groups. Mennonite Brethren had separated from the main group as a result of pietist influences in the nineteenth century while the main body was referred to as the Church (*Kirchliche)* Mennonites. For a history of the Mennonites in Russia before the revolution see: James Urry, *None but Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789-1889* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1989). For more on the Mennonite experience during the Soviet Union see also Walter Sawatzky, "From Russian to Soviet Mennonites 1941-1988," in *Mennonites in Russia 1788-1988: Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lohrenz*, ed. John Friesen (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1989), 299-337.

variety of consequences. Hamm, an itinerant evangelist, discovered that couples for which he performed the marriage service were sometimes not granted marriage licenses by the state, or were denied housing. For many others there could be any of what he thought were "thousands of harassments used by the atheists without conscience qualms."[448] The clarity of an individual's choice became a mark of membership and in kinship and community circles there came to be only two labels—believers and unbelievers. Nominal membership or participation without commitment became unlikely and then untenable. As one German immigrant described it to a German language newspaper correspondent: "every visit to a worship service was a conscious decision to take all the resulting difficult consequences upon oneself."[449]

Membership also implied a withdrawal from those activities of the dominant society that potentially compromised believers' standards of faith and personal ethics. This was particularly true for children. In the Soviet Union minors were not allowed to become members of the church and officially proselytizing was illegal in public. The only lawful religious instruction for minors was in the home. The state, in contrast, had an active program of clubs and organizations that were made attractive to children and young people and whose agenda clearly aimed at inculcation of Communist ideology including systematic atheism. Parents and the church developed a heightened sense of responsibility for the mental and philosophical worlds of children. Membership in organizations of the dominant society became antithetical to religious belief for adherents

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[448] Gerhard Hamm, *Du has uns nie verlassen...: Erfahrungen christlicher Familien in der Sowjetunion* (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1978), 147; Sawatzky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 72.

[449] Isaak Thiessen, "Umsiedler aus Russland," *Der Bote,* 17 February 1976.

of Baptist or Mennonite churches. Peter Epp was called before his supervisor to account for his lack of participation in workers' committee meetings at his work place. He could avoid answering for his aversion based on religious grounds by reminding his superior that he was disenfranchised because he had been arrested and convicted of a crime.[450]

The Soviet and Slavic milieu stimulated the creation of other religious rituals and perspectives. The significant influence of Baptist church expression and the dominance of its Slavic membership also produced a faith practice among ethnic Germans that intertwined western evangelical and Orthodox elements. Mennonite historian Walter Sawatzky suggests that Orthodox influence accounted for Baptist and Mennonite emphasis on worship rather than theology, on standing or prostrating oneself when praying, on the value of shedding tears during worship, and on dogged resistance to domination by a church hierarchy. Soviet proscription of public proselytizing also raised the profile and shaped the symbolic content of life cycle events for religious adherents. Funerals, marriages and birthdays became opportunities for education and proselytizing without officially violating the law. Birthdays included religious education for the children and in large families and closely knit social networks these events occurred often. Funerals were venues for confronting non-adherents with their unbelief and its consequences for the hereafter while marriages provided further opportunity to address the unchurched without formally being accused of propagandizing.[451] Ethnic Germans in

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[450] P. Epp, *Ob Tausend Fallen*, 202.

[451] Sawatzky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 341-342 and 68-70. Descriptions of how a religious leader used weddings to proselytize is in Gerhard Hamm, *Du hast uns nie verlassen*, 137-150. See also: Isaak Thiessen, "Umsiedler aus Russland," *Der Bote,* 17 February 1976.

the Soviet Union also adhered to conservative modes of dress, particularly for women. Women believers were to wear a head covering in the form of a kerchief, to refrain from wearing ornamentation and using make-up, and to wear dresses as a symbol of modesty.

The above discussion has focused on the more evangelical Mennonite and Baptist groups but the liturgical Lutheran Germans shared many aspects of sectarian experience. Their religious practice was similarly conservative, though different forces shaped its tone and produced different expressions of faith. The thaw in the state's approach to its German minorities in 1955 also stimulated a religious revival among Lutherans. Although largely purged of its leadership, the church's faith practices were revived under lay leaders who possessed a sharpened sense of mission. Many Lutherans initially worshiped together with Baptists but eventually Lutheran communities developed and a few were registered.[452] Christel Lane's 1970s study of religion in the Soviet Union argues that the Lutheran faith practices that emerged after the initial flowering of membership relied on a closed and unobtrusive style of symbols and practices. Lutherans preferred anonymity, which encouraged closely-knit groups and an aversion to "any position implying some degree of ideological dissent."[453] Lutheran church practice also remained intimately intertwined with a German national identity and featured worship practices that had long been superseded in western Lutheranism. Soviet Lutherans resembled sectarian groups in that they retained a distinct pietist flavour and worship styles that harkened back to nineteenth century practices; sermons were read from old prayer books

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[452] Johannes Reimer, *Aussiedler sind anders: Rußlanddeutschen sind anders* (Wuppertal: Oncken Verlag, 1989), 55.

[453] Lane, *Religion in the Soviet Union,* 197.

and attitudes toward social conduct were reminiscent of that era.[454] Polish Lutherans shared the pietist-biblical outlook of their Russian counterparts and their worship services were characterized as traditional and emotional rather than intellectual.[455] A Lutheran pastor who immigrated to Germany in the 1970s offered the following characterization of the Lutheran church in the Soviet Union.

> [It is] strictly bible believing and opposed to new ideas. They keep themselves to the Luther Bible. Without religious study new liturgical and music styles cannot be introduced and it is hardly possible to deviate from cherished worship forms.[456]

Lutherans also emphasized their separateness from the more evangelical Baptists by adhering to infant baptism and asserting an overt connection between Lutheranism and German national character. Worship was limited to the German language and together with an emphasis on German national identity resulted in an aging membership. It also "rigidified the religious culture of the community," as Lane puts it. She concludes that the "keenness of the religious communities to preserve faithfully religious tradition and to avoid anything which might attract attention from the political authorities has created a spirit of inflexible conservatism, narrowness and timidity."[457]

Ethnic Germans of faith were unprepared for what they would encounter when they settled in Bielefeld. Many used words like 'shocked,' 'disillusioned,' and

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[454] Ibid., 195-200.

[455] Gerlinde Viertel, *Evangelisch in Polen: Staat, Kirche und Diakonie 1945-1995* (Erlangen: Martin Luther Verlag, 1997), 81, 120.

[456] Eugen Bachman, "Das Leben evangelischer Christen in der Sowjetunion, dargestellt and der Gemeinde Zelinograd/Kasachstan," in *Die Kirchen und das Religiose Leben der Russlanddeutschen: Evangelischer Teil,* ed. Joseph Schnurr (Stuttgart: AER Verlag Landmannschaft der Deutschen aus Rußland, 1978), 93.

[457] Lane, *Religion in the Soviet Union,* 198 and 199.

'disoriented' to describe their experience. German culture was much more secular than they had imagined. It placed high value on associational life as a mark of being an integrated and participating member of society. It reposed little value on spiritual and religious devotion. Surprise and disillusionment with the German society was accompanied by dismay when they observed their co-religionists. They found native German Mennonite and Baptist churches an affront to their piety because of their secular dress, music styles and their seeming lack of emphasis on regular church attendance.

By the 1960s and 1970s, Germany was a secular society very different from what sectarian ethnic Germans had imagined. The strong association of faith and nationality that pervaded ethnic German notions of what it meant to be German was not reflected in modern German culture. In surveys exploring attitudes towards religion in Germany the number of respondents who maintained that they were members of their church and followed its doctrines declined from 49 to 38 percent for Catholics in the eleven years between 1971 and 1982. Protestant responses indicated an even greater decline from 37 to 14 percent during the same period.[458] Social trends in Germany suggest the value system in Germany underwent a gradual 'modernization' in the ten-year period from 1965 to 1975. Declining religiosity was accompanied by increasing interest in leisure activities and in the associations dedicated to such activities.[459]

Even more shocking for sectarian ethnic German immigrants was what they found in the churches of coreligionists. Peter Epp, a minister in a Bielefeld Mennonite Church, recalled how after arriving in Bielefeld

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[458] Glatzer, *Social Trends,* 335.

[459] Ibid., 237.

> the first disappointment was experienced in the worship services of the church. Modes of dress, hairstyles, jewellery, particularly the male clothing styles worn by women, shocked me. ...Women in men's clothing were unfamiliar to us in Russia, outside of workplaces where it was necessary. In Russia you could identify Christians by the clothes they wore on the street. In Germany, I could not see the difference even in the church sanctuary.[460]

Ethnic Germans held on to their conservative modes of dress in Germany. At a conference for area Baptist youth held in Paderborn near Bielefeld, a North American observer noted the conservative dress of the women and ministers who wore dark suits and white shirts without ties.[461]

Discomfort with established churches in Germany went beyond dress. Hans von Niessen, a long time settlement worker among Mennonite immigrants describes how he came to realize that joining existing churches would cause problems for immigrants.

> ...German churches are different than these people. Over there, they had come to the faith, to the church, under stressful conditions. There were none among them who having been baptized would come to church two times a year for the next ten years. ... A person who did not care about any of this in Russia did not come to the church, but a person who, under these difficult circumstances submitted to baptism was a true believer, declared himself, and suffered the consequences.

The dichotomous view of religious membership that developed in the Soviet Union was carried over into their new city home. In Bielefeld references to an individual quickly placed them in the category of 'believer' or 'unbeliever'.[462]

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[460] Peter Epp, "Warum gibt es Annäherungsprobleme?" in *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch 1990: Aussiedler—Gemeinsamkeit suchen* (Karlsruhe: Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutscher Mennonitengemeinden in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin (West) e.V., 1990), 81.

[461] Walter Sawatzky, "Mennonitische Umsiedler kommen zusammen," *Der Bote*, 7 September 1976.

[462] Author's personal experience.

Niessen went on to describe the poor attendance at German Mennonite churches and the reaction of perplexed ethnic German immigrants who could not understand why in a country with the freedom to worship, German Christians did not avail themselves of the opportunity. He concluded that when immigrants joined "a church like this there will be problems—big problems."[463] Others pointed out that in the Soviet Union there had been "long and intensive" worship services and the one-hour services in Germany gave rise to disillusionment and were evidence of the chasm between the expectations of church in the two groups.[464] For a young Alexander Neufeld it was hard reconciling joining a church "youth group that on the one hand had such powerful sermons and Bible teaching and then on Sunday afternoon played soccer and went hiking without any further discussion about it. … In Estonia we had four Sunday services."[465]

In the case of the sectarian churches the gap between host and immigrant coreligionists was too great to bridge and most ethnic Germans quickly migrated to, or started churches with exclusively immigrant membership. An example of this trend was the pattern of Mennonite churches in Bielefeld. In 1987 the largest Mennonite church was the *Mennoniten Gemeinde Bielefeld*; 96 percent of its 728 members were ethnic Germans. Its parent congregation just outside the city in Bechterdissen had 670 members with 75 percent of its membership ethnic Germans from the Soviet Union and South America.[466]

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[463] Hans von Niessen, *Interview.*

[464] *Der Bote*, "Neue Mitarbeiter helfen Umsiedlern," 22 July 1975, 5.

[465] Alexander Neufeld, *Interview.*

[466] *Alexander Neufeld Papers,* Mennonitischen Umsiedlerbetreuung Statistics, June 1987.

Existing German Baptist and Mennonite Churches found the influx of ethnic German coreligionists and their approach to church to be an enigma. In their view immigrants tended to see issues in black and white, noting only the negative aspects of diversity and being unable to accept those who thought differently. In a published article entitled, "A letter to an elder of an *Aussiedler* congregation," Peter J. Foth, pastor of a German Mennonite Church, suggested that immigrant churches were well attended because of the desire of members to "find a place where they are secure, to set themselves apart from the 'world'; they feel pressure to not be seen as 'worldly' or apostate."[467]

To some extent the conservative outlook demonstrated by some sectarian churches may have intensified upon their arrival in Germany in reaction to the culture shock they experienced. In the more conservative churches attended by some of Alexander Neufeld's fellow immigrants, the outlook brought along from Russia was greatly reinforced as a method of maintaining boundaries between immigrants and the host society. In Russia it "was not as strict and conservative as it became here. It was a reaction to the freedom here. You can see that Russian Germans here are more German in many ways, particularly in their feelings of being German, than native Germans."[468] In addition to the comments about conservative dress referred to earlier, the North American observer at the Paderborn youth convention noted their intentional resistance to religious

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[467] Peter J. Foth, "Brief and den Ältesten einer Aussiedlergemeinde," in *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch 1990: Aussiedler—Gemeinsamkeit suchen,* (Karlsruhe: Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutscher Mennonitengemeinden in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin (West) e.V., 1990), 89.

[468] Alexander Neufeld, *Interview.*

practice around them. He noted that the conference was organized by the reformed Baptist group, formerly from the Soviet Union, whose membership included mostly ethnic Mennonites for whom the name 'Mennonite' was a "reminder of the lax religion that they had heard was practiced in the West." A minister at the conference had noted with sadness that "he was increasingly troubled that there was not enough weeping. In Russia there had been much more weeping over committed sins, but in Germany the flow of tears had stopped."[469]

Sectarian responses to German society were decidedly more tension-filled than those of their Lutheran co-immigrants. Klaus Boll's study of ethnic German immigrants from the Soviet Union found little difference between Lutheran and Catholic acculturation patterns upon their arrival in Germany. He argued that the two denominational groups, which in Bielefeld represented about one-half of the ethnic German immigrants, adjusted quickly to West German religious life in comparison with the sectarian Mennonite and Baptist groups.[470] However, in spite of a generally smoother acceptance of German religious practice, there is some evidence that Lutheran immigrants shared the same disorientation and disillusionment with their fellow believers as their Baptist and Mennonite counterparts.

In a pamphlet informing Lutherans about prospective ethnic German immigrants, parishioners were made aware of the different experiences of their Eastern European coreligionists. The writers encouraged local congregations to provide orientation for their

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[469] Walter Sawatzky, "Mennonitische Umsiedler kommen zusammen," *Der Bote*, 7 September 1976.

[470] Boll, *Kulturwandel,* 327-328.

members so that the "sudden surfacing of *Umsiedler* ...would not cause harm because of ignorance and thoughtlessness." The pamphlet highlighted some of the differences between the church experience of immigrants and that which was common in Germany. In their previous homes, ethnic Germans had been accustomed to "close and intimate contact with fellow church members," evangelistic sermons, and pietistic style worship services. In contrast, German Lutheran churches were characterized as allowing a "certain kind of anonymity" and having an unfamiliar liturgy. Immigrants would find that sermons were not evangelistic but "problem oriented" and the problems discussed were not likely to strike a chord with them. The pamphlet concluded it was "because of these reasons that they find it difficult to feel at home in the worship services."[471] These warnings were echoed by a Lutheran pastor who made numerous trips to Poland in the 1970s and was sure that Polish ethnic German Lutherans would "be left cold in our highly ordered and reserved services."[472]

The differences between Eastern European and German Lutheranism were apparent even to sectarian visitors to Lutheran services. One visitor to a Lutheran worship service was astounded "how far from Luther and the Word of God they were." In the visitor's experience he had found "warm hearted fellow believers" in Lutheran churches

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[471] Hans Becker, ed., *Umsiedler* (Stuttgart: Diakonisches Werk der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, 1976), 49-50.

[472] Klaus von Bismarck, "Aufnahme der Umsiedler als Aufgabe der Kirche," *Wegweiser Supplement* 29 (1977): 2

in the Soviet Union while in German churches "the air was full of cigarette smoke; the tables were full of glasses and bottles." [473]

Winnipeg's immigrants were drawn from those ethnic Germans who managed to reach the West during or just after the Second World War. Some in this group had been drawn into Nazi occupied Poland and the German occupied territories in the Soviet Union and had managed to stay under Western domination. They were spared the complete eradication of organized religion experienced by those German religious groups that remained east of what became the 'iron curtain.' Winnipeg's ethnic German immigrants however experienced the Nazi regime's redirection of religious activity for its own cultural and racial purposes. A resettled Lutheran pastor from Volhynia in the 1940s recalled how when they arrived in occupied Poland in the early 1940s they "discovered the unpalatable truth that the government of that time was hostile to the Christian religion and opposed to everything that was sacred and dear to us. The Christian faith, the Bible, our hymnbook and our devotional publications were all treated with contempt. All church life was made difficult."[474] Towards the end of the war organized religious life became almost non-existent, and with most of the male population serving in the German military, religious life was led by women and was restricted to the family, or to small groups.

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[473] Peter (Isaak) Derksen, *Es wurde wieder ruhig: Die Lebensgeschichte eines mennonitischen Predigers aus der Sowjetunion* (Winnipeg: Mennonite Heritage Centre, 1989), 161.

[474] Rudolf Henke, "The wartime fate of the Germans in Polish Volyhnia," trans. Adam Giesinger, *Journal of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia* 2 (1979): 33-34.

The recovery of religious life for ethnic Germans in the West began gradually in the immediate aftermath of the war. Families and religious communities were separated from each other and were spread out throughout occupied Germany. The involvement of church organizations in sponsoring the immigration of ethnic Germans encouraged refugees to re-establish connections with their religious heritage. Since it was Lutheran, Mennonite and Baptist congregations in Canada that had banded together to form the C.C.C.R.R., these churches were also able to provide spiritual resources for their co-religionists who had a desire to emigrate. All three groups had clergy working in the camps of Germany, providing both settlement and religious counselling to prospective immigrants. William Sturhahn, a minister and settlement worker in Winnipeg, attributed missionary motives to Baptist intervention in helping immigrants to Canada. He pointed out that the Northern Conference had benefited immensely from the increased numbers of Baptists as a result of immigrant numbers. He also maintained that "these people are historically and ethnically our responsibility. It is not our task to teach them the English language, but it is our responsibility to lead them to Christ and teach them the commandments of God."[475] Upon their arrival in Canada it was the network of religious communities, such as the Baptists, that helped shape immigrant choices about where to live, work and attend church.

Most ethnic Germans arriving in Winnipeg attached themselves to churches already established by their predecessors in the city and actively pursued these church

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[475] "Report to the Northern Conference about Immigration under Baptist World Alliance Immigration, July 7-11, 1954," *Baptist World Alliance Collection,* MG 28 V18, vol. 1, file 7, 3, NAC.

connections.[476] In Christel Spletzer's case, "our whole life revolved around the church. ... Very few other activities came into play, until later on after we got married and got involved in other organizations." Once their business was established in the late 1960s and 1970s, the Spletzers "got involved with other cultural groups and also socially. But church was still one of the major outlets for our social life."[477] Lutheran, Baptist and Mennonite congregations all experienced dramatic increases in membership in the postwar period. Three quarters of those attending St. Peter's Lutheran Church in the 1950s were ethnic German immigrants.[478] The First Mennonite Church on Notre Dame Avenue increased from 514 members in 1948 to 667 in 1950 and then to 1,037 in 1957.[479]

The dynamics of growth in the McDermot Avenue Baptist church was typical of postwar patterns. The First German Baptist Church, as it was initially called, was a mission endeavour of the English speaking Baptist church that had been established in Winnipeg in the 1870s. The new German church erected its first building in the present city's North End in 1889, and by 1908 the congregation had celebrated the opening of its third sanctuary on the present day McDermot Avenue site. At the end of the Second World War the congregation of about 400 became very involved with European relief efforts and some of its members were instrumental in involving the North American

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[476] This trend seems to have been common among postwar ethnic German immigrants. See Angelika Sauer, "Being German in Western Canada: The German-Speaking Population of the Prairie Provinces, 1880s to 1980s," *Journal of the West* 38 (1999): 54.

[477] Christel (Bakus) Spletzer, *Interview.*

[478] Oster, *Memoirs,* 46.

[479] *60 Years First Mennonite Church*, 132.

Baptist conference in relief and immigration efforts. On the eve of the postwar wave of ethnic German migration the congregation was in the midst of conflict over a proposed change in the language of worship from German to English.

The arrival of immigrants from Europe in the 1950s saw dramatic increases in the church's membership. The 1950 membership of 471 grew to 756 members by 1953.[480] McDermot Avenue Baptist church historian, Maria Rogalski, describes the 1950s as a time of "phenomenal growth" and a "decade of immense crisis and challenge." In her words "assimilation was the challenge of those days." Reflecting on the 1950s, a pastor of the day suggested that "not only was there a tremendous adjustment necessary between the local Canadian membership and the immigration membership, but the immigrant people having come from different areas, had differences among themselves and needed to adjust to each other."[481]

The need to integrate a diverse group of immigrants was a common feature of postwar German religious groups. The process was fraught with conflict and produced church divisions. The main catalyst for church division was often the problem of language. In the case of the McDermot Avenue church, a group began having German evening services in rented facilities in 1950 eventually separating to become the *Deutsche Baptisten Missions Gemeinde.*[482] Other branches followed as in the case of a group of 69 members who transferred their membership to what would become the Rowandale Baptist church in 1953. The new groups were seldom exclusively immigrant and outside

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[480] Rogalski, *McDermot Avenue,* 76.

[481] Ibid., 33-34.

[482] Later the Baptist Mission Church located on Sargent Avenue.

of the language used in the worship service they adopted attitudes and approaches similar to their parent church and, indeed, to those of the dominant society. By the late 1960s churches organized specifically to maintain German language services themselves faced the problem of language use in the church and most of them gradually adopted English, providing German services only for the older generation.

Immigrant churches had to deal with the demographics of an immigrant population that had large numbers of young people and women, both of whom required specialized group activities. The McDermot church organized the Society of German Baptist Immigrant Girls in 1951 to meet for "fellowship, instruction and service." Youth programs began as a bilingual German-English group and then separate groups for each language were formed until the 1960s when the two combined to form one English youth group.[483] Christel Spletzer, who started attending the McDermot Avenue Baptist Church as a thirteen-year-old girl after arriving in Winnipeg, recalls how

> we had a huge group of young people, over a hundred with most of them German. The church was just a vehicle to get to know people and have fun—for my purposes. The young people during that time had a lot of fun. We had camps and outings to the lake, although we were very serious about attending church every Sunday. As soon as church was over we raced home, changed… and drove off to Patricia Beach, lay in the sun, burned to a crisp, and came back at six o'clock for the evening service.[484]

The diversity and overwhelming numbers of new church members arriving in Winnipeg in the 1950s produced conflict that went beyond language. The full range of immigrant class and social divisions accompanied immigrants to their new church homes

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[483] Rogalski, *McDermot Avenue*, 34-36.

[484] Christel (Bakus) Spletzer, *Interview.*

and the absence of established patterns of deference produced a period of tension that often was more serious than the language problem. Baptist pastor and immigration worker, William Sturhahn's account of the basis for conflict in churches illustrates the depth of these differences:

> It was not uncommon that Mr. X., formerly a well-established landowner, the director of an industrial plant, or a reputable tradesman, came to Canada with great visions and plans to recapture his past. In Poland or Russia he was in a commanding position. In addition, he might have been a municipal or county official, or an officer in the German army. He now comes to Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver or any Eastern city. Theoretically he is prepared to accept any job as was suggested to him. But his knowledge of the English language is very limited. In fact, his employer or Canadian colleagues let him know that he is a second rate Canadian. His wages are minimum; his work is menial. He feels frustrated, but cannot very well show his feelings at work. He is still quite at home in his church. Here his language is spoken; he has a leading position. If he were the only frustrated person in the congregation, things might go on peacefully, but Mr. Y. and Mr. Z. have similar experiences and disappointments. On top of it all, Mr X's basic concept of church administration, originating in Poland, differs radically from that of Messrs. Y. and Z., who are from East Prussia and from West Germany. Besides there can be only one teacher of the Bible class, and each of the three brethren claim full qualification for this teaching position or there is need for only one additional deacon.[485]

Sturhahn's hypothetical case indicates the degree to which the church conferred status that was much more difficult to obtain in the world outside the ethnic community. A person's claim to a position of status, however, was contested by others and often based on old world experience and class identity.

Although Lutheran immigrants also contributed to the growth in German language Lutheran churches, their devotion to Canadian churches was less uniform. In a

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[485] William J.H. Sturhahn, *They came from East and West: A History of Immigration to Canada* (Winnipeg: North American Baptist Immigration and Colonization Society, 1976), 217.

handbook that offered advice for new Lutheran immigrants the writer lamented the lack of church attendance among those already in Canada. Lutheran church leader J.G. Keil's contact with immigrants already in Canada indicated that less than half of the immigrants could say that they regularly attended Lutheran worship services. Even among those indicating regular attendance, few could provide the name of the church they attended or the name of the local pastor.[486] When the Maretzki family came to Winnipeg after starting out in Bissett they were ambivalent about church membership. With the arrival of a son a process of becoming attached to church life began as well. The newborn "had to be baptized. So we looked up the Lutheran church—the St. Peter's Lutheran Church. It was a German church and there our son was baptized. If you asked the pastor for baptism they also wanted you to become a member. So we became members and all our children have been confirmed."[487]

Religious expression among Mennonite immigrants was shaped by the intersection of postwar ethnic German immigration and the migration of Mennonites from rural areas into Winnipeg. The city and its surrounding areas were home to 2,384 Mennonites in 1941. By 1951 the number had more than doubled to 5,566 and it almost tripled again by 1961 to 13,595. Growth slowed somewhat after that but in 1981, 19,105 Winnipeggers claimed some Mennonite identity while church membership at the time

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[486] "CLWR Handbuch: Helfende Hinweisungen fur Neueinwanderer," *Canadian Lutheran World Relief Collection*, MG 28 V120, vol. 30, file 28, NAC.

[487] Wilhelm Maretzki, *Interview.*

stood at 9,352.[488] Both rural to urban migration and the arrival of ethnic German immigrants contributed to this dramatic rise in the Mennonite population of the city.

Prior to and during the arrival of ethnic German Mennonite immigrants the Manitoba Mennonite religious scene was rocked by controversy that pitted rural against urban churches. Ostensibly, the controversy was about certain doctrinal beliefs advanced by a Winnipeg church elder. The disagreement, however, was widely believed to hinge on a basic urban-rural split in perceptions of religion. The doctrinal debate "provided a convenient target for a broader and more fundamental conflict—between an open and tolerant urban church and more traditional and legalistic rural churches."[489] Ethnic German immigrants arrived in Winnipeg before the tension between tradition and modernity had been resolved and their presence further complicated the conflict.

Although some Mennonite churches attended by ethnic German immigrants traced their origins specifically to mission efforts aimed at the new arrivals, most church membership rosters soon reflected combinations of inter-war and postwar immigrants.

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[488] *Census of Canada*, 1941 and 1951. The 1961 and 1981 numbers are from Leo Driedger, "Postwar Canadian Mennonites: From Rural to Urban Dominance," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 6 (1988): 77. Church membership is also from Driedger and is based on his 1988 Survey of Metropolitan Mennonite Churches. An ethno-religious group such as Mennonites may have respondents claiming either religious or ethnic identity, or both. Church membership numbers may therefore include non-Germans and census respondents indicating a Mennonite identity need not be members of a Mennonite Church.

[489] The controversy is detailed in Ted Regehr, *Mennonites in Canada 1939-1970: A People Transformed* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 182. Anna Ens, congregational historian, maintains that it is difficult to substantiate that rural-urban differences were the cause of the controversy but acknowledges that there were lifestyle differences between urban and rural churches. See Anna Ens, *In Search of Unity: Story of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1996), 80-85.

Urban Mennonites who traced their ancestry to the 1870s were generally found in the English language Mennonite churches in the city. The Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, which offered German language services, was established as a mission to immigrants settling in the city in the 1950s. Some of these immigrants were apparently uncomfortable both with the "unfamiliar, contemporary lifestyle" of the First Mennonite Church and the determination of the Bethel Mennonite Church "to be English speaking first and foremost, even though it offered a German service." In spite of this early tendency to embark on a religious path separate from existing churches and considerable opposition from those churches, the church on Sargent benefited from members who had migrated earlier. Before long "second generation Canadian Mennonites (those of the 20s immigration) were finding work or study opportunities in Winnipeg and began to attend. Some Bible College students also participated."[490] Sargent Avenue's association with educational institutions and with increasing numbers of second generation, English-speaking members reduced its insularity and made more a transitional rather than an exclusively immigrant church.

As in the case of the McDermot Avenue Baptist church, debate over the language of worship, which arose in 1962, signalled that the immigrant church on Sargent Avenue was moving towards greater adaptation. However, the suggestion that education for the church's children should be offered in English provoked an immediate negative response. Later that year the church's governing council affirmed the church's German orientation but was forced to admit "that faith and language are not synonymous." The council

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[490] *Bless the Lord, O my Soul: Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church 50th Anniversary 1949-1999,* (Winnipeg: Anniversary Committee, 1999), 95.

believed that "the German language is a heritage which will give us spiritual benefits into the future." Various regulations pertaining to language use were attempted over the next few years, but in the face of members leaving because their children could no longer understand the German language, the leadership of the congregation relented. The church's historian concludes that "cultural adaptation, in the matter of language, could be slowed down, but could not be stopped." By 1971 the Sargent church's education program offered programs in both languages and a short English sermon had become part of the worship service.[491]

It was not only in the area of language that churches began to adapt themselves to Winnipeg's dominant culture. During the 1970s, the sermons at the Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church "became less exhortative and more expository in nature" and began to reflect the "social activism" of the times. Other evidence that the church members were coming to terms with the dominant society included complaints that attendance in the active youth programs of the church was waning and, as a later writer would describe it, that young people were being "influenced significantly by the lifestyles of neighbouring cultures."[492]

The immigrant church in Bielefeld has been portrayed here as defining an ethos and worldview that was in conflict with dominant German culture. The conscious aim of ethnic Germans in Bielefeld was to ensure that religious beliefs governed their adaptation to the new world and that faith sustained their resistance to the undesirable aspects of the

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[491] *Bless the Lord,* 113-115.

[492] Ibid., 125.

dominant society. Ethnic Germans viewed joining Bielefeld's youth and sports clubs and its unions and leisure associations as a threat to their faith and its transmission to the next generation. While the tension between the church and the organizations of secular society pervades many churches it became especially significant in the Bielefeld context because of the host community's emphasis on participation in civic organizations as a mark of successful integration into the host society. The combination of a society that placed a high value on associational life and an immigrant group deeply suspicious of the ideological agendas of such secular associations produced a tension that prevented each from coming to terms with the other. In Bielefeld there were sufficient numbers of new immigrants in the 1960 to 1980 period to reinforce the conviction that the church should be the primary locus of social life.

In Winnipeg there was no similar drive to construct religious experience in opposition to the values of the dominant culture. In Winnipeg, church attendance and participation in associational activities were not seen as antithetical to one another. Sectarian ethnic German immigrants, however, preferred their church and religious worlds to civic society. They lived in two worlds, one religious the other secular, each distinct from the other without experiencing a significant degree of dislocation. In Winnipeg, as in Bielefeld, the church was an important locus of social life for most immigrants. However, other than in the area of language, the worldviews held by immigrants were generally not in conflict with the dominant society's values or those of existing churches.

What was the role of religion in the integration of immigrants in Bielefeld and Winnipeg? In both cities, religion replaced associational life for most socially based

cultural resources and activities. In Winnipeg the conflict over language in immigrant churches hastened the process whereby 'German church' became a symbolic gesture to the past but no longer dominated immigrants' relations with Winnipeg society. In Bielefeld religion's power to shape the ethos and worldview of its adherents was much more apparent. The church became an alternative to participation in the larger society. Ethnic Germans used church to resist the dominant society and aimed at constructing a church-centred community separate from that society.

Chapter Seven: The Paradoxes of Linguistic Assimilation

"...wir sollten cooler (sprich: kühler) sein, d.h. gelassener, einen kühlen Kopf bewahren."[493]

The phrase quoted above comes from a report of a 1998 meeting of the *Landsmannschaft der deutschen aus Rußland* in Kassel, Germany. The meeting dealt with the emotional issue of the place of the Russian language in the life of ethnic German immigrants. Responding to criticism of the association's deprecation of Russian, the leaders advised that while strenuously pursuing support of those ethnic Germans who had lost their language and were "only German in their hearts," they would also take every opportunity to emphasize "the importance of using the German language in all aspects of life." It is not clear whether either the assembly or the editors of the newsletter recognized the ironies of the language question embodied in delegate Irina Brinkman's admonition to be 'cooler' about the issue. Although not as virulent an issue before 1989, the comment is a poignant reminder that the struggle over the place of the Russian language in the lives of ethnic German immigrants was aggravated by their disillusionment with the German spoken by their co-workers and neighbours. To them it seemed that the German language they were supposed to make their own had been corrupted by the adoption of English and American words.

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[493] "Die russische Sprache", *Volk auf dem Weg*, 49 (May 1998): 4. Irina Brinkman's comment was based on the English expression, 'cooler heads should prevail. Literally translated her comment was: "...we should be 'cooler' (Pronounced: '*kühler*') i.e. calmer; keep a cool head."

Ethnic German immigrants coming to Canada probably expected to struggle with the place of the old world language in their new lives. Most ethnic German immigrants making their home in Winnipeg had little, if any, knowledge of English before their ship docked in Halifax or Quebec City and the first experiences of trying to make themselves understood in their new country have become the stuff of family and folklore. Ethnic Germans in Winnipeg, however, adopted English very quickly and with little fanfare. The place of German in their new lives was not so easily resolved. There was considerable struggle present in the largely futile effort to maintain German as the language of home and church for their children and grandchildren.

This chapter examines the choices about language made by immigrants in adjusting to life in their respective cities. The question of how important language was in this adjustment will be the backdrop for the discussion. What happened to language as immigrants adjusted to their new lives? Was the German language critical in maintaining ethnic identity? Was language an important component in creating new identities as German nationals or German-Canadians? What language should the immigrants speak at home or in church? Should they establish and send their children to German Saturday schools?

Consensus about the relationship of ethnicity and language has been difficult to achieve in scholarly analysis. Linguist Manfred Prokop appears to equate language maintenance with an individual's continuing identification with a particular ethnic group. Although his study concentrates on language maintenance his conclusions about the decline of German in Alberta suggest that he believes that language and culture are

synonymous.[494] A similar position is advanced by Madeline Kalbach and Warren Kalbach who use language as a basic index of ethnic-connectedness. They suggested that "the strength of ethnic identity… which may be said to characterize a particular ethno-religious group can be measured in terms of the proportions of ethno-religious groups reporting the use of ethnic languages in the home."[495] In Germany, scholars have strongly favoured conceptions where language and ethnicity were closely connected. Bettina Strewe, for example, maintains that "for membership in an ethnic group, the preservation of mother tongue, the language of one's ancestors, plays an important role."[496] Sociolinguist Peter Rosenberg states this connection even more explicitly: "there is an extremely close connection between language and cultural or ethnic identity."[497]

Others have argued that language is but one of many components of identity. Stanley Lieberson points to the examples of Jews and Gypsies: "[b]oth have more than a distinctive mother tongue to support ethnic maintenance in contact settings."[498] Lieberson

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[494] Manfred Prokop, *The German Language in Alberta: Maintenance and Teaching* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1990), 69.

[495] Madeline A. Kalbach and Warren E. Kalbach, "The Importance of Ethnic-Connectedness for Canada's Post-War Immigrants," *Canadian Ethnic Studies,* 27 (1995): 16-33.

[496] Strewe, *Arbeitsbericht Nr. 6*, 15-16.

[497] Peter Rosenberg, "New Research on the Status of the German Language in the Soviet Union," trans. Christine Clayton, *American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Journal* 18(1995): 15. Originally appeared in *Kulturelle Identität der deutschsparchigen Minderheiten in Russland/UdSSR*, ed. Hartmut Kugler (Kassel: Jenior & Pressler, 1992), 45-73.

[498] Stanley Lieberson, *Language and Ethnic Relations in Canada* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1970), 241. See also Wsevolod W. Isajiw, "Identity and Identity-Retention among German Canadians: Individual and Institutional," in *A Chorus of Different Voices: German-Canadian Identities,* eds. Angelika Sauer and Matthias Zimmer (New York: Peter Lang, 1998): 67-68.

concludes that "debate over this issue is foolhardy... while ethnic differences are sometimes not accompanied by linguistic differences, it is rare to find two or more mutually unintelligible languages used in a society without the speakers belonging to different ethnic groups."[499] Sociolinguist Joshua Fishman addresses change in language use and its relation to changes in ethnic identity. He argues that both language loss and language adoption are "indicative of fargoing culture change, at the very least, and possibly, of cultural dislocation and destruction." He acknowledges, however, that in spite of the loss of an ethnic language "a sense of ethnocultural identity may... remain, at a conscious or unconscious attitudinal level."[500]

Sociologists and educators have been at the forefront of the study of language in immigrant communities in Canada, making particular use of census data in their analysis. These studies have consistently revealed that longer periods of residence in Canada, higher socio-economic status, an urban environment and reduced association with an ethnic church coincided with a loss of immigrant first languages for most groups.[501] Germans have followed these broad patterns of adaptation, but often at a faster pace than

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[499] Lieberson, *Language and Ethnic Relations,* 5.

[500] Joshua Fishman, ed., *The Rise and Fall of the Ethnic Revival: Perspectives on Language and Ethnicity* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1985), xi.

[501] See for instance: Kalbach and Kalbach, "Ethnic Connectedness": 16-33; Prokop, *German Language in Alberta*, 111-115; Leo Driedger and Peter Hengstenberg, "Non-Official Multilingualism: Factors Affecting German Language Competence, Use and Maintenance in Canada," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 18 (1986): 90-109, and Beatrice Stadler, *Language Maintenance and Assimilation: The Case of Selected German-Speaking Immigrants in Vancouver, Canada* (Vancouver: Canadian Association of University Teachers of German, 1983).

other immigrant groups.[502] Manfred Prokop's study of the German language in Alberta summarizes this finding:

> 'The Germans' in Canada, in comparison with other ethnic groups, have always been quick to give up their linguistic and cultural heritage. They are said to be among the first to neglect to teach their children German in the home, and they themselves appear to be quite ready to abandon their mother tongue. Frequently, people who, by their pronunciation and intonation, are obviously of German descent may be heard talking to each other not in their mother tongue, but in heavily accented, broken, unidiomatic English. When asked, some will deplore the fact that they have forgotten their mother tongue, but have not yet fully learned the English language.[503]

In Imperial Russia, the common place of origin of many Winnipeg and Bielefeld immigrants, the combination of closed settlements, intimate village, church, and kinship circles, and social distance from Slavic culture allowed for the preservation of the German language for two hundred years. The German language spoken in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was, however, not uniform nor necessarily that which was spoken in Germany at the time of their immigration. Volga Germans came to Russia with a "babble of dialects" that over time was moulded into a unique Volga German dialect still dominated by Hessian forms of speech but that also contained about eight hundred Russian words or phrases by the nineteenth century.[504] Mennonites developed their unique Low German dialect during their Prussian sojourn before arriving in Russia in the late eighteenth century. Low German, complete with many adopted Russian words, became the everyday vernacular for Mennonites while High German was retained as the

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[502] Prokop, *German Language in Alberta,* 69.

[503] Ibid.

[504] James Long, *From Privileged to Disposessed: The Volga Germans, 1860-1917* (Lincoln, Neb: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 49-50.

language of church and writing.[505] Black Sea Germans traced their ancestors to the regions of Wurttemburg and Alsace and their everyday language was a thick Swabian High German dialect but like their Mennonite neighbours they maintained a written High German that trailed but was similar to that used in Germany.[506]

It was only after the 1917 Revolution, and to an even greater extent after the Second World War, that there was serious erosion in German language use in Eastern Europe and particularly in the Soviet Union. The relatively late threat to the German language in the east coupled with strong reinforcement of German under the Nazi regime accounts for the high level of German language use and the low incidence of Russian or Polish among Winnipeg's ethnic German immigrants, particularly among older arrivals. Although Walter Koberstein, a Winnipeg immigrant from Volhynia, could speak both Polish and Ukrainian, his parents and particularly his mother could understand but spoke little Polish.[507]

After the Second World War, those remaining behind in the Soviet Union and to an even greater extent those in Poland faced increased pressure to adopt the Russian or Polish language and German competency declined. In the 1979 Soviet census 57 percent of Germans indicated German as their mother tongue. Ten years later the number had fallen to 48.7 percent. In Kazakhstan, the republic with the largest concentration of Germans, the decline was even more dramatic with those indicating German as their

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[505] John Friesen, ed., "Mennonite Churches and Religious Developments in Russia 1789-1850," in *Mennonites in Russia: Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lohrenz* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1989), 44.

[506] Joseph Height, *Paradise on the Steppe* (Bismarck, N. Dakota: North Dakota Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1973), 267-268.

[507] Walter Koberstein, *Interview.*

mother tongue falling from 64.5 to 54.4 percent between 1979 and 1989. Similar trends were present in Poland with some estimates suggesting approximately 80 percent of ethnic German immigrants from that country in the 1980s spoke no German.[508]

Susanna Koop describes the problems experienced by her sister when she tried to communicate in the mother tongue within the household:

> My sister had a Volga German husband. At home they spoke Russian, at school, Russian, on the street, Russian. What could you expect from the children? Just Russian. If they had spoken German at home, they would have at least had some German. When they came here, of course they had problems. They are German; in their heart they are German but cannot speak a word of German, that is the problem.[509]

Another immigrant, arriving in Germany in the late 1980s, was sure that "if a few more years had gone by, there would have been no German among the young people."[510] The status of German as the language of the enemy, particularly in the Soviet Union, also forced its use into private worlds and lowered its prestige. Rosenberg points out that there "is hardly a more extreme way to mark a language as [of a] low variety than to call it the language of the enemy."[511]

The pattern of Russian language adoption by ethnic Germans in the East mirrored that observed in the adoption of English by ethnic German immigrants in Canada. Those

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[508] Dietz, *Arbeitsbericht Nr. 3*, 14 and Peter Rosenberg, "Status of German Language," 15.

[509] Susanna (Regier) Koop, *Interview.*

[510] Malchow, *Fremden Deutsche,* 113. The quotation is from a transcribed interview with Erna Weber.

[511] Rosenberg, "Status of German Language," 19.

with higher levels of education and occupational status and those living in cities tended to gain Russian language competence at the expense of German.[512]

On the eve of immigration the two groups of immigrants shared some common historically shaped attitudes about language use, but also faced very different prospects of language accommodation in their new homes. Immigrants to Winnipeg in the 1950s had emerged from hundreds of years of maintaining the German language in a sea of Slavic tongues. They had passed through the Nazi crucible where their sense of 'Germanness' and their use of German had been reinforced and expanded. Their arrival in Winnipeg, however, was accompanied by the realization that the transactional language, at least in the world outside their home, would be English. Bielefeld's immigrants shared the long history of German language maintenance among Slavs but, after 1955, were accommodating themselves to two isolated language worlds, Russian or Polish in the public sphere, and German in the home. For them, migration to Germany implied recovery of the German language and the anticipation of reuniting private and public language worlds.

The remainder of this chapter will explore the dynamics of language accommodation in these two environments. In the domain of language, processes in Winnipeg and Bielefeld hearken back to the model of assimilation advanced by the Chicago School in the 1920s. Language use featured similar themes of initial contact shock, a period of intense learning and adjustment, attempts at preservation of pre-migration languages, accommodation and ultimately, varying degrees of integration and assimilation.

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[512] Barbara Dietz, *Arbeitsbericht Nr. 5,* 16.

Immigrants arriving at the Frankfurt airport and then spending time in temporary housing before finally finding a home in Bielefeld include language in their description of the culture shock they experienced. In the 1970s and 1980s most immigrants came from an environment where German had been the language of home and, for Lutherans and Mennonites, of church. Immigrants could reasonably expect that adjustment in language use would pose less of a problem than other areas of their new life, such as finding places to live and work. Immigrants were, however, surprised by the differences between modern German and what had become a fossilized German during their Slavic isolation. Germany's postwar experience had Anglicized and, more particularly, Americanized the country's German language. The language of work and popular culture was especially dominated by English words they could not understand. The limited context of their use of German, in church and everyday conversation in the home, prepared them poorly for life where all communication was now to be in German. Susanna Koop recalled that for her the linguistic challenges had not represented "a different world." She had been able to "integrate right away because I could speak German" but she acknowledged it was in spite of her speaking "completely differently." Her husband, Heinrich, thought ethnic German ways of speaking were an immediate affront to native Germans. In his mind this capacity to distinguish immigrants from native Germans seemed to be inborn: "you say three words and they have figured it out."[513]

The problem was particularly acute for the young who were forced to interact with their German peers. Victor Eck, a boy of six when his family arrived in Bielefeld in

[513] Heinrich and Susanna (Regier) Koop, *Interview.*

1976 recalls the pain of not fitting in because of his language deficiency. The language of his childhood home in the Soviet Union was a Low German dialect and it took six years before his German matched that spoken around him.[514] Alexander Neufeld, a twenty-two year old when he arrived in 1977, lists language as one of the primary crises of culture he experienced upon arrival in Bielefeld. The shock was there, even though as he says,

> we spoke German at home, so I understood most of what was said. Not technical language, but I could understand almost everything. I could, on a conversational basis, make myself understood. But, of course, discussions and more formal presentations—that was still a problem.

The problem became apparent when he made contact with other young people in the family's adopted church congregation in Lage, just outside Bielefeld.

> When you are in a group like this and different things are discussed, of course I also had something to contribute, but before I had organized how I would say it [in German] they had already moved on to another subject. ... That was frustrating. So you went through a process that allowed you to accept this until you could communicate more effectively.[515]

It was particularly disorienting to realize that even in the area of religion, which rested at the very core of immigrants' reason for maintaining the German language, they would experience problems of adjustment. In a lengthy article in *Der Bote,* Isaak Thiessen lamented the sanctions imposed on lay ministers who had emigrated from the Soviet Union but were not allowed to minister to their fellow immigrants in established German Mennonite churches. In spite of having faithfully shepherded the flock under difficult circumstances in the Soviet Union, Isaak Thiessen believed that:

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[514] Viktor Eck, *Notes of an Interview*, Bielefeld, October, 2000.

[515] Alexander Neufeld, *Interview*.

> now their courage had been taken away, because from an official and career point of view, one brother … had been told in no uncertain terms: 'If you are not prepared to learn German grammar then do not reach for the Bible again.' Meaning, do not preach. Banned from the pulpit in German churches because of inadequate knowledge of the German language! … It is true, his command of the German language is not very good and he speaks with a heavy eastern accent.

To the writer of the article it seemed that correct grammar and an accent-free delivery had become more important than the preaching of the gospel.[516]

Immigrant Johannes Reimer's poignant description of his first contact with western culture also included the frustration of not being able to make himself understood. When Reimer and his family arrived in Germany in 1976, there "were times when I in all seriousness thought I was not quite normal. I could not do anything right: I could not speak, at least not correctly, the way I ate my food was objectionable, not even my clothing was acceptable."[517] Part of the shock was discovering that what German immigrants had learned and believed to be 'real' German did not match the language commonly spoken in Germany. The resulting frustration was eloquently captured by an older ethnic German woman attending a senior's seminar who commented that "*Es hat lange gedauert, bis ich wußte, was es heißt, einen* 'Chance' *zu haben*, 'fit' *zu bleiben und* 'in' *zu sein.*"[518] The preponderance of English words in public and privately spoken

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[516] Isaak Thiessen, "Umsiedler aus Rußland," *Der Bote* 3 May 1977.

[517] Johannes Reimer, *Aussiedler sind anders*, 70.

[518] The phrase, using colloquialisms of the 1970s and with mixed German and English words, could be translated as: "It took a long time before I knew what it meant to have a 'chance' to stay 'fit' and be 'in'." Quoted in "Aussiedler: 'Es ist wie ein Traum in Deutschland zu sein': Einwöchiges Seniorenseminar in Haus Neuland," *Neue Westfälische,* 22 January 1977.

German only added to the gap between what ethnic Germans expected and their actual experience when they arrived in Bielefeld.

Expectations regarding language use were quite different for ethnic Germans coming to Winnipeg. Although most of them could take comfort in being able to communicate with relatives in Canada, many of them initially faced placement on farms, in the beet fields, or in domestic service where they knew the language would not be German. Ethnic Germans in Winnipeg also experienced the shock of not being able to communicate, but did not experience the sense of deception felt by their Bielefeld counterparts.

In Winnipeg, immigrants faced the task of learning English as quickly as possible. For immigrant children this meant a period—mercifully short for them compared to their parents—of forced adoption of a new language. Christel Spletzer recalls how Mrs. Cook, her teacher, faced a class of almost entirely immigrant children, most of whom spoke only German. She, however, "did not speak a word of German. So with sign language and books and dictionaries and so on we communicated with her and she was very determined not to allow us to speak anything else but English." Like most school-age children, Spletzer learned the new language quickly and had soon mastered English and began taking French as well. She recalls that once she was fluent in English "things became much better."[519] For adults, learning the language represented more of a challenge. Walter Koberstein was twenty when he came to Winnipeg. Like many other immigrants who were beyond elementary school age, he had no opportunity to take

[519] Christel (Bakus) Spletzer, *Interview*.

formal English language instruction. Recalling the hard work digging trenches for house foundations also brought memories of not being able to communicate with others. Not able to converse in English, Koberstein was grateful for some Polish and Ukrainian co-workers with whom he could communicate. Since he "never went to night school or any other school here in Canada," Koberstein "started reading books… and trying to converse with people on the job" in order to learn English.[520] Although not as formal or subsidized as heavily as in Bielefeld, there were organized language classes for immigrants in Winnipeg. School divisions were active in organizing classes for ethnic German and other immigrants. Schools in neighbourhoods such as Winnipeg's West End were busy teaching ethnic German immigrants the new language in the evening. As early as 1948, when immigrant arrivals were limited to displaced persons, the Minister of Labour praised the school divisions' efforts at organizing language classes. By that time there were reported to be 779 immigrants taking advanced and elementary English in thirty-three classes throughout the city.[521] One writer to the German language newspaper, *Der Bote,* reflected the urgency of immigrant language needs, expressing both his frustration and the inevitability of having to learn English. He was upset at receiving only English answers from people he knew could understand German but faced derision when he replied to them in his broken English. He wished his fellow readers well in learning English, however, because he acknowledged it was as necessary as breathing.[522]

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[520] Walter Koberstein, *Interview.*

[521] "Mitchell Praises Groups Helping Immigrants," *Winnipeg Free Press,* February 3, 1949, 2.

[522] Jacob Mantler, "Wo sind sie denn geblieben?," *Der Bote,* 27, no. 44, 24 May 1950.

The transition to using English was most rapid when immigrants were immersed in the language at work or in business. Walter Koberstein acknowledged that "when it comes to business talk, that's all English. ...Sheet metal terms were English and now [in] the window business and the aluminum business, technical words are all in English, I can't find the German words for that."[523] Christel Spletzer and her husband spoke German to each other at first but then, she says: "as soon as we started to talk about business it was English and as the years went on it was more English in other areas also."[524] In contrast to earlier waves of immigrants who had gone to farms, postwar ethnic Germans worked in the industrial economy where each job had a rapidly evolving language of its own. Without the connection to Germany, English words rapidly entered the language and with both men and women working, the penetration of English into the home was greatly facilitated.

Ethnic German immigrants trying to come to terms with life in Bielefeld also faced learning—not a new language, but one that was quite different from the one they had preserved in Eastern Europe. In the estimation of the German bureaucracy language was the greatest barrier to the rapid integration of ethnic Germans into the social and economic life of Bielefeld. The 1976 change in policy placing the responsibility for language instruction under the *Arbeitsamt* prompted the *Neue Westfälische* to comment: "of all the efforts to integrate new citizens from Poland and Russia, teaching of language

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[523] Walter Koberstein, *Interview.*

[524] Christel (Bakus) Spletzer, *Interview.*

is one of the most important."[525] The *Westfalen Blatt* believed that "it is generally recognized that solid German language skills are the first step to occupational and social integration and recognition, particularly in one's own homeland."[526] *Arbeitsamt* officials speaking to students and the invited media at opening ceremonies for language schools were quick to reinforce this connection. Werner Boll, the director of the *Arbeitsamt* in the 1970s was frequently quoted in Bielefeld newspapers emphasizing the importance of language skills for ethnic Germans. He maintained that language skills were "a bridge to their new life,"[527] and a "key to the house whose name is Germany,"[528]

Language instruction involved the whole family. At first, the Lutheran church provided childcare so mothers could attend, but later the entire family received language instruction at the same time.[529] The state paid for language courses for ethnic German immigrants throughout most of the years of the migration to Germany. According to a 1976 regulation, the maximum time an ethnic German immigrant could receive language instruction at the state's expense was twelve months.[530] Beginning in 1976, the Bielefeld

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[525] "Sprachlehrgang für 74 Spätaussiedler: Bielefeld Standort für Sprachschulungen," *Neue Westfälische*, 4 August 1976.

[526] "Deutschlehrgang fuer Aussiedler begonnen: Arbeitslose Aussiedler gibt es nur sehr wenige" *Westfalen Blatt*, 8 September 1977.

[527] "Eine 'Brücke zum neuen Leben': Sprachunterricht für über 100 Spätaussiedler," *Neue Westfälische,* 9 November 1976.

[528] "Spätaussiedler lernen Deutsch: Die Mittel dafür kommen wieder vom Arbeitsamt, " *Westfalen Blatt,* 9 February 1977.

[529] "Während Mutti Deutsch lernt, werden ihre Kinder betreut: Spielstube und Sozialarbeit des Evangelischen Gemeindedienstes," *Neue Westfälische*, 18 August 1976.

[530] The maximum period of subsidized language training was reduced to 10 months in 1988. Barbara Dietz and Peter Hilkes, *Integriert oder Isoliert? Zur Situation rußlanddeutscher Aussiedler in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (München: Olzog Verlag, 1994), 52.

Arbeitsamt held regular six-month language courses for the entire family of an immigrant worker. Local newspapers faithfully reported the opening ceremonies of each new class. By 1981 it was reported that the Bielefeld *Arbeitsamt* had spent 45 million marks on language education, 10.7 million marks of the total going for instructional expenses and the rest for expenses of students.[531]

Language training was difficult for immigrant families. In many cases younger family members spoke better Russian than German or if they spoke German their vocabulary was restricted to the domain of the household. A Bielefeld newspaper report suggested that of 120 younger *Aussiedler* making use of *Arbeitsamt's* services in 1976, 40 could hardly make themselves understood in German.[532] The account of one instructor offers insight into the trials and tribulations of learning a language over again. Like the Bielefeld newspapers, she reported that in most cases younger students in her class spoke better Russian than German.[533] The instructor noted that most of the German spoken by her students was peppered with Russian words, particularly where technical modernizations in the Russian language had left immigrants without an appropriate German equivalent. At the same time their German had not benefited from 200 years of evolution and change that had occurred in Germany since their ancestors had migrated to the East. She reported that students in her class were sensitive about having to use materials produced for *Ausländer* (foreigners) because they "consider German as their

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[531] "Die Aussiedler und ihr Deutschland: Vertriebenenbeirat zu Eingliederungsfragen," *Neue Westälische,* 15 April 1981.

[532] "Beratung junger Spätaussiedler: 120 Neu-Bielefelder suchten Rat bei Berufsberatung" *Westalen Blatt*, 28 January 1977.

[533] Knobel-Ulrich, "Neue Leben," 7-10.

mother tongue and do not want to be treated as foreigners." Most of the students had been involved in manual work, had not been in school for many years, and had forgotten systematic study methods. Even if their spoken German was reasonably good they had not written in German very often, if ever. On occasion they only knew the Cyrillic alphabet and had to begin with daily lettering exercises, a process they found very demanding. According to the instructor, "they break out in a sweat and often tears result because the German handwriting rules can also drive *Aussiedler* to despair." Because they had idiomatic knowledge of the language, much of the instruction was directed at correcting grammatical errors and the Russification that had crept into their usage, a task that the instructor thought to be more difficult than learning a completely new language. For adult learners the already bittersweet experience of returning 'home' was heightened when young children, who just a few months before could speak little German, soon corrected their parents and were visibly embarrassed by their strange dialect and deficiency in expressing themselves in modern German.[534]

Given the difficulty and stress of returning to the classroom it was not surprising that immigrants avoided language instruction if they could. Like so many of their Winnipeg counterparts, many Bielefeld immigrants never completed their language training, choosing instead to accept immediate employment rather than longer term occupational mobility. One Bielefeld headline proclaimed that immigrants were being "torn out of the hands" of those facilitating language and social integration by employers needing labourers. The article went on to profile the high percentage of immigrants with low-skill work histories and bemoaned the fact that many were abandoning language

[534] Ibid., 7-10.

study for immediate entry into low skilled employment.[535] In other cases immigrants did not attend language courses because of scheduling conflicts. A meeting of the Housing and Social Committee of the City of Bielefeld with a group of immigrants in temporary housing found that not all immigrants were accepting the offered language courses because of difficulties in coordinating work and school.[536]

Immigrants also complained that language instruction did not meet their needs. The Housing and Social Committee heard complaints that "language courses only helped gain a general knowledge of the German language." Immigrants suggested to the committee "it would be desirable to also acquire technical communication skills."[537] Alexander Neufeld was one of those who abandoned formal language training, not for low skilled work, but because of family considerations. He was sent to Hanover under the auspices of the Otto Benecke Foundation[538] as part of a special program to upgrade the language skills of educated immigrants. He only attended for one month because "it was not very useful" and because his one sister attending school in Bielefeld was struggling and needed tutoring. He then attended a local language course sponsored by the *Arbeitsamt* but only finished the first part before beginning regular formal studies.[539]

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[535] "Aussiedler werden Vermittlern 'aus den Händen gerissen': Hohe Arbeitsmoral/Viel gewerbliche Arbeiter/Meist Sprachnöte," *Neue Westälische*, 30 January 1978. Also Maria Hecht, *Notes of an Interview,* Bielefeld, January, 1999.

[536] *Sozial und Wohnungswesens Protokolle*, 15.03.77, BSA.

[537] *Sozial und Wohnungswesen Protokolle,* 13.06.1978, BSA.

[538] Students in Berlin established the Otto Benecke Foundation in 1965. The foundation provides integration and language training services for academics and other educated immigrants. The German government provides funding. http://www.obs-ev.de/obs.htm, May 13, 2000.

[539] Alexander Neufeld, *Interview.*

Efforts to learn the dominant language of their host societies took up the time of both Bielefeld and Winnipeg immigrants for the first few years following their arrival. In Winnipeg, the strong pull of English language acquisition was soon followed by concerns about the resulting loss of German. By the early 1950s ethnic Germans were organizing Saturday language schools to teach their children German. As the Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church's history puts it, "it was an attempt to give our children the opportunity to learn German alongside the English language which they learned in the public school."[540] In contrast to the previous waves of immigrants, Winnipeg's postwar immigrants did not have the opportunity to establish church-run schools conducted entirely in an ethnic language. Churches in Winnipeg soon had concerns about their children's ability to comprehend and adopt the faith of their parents, a faith that was expressed in the German of Luther's Bible, cherished German hymns and German language teaching and preaching.

Mennonite historian Gerald Ediger has examined in detail the language question in the Mennonite Brethren Church using Winnipeg congregations as case studies. He argues that the "new immigrants did not create the deep sense of crisis and trauma that characterized the German-English transition among Canadian Mennonite Brethren."[541] However, the influx of a large number of German speakers in the postwar period exacerbated language tensions that had been present in the community for some time. The debate over the language of services illustrates why the church was the most

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[540] *25 Jahre Sargent*, 31.

[541] Gerald C. Ediger, "Deutsch und Religion: Ethnicity, Religion and Canadian Mennonite Brethren, 1940-1970" (Ph.D. diss., Emmanuel College, 1993), 55.

powerful advocate of language preservation among immigrants. Ediger's analysis of exchanges published in the church's periodicals in the late 1940s and 50s concludes that those wishing to retain German were resolute in forcing exclusive use of High German in the home. They were "equally certain that failure to do so would bring much pain and ultimate schism in the Mennonite Brethren community and the sin of causing such trauma would be laid at the doorstep of these parents and children."[542]

Examinations of the struggles over language in Mennonite churches have stressed the role of language as a boundary maintenance tool. Ediger demonstrates the prevalence of perceptions that "the German language represented a significant protection for Mennonite Brethren identity and community from the encroaching dangers of English Canadian society."[543] Anna Ens's study of the other major Mennonite group receiving large numbers of postwar immigrants, the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, points to loss of the traditional boundaries maintained by Mennonites in Russia as reason for the heightened emphasis on language maintenance.[544] Mennonites in Manitoba faced "urbanization, higher education, new occupations, the electronic media, as well as increasing affluence," all of which eroded traditional boundaries. Ted Regehr's history of Canadian Mennonites adds the dimension that people "who had been raised and had their most treasured spiritual experiences in a German milieu, loved the language and were convinced that its loss would deprive them of cultural, literary, aesthetic, and religious

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[542] Ibid., 58.

[543] Ibid., 349.

[544] Anna Ens, *In Search of Unity*, 117.

treasures."[545] The experience of Baptist congregations paralleled that of Mennonites. Although the desire to maintain boundaries using the German language was less of a factor, church and immigration leader William Sturhahn points out that Baptist immigrants also wanted to keep "the German language and its great treasure of song and poetic literature."[546]

In individual churches the language debate was painful, frequently dividing families and in most cases splitting local congregations and creating new English or German congregations. In the McDermot Avenue Baptist Church the English evening service attendance grew dramatically when it was begun in 1948. With the arrival of German immigrants the Sunday morning German language worship services also experienced increased attendance. The influx of immigrants threatened to reverse progress towards English services and the church council implemented a return to a bilingual Sunday evening service, which had already become entirely English. Non-immigrant members were unhappy with this decision and delays in resolving the conflict resulted in a group leaving the church in 1950 to begin the German only *Deutsche Baptisten Missions Gemeinde.* The McDermot church, however, continued on a path of increasing German language use to the extent that church minutes became entirely German again. The reversion to German was cause for increasing dissatisfaction among long-standing members whose children had become Anglicized. Other more amicable

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[545] Regehr, *Mennonites in Canada,* 313.

[546] Sturhahn, *They Came from East and West,* 213.

divisions resulted in the founding of another German congregation in 1952 and of an English language church in 1959.[547]

Language controversy in churches usually began with a request to the church's governing body or membership by a group wishing to establish English language Sunday School classes for children, or to include English in an evening service, as was the case at McDermot. At the Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church the fateful day came in 1962 when the congregation heard a member of the Education Committee suggest "an English Sunday School class would be in order to accommodate children who do not speak German."[548] In many situations the response from those seeking to preserve German was intransigent and unequivocal. At Sargent the position of influential members in the congregation carried the day and the reply to the request stated simply that "[o]ur Sunday School will be in German only. In the Summer Bible School English can be offered. Our church has everything in German…"[549] Accommodation of the English language could not, however, be denied. Invariably the initial request for some English breached the stranglehold of German and congregations began a painful journey of accommodation. With varying speed and levels of conflict, congregations adopted English language evening services, then began educating adolescents in English, gradually introduced English language hymns and sermons, and eventually changed the working language of committees and translated their governance documents into English.

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[547] Rogalski, *McDermot Avenue*, 33-38.

[548] *Bless the Lord, O my Soul*, 113.

[549] As quoted from the minutes of a congregational meeting. Ibid., 114.

At many points in debates over language in church those seeking to preserve German argued that the deficient German language skills of the youth were due to neglect in the home. In spite of this charge, it appears that many ethnic German immigrant families in Winnipeg faithfully sought to maintain German as the language of the home—at least initially. Christel Spletzer and her husband decided that they were going to teach their children German but "it became more difficult when they became teenagers." Other families could maintain German as a home language until grandparents passed away and until the need for German skills and the associated guilt of having failed to preserve the language were no longer urgent. Wilhelm Maretzki's two sons were born in Canada and although they had spoken only German until they went to public school, they rapidly switched to English and no longer wanted to speak German. Telephone calls from their German-speaking grandmother became one of the few occasions when German language skills were still mandatory.[550]

Winnipeg's urban setting and ethnic German dispersion into the city's workplaces made the maintenance of German in the home difficult, particularly as immigrant children progressed through the school system. By 1986 a survey of nine hundred German-Canadians in Manitoba found that English was spoken in the home over 75 percent of the time while respondents indicated they had spoken English 39 percent of the time in their childhood home.[551] Leo Driedger and Peter Hengstenberg's survey of Mennonite language maintenance suggests similar trends. Their 1986 study found that

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[550] Wilhelm Maretzki, *Interviews.*

[551] *German-Canadian Congress*, Bruno Dyck, "Sociocultural Survey of the German-Canadian Community in Manitoba: A Final Report, June 1986,"Appendix A, P4257, File 2, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, (hereafter PAM).

Manitoba Mennonites spoke a traditional mother tongue to their parents 64 percent of the time while only speaking that tongue to their children 23 percent of the time.[552] The dominance of English in Winnipeg is likely even greater than these province-wide statistics suggest. In the case of the 1986 survey of German-Canadians approximately one-half of the respondents came from areas in rural Manitoba that included the Mennonite enclaves around Winkler and Steinbach where everyday use of Low German was still common. Manfred Prokop's analysis of home language in Manitoba based on the 1991 census found no census enumeration areas in Winnipeg where German use exceeded English and only two census areas in the city where 20 percent of the people spoke German in the home.[553]

In the face of the steady erosion of German language use in the home, some ethnic immigrants intensified their efforts to promote German usage in the immigrant community. Mennonites, for instance, created a promotional organization. Although not specifically a religious organization, a letter inviting pastors to become members and to promote membership listed as one of the reasons for its formation the contention that Mennonite religious life was in danger of becoming shallower and at risk of "false religious teachings" if it were to give up its mother tongue. Other arguments for the new association included the prevention of generational divisions, and the enrichment of Canada by adding to the "glorious flower bouquet of various national cultures" found

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[552] Driedger and Hengstenberg, "Non-Official Multilingualism": 101. In the case of Manitoba Mennonites traditional language could be either the Low German dialect used for in-group communication or High German.

[553] Manfred Prokop, "The Maintenance of German as a Mother Tongue and Home Language in Manitoba," forthcoming in *Journal of Mennonite Studies*.

here. Maintaining German language skills would contribute to a better understanding of the English language because research had shown that "those with a knowledge of two languages have a broader horizon and subsequently have a greater vocabulary in both languages compared to people with knowledge of only one language."[554] However, as a brief association history suggests, its "founders seem to have set themselves an unrealistic goal." Their vision of maintaining German as a language in the home and in church was not to be realized and in the 1960s the organization's goals were changed to reflect reality. At a general meeting of the association the words 'mother tongue' were taken out of the organization's name and it became simply *Mennonitischer Sprachverein* (Mennonite German Society). The association maintained a central library and its goals were now to promote language schools, literary evenings, dramas and music evenings.[555]

The difficulty of maintaining German as a home language forced many ethnic German immigrants to turn to other methods of passing on German language skills to their children. German language Saturday schools became a feature of many immigrant children's lives over the three decades of the 1950s, 60s and early 1970s. German language education had the added potential of uniting the various streams of Germans in Winnipeg. Ethnic Germans with strong ethno-religious identities shared the desire to pass on the German language with the non-sectarian and less religiously oriented immigrants.

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[554] "An die Altesten und Leiter der mennonitischen Gemeinden in Canada," November 1952, *Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization Collection*, vol. 1334, file 1020, MHC. The organization was called the *Mennontischer Verein zur Pflege der deutschen Muttersprache in Canada.* It was established in September 1952 in Winnipeg.

[555] Georg K. Epp, "Ein Verein zur Pflege der deutschen Sprache in Kanada: Mennonitischer Sprachverein (Mennonite German Society)," in *German-Canadian Yearbook,* ed. Hartmut Froeschle (Toronto: Historicial Society of Mecklenburg Upper Canada, Inc., 1976): 271-272.

Ethnic Germans and immigrants from Germany proper could also agree that preservation of the German language and the attendant access to the wealth of German literature, poetry, and culture were worthy goals to include in the raising of their children.

Ethnic German immigrants arrived in Winnipeg just when the problem of language in church was preoccupying the traditionally German churches maintained by their predecessors. In keeping with their concern over the prospect of division between youthful English speaking members and older group of German speakers, churches began organizing schools to teach German. The Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church began a German language school in 1953 with twenty children enrolled in a class held on Saturday mornings in the church basement. Mennonite Brethren churches, at home in Winnipeg since the 1920s and whose history of German language schools dated from the 1930s, experienced increases in enrolment with the arrival of postwar immigrants.[556] Baptist churches also began German language schools in response to their German immigrant members' desire to preserve the language for future generations. McDermot Avenue Baptist Church began its German Saturday school in 1963 with 71 students attending.[557]

The German Saturday School movement reached its zenith in the 1960s when numerous schools enjoyed high enrolments and a blossoming of joint activities. By that time there were twenty-six German schools in the city, all but two sponsored by various churches including Mennonite, Baptist, Lutheran, a Catholic school at St. Joseph's, a Seventh Day Adventist, a Pentecostal and a *Gemeinde Gottes* school. Combined

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[556] Ediger, "Deutsch und Religion,"196 and 269.

[557] Rogalski, *McDermot Avenue,* 79.

enrolment was over 1000 students.[558] The German Club also became involved in German language education in 1953 and by 1961 its newsletter was announcing the first classes for children 16 years and older and was assuring its members that "the maintenance of German is one of the Club's greatest and most satisfying goals."[559] By the mid 1960s it was operating one of the largest German schools in Winnipeg with over 200 students.[560] The German Consulate become heavily involved after 1960 in supporting the German language school effort by providing curriculum materials. Schools held an annual festival featuring presentations displaying students' proficiency in German song, poetry and prose. The 1962 festival enjoyed participation from Baptist, Lutheran, Mennonite, Pentecostal, and *Gemeinde Gottes* schools as well as the German Club's school.[561]

Language schools were, as we will see in the next chapter, arenas where the particularity and persistence of ethnic identity was hotly contested. Church sponsored language schools were wary of secular interference and eventually faced challenges to their autonomy. The need for German language schools to give longevity to the German language in church was however soon eclipsed by the realization that language would not guarantee the passing on of faith in the immigrant community. Most language transition conflicts occurred in churches in the late 1960s and early 1970s and by the mid 1970s the

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[558] "Enrolment Statistics, " *Hans and Sonja Roeder Collection,* HG 128 MG 31, vol. 12, file 1, NAC.

[559] "German Society of Winnipeg, 1892: Circulars, clippings, correspondence, financial materials, notes, 1961-1966, 1969, 1970, 1974," *Roeder Collection,* vol. 12, file 7, NAC. See also *Jubiläumsbuch: 1892-1992 100 Years German Society of Winnipeg,* (Winnipeg: German Society of Winnipeg, 1992), not paged.

[560] "Enrolment Statistics," *Roeder Collection,* NAC .

[561] "Fest der Deutschen Sprache, February 24, 1962," *Roeder Collection,* vol. 10, file 20, NAC.

accommodation of English in the language of Winnipeg churches was essentially complete. Many continued to offer German language worship services for their older population, but had to concede defeat in maintaining German as the language of church for the young. Adoption of the mores and values of their respective faiths became more important to church members than sharing a common linguistic heritage. As churches realized that the next generation would not maintain German language church, Saturday German schools had relevance only for cultural purists who placed high value on German culture and literature. The Portage Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church was forced to close its German school and refund fees in 1967 when there were too few students to continue.[562] Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church language school attendance peaked in 1964 at 120 students and enrolment declined steadily thereafter. The school was closed in 1974 when enrolment numbered only thirty-six students.[563]

Non-church language instruction enjoyed a somewhat longer life. The German Club's school continued to enjoy increasing enrolments to 1975 when its attendance also began to decline.[564] After the Canadian Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism report of 1970 there was an awakening of interest in non-English, non-French, heritage languages but those favouring German language education looked to the public school system to provide instruction. In spite of heritage language programs, by 1983 only an estimated 6 percent of those claiming German ethnicity were enrolled in German language classes, whether public, private or supplementary (Saturday)

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[562] Ediger, "Deutsch und Religion," 331.

[563] *25 Jahre Sargent*, 31.

[564] *100 Jahre Deutsche Vereinigung,* not paged.

schools.[565] By the mid 1980s new forms of cooperation were attempted to maintain use of the German language in Winnipeg. The Manitoba Parents for German Education, a group established to advocate German bilingual education in public schools, and a number of German associations jointly sponsored the inaugural conference of the German Canadian Congress (Mb) in 1985. At the conference a presentation addressing the need for cooperation among the diverse groups of Germans in Manitoba maintained that if "the German-Canadian community is to be a culturally viable group in Canada, then it must promote the presence and use of German in its homes, schools and communities." It seemed that by the mid 1980s, the attitude towards German had become "much too apologetic" and the speaker argued, "attempts to maintain it are superficial and symbolic."[566]

Preserving a language from their previous lives in Eastern Europe and Central Asia was a much different problem for ethnic German immigrants in Bielefeld. For them, the language of the old world host society had been Russian or Polish. The many years of constant vigilance in maintaining German identity and language skills in this environment meant that most immigrants were only too happy to give up their Slavic

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[565] "Socio-cultural Survey, Final Report," 8-9.

[566] Abe Peters, "Keynote Address," in *Building our Future Together: Report of the German-Canadian Community Development Conference November 2, 1985* (Winnipeg: German-Canadian Congress (Mb.), 1987), 10. "German Canadian Congress," *Mennonite German Society Collection*, vol. 4149, file 9, MHC. The keynote address is also in Abe Peters, "Building our Future Together," in *German Canadian Yearbook,* eds. Gerhard Friesen and Karin Gurttler (Toronto: Historical Society of Mecklenberg Upper Canada, 1988): 251-256.

language.[567] Unlike their Winnipeg counterparts, their expectations of living in Bielefeld included abandoning the language of the old world, certainly for their children and grandchildren. Additionally, rapid adoption of the language of the new home by the young enhanced the relationship between generations rather than creating divisions between them. A proclivity to abandon Slavic language use was, however, not universal and, for a minority, the language of the old world was not as easily replaced as might have been anticipated prior to emigration. As the anecdote at the beginning of this chapter suggests, the place of Russian in the new world of immigrants was not uncontested.

The Russian language was particularly effective in evoking connections to a past that many, in spite of painful memories, wished to remember. For immigrants from the Soviet Union, Russian and Ukrainian songs were fondly recalled and sung. Klaus Boll's interview respondents generally loved Russian and Ukrainian music and "not only had fond memories of these songs, but enjoyed singing them with friends and relatives after their immigration to Germany."[568] The sentiment was not universal and individual respondents would not allow the singing of Russian songs in their presence after arrival in Germany. Boll attributes this attitude partly to "unpleasant memories of the time of exile and the *Kommandantura*, and partly because by sharply distancing themselves from

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[567] The dramatic increase in the numbers of immigrants in the 1990s, after the period examined here, significantly changed attitudes towards the retention of Slavic languages among ethnic German immigrants. The German language skills of those arriving were much more limited and increased intolerance raised the status of, and reinforced the use, of Russian among later immigrants. The debate within the immigrant community about the place of Slavic languages in the lives of immigrants intensified as a result.

[568] Boll, *Kulturwandel,* 243.

such songs, *Aussiedler* wished to indicate their singular allegiance to Germany and at the same time to deny their Soviet past and its influence on them."[569] As we have seen earlier, in the religious domain the Russian hymn and prayer was important in immigrants' religious life, even in the new land. For Baptists, in particular, the many years of worship in Russian meant that the Russian language hymn was most effective in evoking the memories of a difficult past where only the reassurance of faith had preserved them.

The timing of immigration was the most important variable in determining the extent to which immigrants retained the Russian or Polish language for communication. Barbara Dietz's analysis of a survey conducted in 1990 with immigrants who had migrated to Germany from the Soviet Union showed the increasing importance of the Russian language for younger immigrants and for those who migrated later. The survey found that the Russian language was most important for young immigrants in communication with friends and visitors from the Soviet Union. Ethnic Germans under the age of thirty-nine indicated that they spoke Russian 39 percent of the time when talking to their friends.[570] Although the desire to use Russian in conversation with fellow immigrants was much less apparent in the 1970s and early 1980s, younger immigrants tended to revert to Russian too frequently to suit their less Russified elders. Elizabeth Peters resisted moving to Bielefeld in the mid 1970s because of the amount of Russian she had heard spoken there while on a visit. She claimed that in Bielefeld at the time "it

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[569] Ibid. *Kommandantura* refers to the restricted mobility and stiff regulations imposed on Germans in the Soviet Union after World War II. These restrictions were officially lifted in 1955 but took somewhat longer to be effected in practice.

[570] Dietz, *Integriert,* 56-57.

was so bad already; we went to visit a few times; we were in Sieker and other places. They spoke Russian here and I had left Russia and now I had to listen to Russian. I had not wanted to hear it again; or have anything to do with it; after all I was in Germany now."[571]

Until the late 1980s, however, the desire to preserve Russian among Bielefeld's immigrants was limited to a few domains for a brief period of time. The many years of setting a German identity in opposition to a dominant Slavic society contributed to a rapid loss of Slavic components in these immigrants' identity. In contrast to ethnic Germans in Winnipeg for whom the loss of the German language had implications for their identity as Germans, the loss of Russian or Polish came at a low price for ethnic Germans arriving in Bielefeld.

The process of making a new home in Winnipeg meant devising a path through the pitfalls of communication between generations and the demands of work and school. For Winnipeg's immigrants the rapid adoption of English created conflict, both with an older generation unable to communicate fluently in English and with the immigrants' sense of being German. The conflict was most intense and protracted in the church, where the very basis of the faith appeared to be at risk when members contemplated a change in the language of song, prayer and scripture. The contest to retain German in the church contributed immensely to the German Saturday School movement that attempted to pass on German to the young after it proved too difficult to maintain in the home. Eventually the desire to communicate the faith won out over the connection to a German

[571] Elizabeth (Peters) Warkentin, *Interview*.

tradition. Church became English and the need for learning German lost its validity for all but the older, first generation immigrants and those possessing a sharp ethnic consciousness. Immigrants who possessed a strong desire to maintain the German language beyond the bounds of church were left to foster German as a language worth learning even for non-ethnic Germans. In spite of various attempts to promote the use of German in the community by coalitions of German associations, the German language became a symbol of ethnic consciousness rather than an important everyday feature of ethnic German culture and identity.

In Bielefeld, adapting to the language was an additional and unexpected shock that accompanied establishing a new life in Germany. Immigrants contemplating the move to Bielefeld had not conceived of language as a barrier to feeling at home in a new environment. They recognized that their children, who had generally adopted the Russian language, would face a period of challenge in communicating. But they could not anticipate the degree to which the German they had preserved for so long would be such a problem in the country they had 'come home' to. Since ethnic German immigrants were considered German and were to be integrated into the life of the country as full citizens, the German society that surrounded them placed great emphasis on a rapid improvement in language competence. The German state's approach to the problem meant a return to the rigours of formal schooling, a distant and foreign experience for many. The Russian language that many of the younger immigrants had adopted was quickly abandoned in most cases. Like their Winnipeg counterparts, however, they found that the depth of emotion evoked by prayer and singing in church brought out the desire to preserve some of their old world past.

Adapting to the language used by their neighbours and fellow workers, the language learned in school by their children, and the one heard on the radio and television went to the very heart of what it meant to feel at home in a new city and country. Both the long period of German language maintenance in Eastern Europe and the reinforcement of German identity that accompanied the Second World War, pointed to a path of integration that would sustain the German language in Winnipeg and ease the way into life in Bielefeld. It was not to be. In contrast to their ancestors in Imperial Russia or their predecessors who had immigrated to the prairies of Canada, ethnic German immigrants who came to Winnipeg and Bielefeld were thrust into an environment where the working world was increasingly dominated by technology and its adoption of American terminology. Immigrant children were immediately part of school and friendship circles that favoured English or modern German in preference to their old German dialects.

Both Bielefeld and Winnipeg demanded rapid language adaptation. In Winnipeg this adaptation was driven by immigrants' desire to participate in Canadian society. Immigrants learned the language quickly, particularly if they were young and in the work force. In Winnipeg a greater sense of loss accompanied the loss of German compared with the loss of Russian or Polish for Bielefeld's immigrants. Both the rapid acquisition of English and the tension accompanying the attendant rapid loss of German were indicators of how quickly Winnipeg's immigrants integrated into the wider Canadian society. In Bielefeld language integration processes were driven by the state's desire to make *Aussiedler* full-fledged citizens of modern Germany. Like their Winnipeg counterparts, ethnic German immigrants in Bielefeld had a strong desire to learn the

language of work. They had not expected, however, that their German language would impede their integration into Bielefeld life. It did, and the consequence was a greater degree of tension accompanying linguistic adaptation in Bielefeld than in Winnipeg.

PART FOUR: PARTICIPATION

Chapter Eight: National Citizenship and Community Membership

The degree to which immigrants participate in the political and social life of the country and city in which they live reflects how much 'at home' they really feel. As Elliott R. Barkan suggests, integrated immigrants "associate on a regular basis with members of the larger society," and are "involved in the general political processes" of that society.[572] If they participate chiefly or exclusively in ethnic and immigrant-specific associational life, however, they might have established only limited acceptance in and influence on the dominant society and its culture. This chapter will examine ethnic German citizenship, participation in ethnic and dominant society organizations, and participation in mainstream politics in Winnipeg and Bielefeld.

Sociologist Rogers Brubaker suggests that in modern liberal states citizenship serves as a boundary that denies certain rights to some while extending them to others. In modern states citizenship becomes "a powerful instrument of closure, shielding prosperous states from the migrant poor."[573] Brubaker conceives the liberal state as a membership association with boundaries drawn according to traditions of nationhood. Germany and France, for instance, differed in their definitions of membership, Germany

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[572] Barkan, "Race, Religion, and Nationality," 48.

[573] Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), x.

maintaining an ethnic boundary while France had a more permeable, politically based definition of citizenship.[574]

Canada and Germany also had differing concepts of citizenship and ethnic Germans had different rights to citizenship within these concepts. In Germany, citizenship was based on a law of 1913 that defined a *jus sanguinus*, or blood basis for citizenship. Under this law, German citizenship is acquired at birth when "one of the parents is a German citizen."[575] Subsequent laws expanded the right of citizenship to include ethnic Germans in the East but the fundamental principle of citizenship remained one of descent. As Rainer Münz argues, this reflected the reality that "Germany perceives itself as an ethnocultural nation, i.e., as a state of and for the German people."[576] Rights of citizenship belong to those who are of German ethnicity by birth, not to those who reside within a given territory and who are governed by a given state. In this sense German "nationhood is an ethnocultural, not a political fact," as Rogers Brubaker puts it.[577]

Many ethnic German immigrants had a brush with extreme racial interpretations of German citizenship during the war when they were sent to the Warthegau in occupied Poland and were incorporated into the Nazi German Reich. In the Warthegau the Nazi

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[574] In addition to Brubaker noted above, see: Christian Joppke, "How Immigration is Changing Citizenship: A Comparative View," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* , 22 (1999): 630 and Charles Tilly, "Citizenship, Identity and Social History," *International Review of Social History,* 40 Supplement 3 (1995): 1-17.

[575] Article 4.1 of the *Reichs- und Staatsangehörikgeit's Gesetz, (RuStAG),* 1913 as reproduced in Lederer, *Integration in Zahlen,* 112.

[576] Münz and Ohliger, "Long-Distance Citizens," 169.

[577] Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood,* 1.

German government set up commissions that travelled to various camps processing new arrivals and granting them citizenship. After proving their descent from German ancestors, documenting their attachment to German culture and undergoing a racial examination, most ethnic Germans received German citizenship.[578] Many immigrants arriving in Bielefeld in the 1960s, 70s and 80s still had a right to citizenship based on this earlier grant of citizenship, given during the war before they were sent back to the Soviet Union. Others had a right to citizenship based on their German ancestry and on their status derived from having suffered as a result of the actions of the Nazi regime. Under the German Basic Law, ethnic Germans who had acquired citizenship but had been forced to relinquish it in postwar Poland or the Soviet Union had an automatic right to take it up again upon their settlement in Germany. Those classified as expellees or ethnic German refugees had a right to citizenship on the same basis even if it had not been acquired in the Warthegau during the war.

The only proviso for Bielefeld's ethnic German immigrants was that they be prepared to relinquish their previous citizenship, if possible, and that they profess a desire to become German citizens. Requirements that appear simple were rendered a nightmare for ethnic Germans arriving in the processing centres at Friedland and Unna-Massen, the first stops on the road to Bielefeld. Processing their application and formally documenting their right to citizenship was an unpleasant memory for most ethnic Germans. The unending appointments and consultations with bureaucrats were taxing for Elizabeth Warkentin: "One time I was at the end of my wits, I came into the room, threw

[578] For a description of this process see Valdis O. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press), 189-192.

down my papers and cried. ... I told the official I did not know anything anymore and I could not continue."[579] The process was daunting. A fifty-four-page application form documented the details of immigrants' past lives and degree of 'Germanness'. To establish their qualifications for German ethnicity,[580] applicants had to indicate their own and their family's present and previous citizenship status, their mother tongue, present language use, knowledge of German, home language, and evidence of having nurtured attachments to German culture and ethnicity. Participation in any activities that were part of Germany's war effort was documented as well as any suffering endured because of being German.[581] Although the bureaucratic nightmare seemingly had no end, the acquisition of German citizenship itself was the end of a long awaited dream for most immigrants. Since they acquired citizenship as the first step of what would become event-filled weeks or months in their new homes the imagined benefits of finally being completely German seemed to be fulfilled in the process of their official acceptance into German citizenship.

For ethnic German immigrants, Germany's concept of citizenship was fully in tune with their own attitudes of who could be a German and who should be included in the German polity. Ethnic German interviewees almost universally expressed reservations about, or outright opposition to, the presence of foreigners in Germany. Maria Hecht distrusted Turks, claiming ethnic Germans knew them from their former homes in Kazakhstan. She supported citizenship for those who had completely adopted

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[579] Elizabeth (Peters) Warkentin, *Interview.*

[580] *'Volkszugehörigkeit'*

[581] A copy of the application form is in Walth, *Strandgut der Weltgeschichte,* Appendix 41, 421-448.

German language and culture but was opposed to dual citizenship.[582] Some of Elizabeth Warkentin's disappointment with the Germans around her was due to it making "no difference to them if they live with a Turk, or whatever."[583]

The German state embraced ethnic German immigrants in ways that would be the envy of other migrants, giving them privileged access and full rights in a highly developed Western country with a generous social welfare system. Official citizenship was bestowed easily after the necessary marshalling of evidence concerning birth, ethnicity, and social membership. As far as the policies of the state were concerned ethnic Germans became full participants in German society upon receiving their citizenship or upon having it confirmed. In the country's statistical records, status as an *Aussiedler* lasted only for a year. Unlike the situation for foreign guest workers, records of ethnic Germans as a separate group, vital statistics, residence records and demographic statistics, were no longer kept after their first year in the country.

Gaining acceptance as equals of their fellow citizens proved much more difficult. In the 1960s, 70s and early 1980s there was little public opposition to the immigration of ethnic Germans, but as individuals, ethnic Germans frequently felt their citizenship remained incomplete. A common problem was that they were labelled 'Russians' or 'Polacks'. Bielefeld newspapers reported that in school, ethnic German immigrant children had to endure taunts such as: 'the Russians are coming' from fellow

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[582] Maria Hecht, *Notes of an Interview.* At the time of the interview Germany was embroiled in controversy about allowing dual citizenship.

[583] Elizabeth Warkentin, *Interview.*

classmates.[584] At a meeting of a Lutheran Church women's organization on the topic of integration the speaker gave an example of an immigrant who had returned to Paraguay in part because he was called a 'Polack'.[585] Ethnic Germans complained in a meeting with *Bundesminister* Werner Maihofer in 1978 about being referred to as 'Russians,' prompting the Minister to acknowledge the thoughtlessness of Germans.[586] Susanna Koop finally confronted a fellow worker of hers who kept referring to 'the Russian women from Teichsheide.' Susanna explained the contrast between their former home in the Soviet Union and their experience in Bielefeld:

> In Russia we all felt a little higher than the Russians. We were always something a little more than they. At work we were valued more, considered ourselves a step above the Russians. We came here and we were supposed to be a step lower than native Germans. A person finds that hard. If you cannot do that, you will find it very hard to adjust to life here.[587]

Although immigrants often feel like second class citizens when they arrive in a new country, for ethnic Germans the disillusionment was exacerbated by their imagined idea of what Germany was and how the tension of ethnic identity would be resolved once they were finally there. The longing for Germany was almost surreal for many ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union. Peter Derksen, a minister in the Soviet Union commented in his

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[584] "Assiedlerkinder müssen in die Gemeinschaft integriert werden: Schwerwiegende Probleme durch westliche Lebensweise," *Neue Westfälische,* 25 Februar 1977. See also Maria Hecht, *Notes of an Interview.*

[585] "Frauenhilfe erleichtert Umsiedlerschicksale: Jahresfest im 'Haus des Handwerks'," *Neue Westfälische,* 17 May 1971.

[586] "Deutsche aus Russland öffneten vor Minister Maihofer einen prallen Sack voller Probleme: Gespräch führte zu konstruktiven Ratschlägen," *Neue Westfälische*, 23 January 1978.

[587] Susanna (Regier) Koop, *Interview.*

memoirs: "if only people had been so focused on getting into heaven as they were with the emigration to Germany."[588]

In contrast to that of Germany, citizenship in Canada was based on *jus soli*; citizenship acquired on the basis of place of birth or residence, not of ethnic descent or blood relationship. Canadian philosopher, Will Kymlicka rejects descent-based approaches to citizenship as having "obvious racist overtones." He argues that "[n]ational membership should be open in principle to anyone, regardless of race or colour, who is willing to learn the language and history of the society and participate in its social and political institutions."[589] This multicultural model of citizenship gained credence during the time of ethnic German immigration to Canada and Winnipeg.

Most ethnic Germans in Winnipeg became citizens as soon as they could, which in the 1950s and 1960s was after five years of residency.[590] Otto Plonke's priorities after arriving in Canada were to pay off his travel debts and become a citizen. Becoming a citizen legitimized his stay in Winnipeg and to him it seemed, "nobody asked me anymore where I was born and I had no more difficulties."[591] The kind of emotions immigrants felt on the day they became citizens are poignantly described by one of Barry Broadfoot's interviewees:

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[588] Derksen, *Es wurde wieder ruhig,* 150.

[589] Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 23.

[590] The revision of the Citizenship Act in 1977 changed the length of time to three years.

[591] Otto Plonke, *Interview,* Winnipeg, March 28, 1995, GOH.

> The day we became Canadians it was sunny and warm and my wife and I dressed up in our finery and we went to the courthouse and into the big courtroom and there were all the people there—Polish, Russians, Portuguese, Dutch, Norwegians, Chinese and a lot of others, and it was all very solemn in that big courtroom. …
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> The judge was named Mr. Wilson and he was an important judge, and we went through the ceremony, taking the oath and swearing to be good Canadians, and everybody answering they would be, and then the judge talked to us. Not like a judge but like a friend, and he told us about Canada and what it meant to him and what he hoped it would mean to us, all of us from different countries. He was a very kindly and great man, and he spoke to us beautifully and with great feeling, and then it was all over and we were Canadians.[592]

Acquiring Canadian citizenship as quickly as possible reflected the finality of ethnic German attachment to Canada. Since many immigrants only had a brief and tenuous connection to the German state, it appears that declaring allegiance to Canada was automatic for many ethnic Germans. Volume Four of the *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, a 1970 study that examined the contribution of ethnic groups other than the English and French, discussed the acquisition of citizenship under the rubric of the political process and the right to vote. It acknowledged, however, that acquiring citizenship "has not always been because of a desire to vote; in many instances it has been in order to obtain title to land, or the right to sponsor relatives as immigrants."[593] For ethnic German immigrants and other immigrants originating in Eastern European and the Soviet Union, the Communist regimes of their homelands may also have played a role. Many immigrants were effectively stateless or did not wish to

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[592] Broadfoot, *Immigrant Years,* 254.

[593] Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Cultural Contributions of the Other Ethnic Groups, Final Report Volume IV* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), 68.

return to their country of citizenship. These immigrants acquired Canadian citizenship as soon as they met their five-year residency requirement. While 9.5 percent of British Commonwealth immigrants arriving in Canada between 1951 and 1953 acquired Canadian citizenship five years later, the rate for Eastern European immigrants was much higher. Between 1953 and 1958, 95.5 percent of U.S.S.R. immigrants, 38.4 percent of Polish immigrants and 29.8 percent of German immigrants acquired their citizenship. The rate for immigrants arriving before 1951, when most ethnic German immigrants came to Canada, appears to have been even higher.[594]

Participation in the political process beyond voting does not seem to have been an important factor for ethnic Germans in Winnipeg. Ethnic German participation in the political process has tended to mirror that of their German national counterparts. Immigrants diligently exercised their franchise after becoming citizens but were much more cautious about becoming involved as candidates or in lobbying activities. The *Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission* found that "Germans have not been active in political life as a cultural group." The reason cited for this lack was the presence of sectarian groups such as Mennonites and Hutterites who opposed voting, the fact of Germany as the enemy in two World Wars, and a seeming "lack of ethnic-consciousness"

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[594] *Characteristics of Persons Granted Canadian Citizenship, 1953-1958, Catalogue 91-505,* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1960). The tables in this statistical summary do not allow for an exact determination of the rates of citizenship acquisition for ethnic German immigrants arriving between 1946 and 1950. Between 1953 and 1958, 7666 German citizens or persons born in Germany acquired Canadian citizenship who had immigrated before 1951. Approximately 90 percent of all immigrants acquiring Canadian citizenship between 1953 and 1988 immigrated after 1946. On this basis it would seem that almost 50 percent of postwar ethnic German immigrants arriving in Canada before 1951 had acquired their Canadian citizenship by 1958.

displayed by many Germans.[595] A study of the political participation of ethnic groups found similar trends in Winnipeg voting patterns. M.S. Donnelly found little evidence of Germans voting or participating in politics in any organized fashion as an ethnic group. Even in Ward Two, which in the 1960s included the postwar immigrant German population of the West End, there were no German aldermen until 1961. Only then did German representation roughly reflect their concentration in the ward. Donnelly found that Winnipeg's Germans tended to follow national trends and "deliberately refrained from political activity organized on an ethnic basis."[596]

A continuing feature of immigrant life has been participation in immigrant associations. These groups provided a place for various forms of mutual aid, for the advancement of group political and cultural objectives, and often just to meet people from 'home' over a drink or a game of dominoes.

In Bielefeld, banding together in associations and participating in life outside of extended family and church was antithetical to ethnic German understanding of community. Ethnic German immigrants in Bielefeld eschewed participation in both ethnic and host society associations. Their needs for mutual support and social interaction with fellow ethnic Germans were met by the immigrant church. Their own ambivalence or even opposition to links with host society secular associations was diametrically opposed to trends in German society, which increasingly viewed such participation as a

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[595] *Cultural Contributions of the Other Ethnic Groups* , 83.

[596] M.S. Donnelly, "Ethnic Participation in Municipal Government: Winnipeg, St. Boniface, and the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg," report made to the *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and* Biculturalism, September 1965, 41 and 27.

mark of an integrated citizen. Although similar tendencies towards favouring church over associational life characterized ethnic German immigrants in Winnipeg, the two domains were not as clearly separated, and some ethnic Germans participated in both.

In many accounts of immigrant adaptation, church and associational life have not been separated but, rather, have been examined together on the assumption that both fulfilled immigrant social needs for companionship, emotional support, economic networks and political action. In the case of ethnic Germans, religion and the church played a heightened role in immigrant lives, whereas associations enjoyed much less support or even were formally opposed, particularly by sectarian immigrants. In both Bielefeld and Winnipeg, associational life was less important in assisting integration but was also often the arena for intense struggle to preserve elements of ethnic German cultural identity.

Scholars have analysed associational life to gauge the persistence or decline of ethnicity in the immigrant community. Samuel L. Baily ranks the vitality of mutual aid societies and newspapers as important in the adjustment of New York and Buenos Aires Italians.[597] Raymond Breton, who advanced the idea of institutional completeness, argued that the "number of churches, welfare organizations, newspapers, and periodicals" was a measure of such completeness.[598]

With specific reference to the German immigrant experience, scholars have advanced the argument that the domains of religion and associational life competed in shaping immigrant worldviews. Scholars have generally described two mutually

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[597] Baily, "Adjustment of Italian Immigrants," 292-293, 295.

[598] Breton, "Institutional Completeness," 195.

exclusive groups, *Kirchendeutsche* and *Vereinsdeutsche*—those whose social interactions and cultural reference frame was shaped by church life, and those who relied more on associational life. Stanley Nadel's study, for instance, argues that among New York's Germans the "most successful religious groups… were those that sponsored their own *Vereine* in the city to compete for the loyalty of the *Vereinsdeutsche* populace." This was the case for German immigrants in New York because they emphasized associational life to a much greater extent than church life. Nadel concludes that the city's German population "was basically a secular community where religion played a far from central role."[599] On the *Verein* to *Kirchendeutsche* spectrum, ethnic Germans in both Bielefeld and Winnipeg were clearly *Kirchendeutsche* and had difficulties with association activities that were outside the sanctions of the church.

In the larger German society membership and participation in associations increasingly came to be identified with the very nature of 'Germanness'. In surveys conducted in the late 1960s about half of the German population indicated that they were members of a voluntary organization. By 1977 the number had grown to 56 percent and in the next five years it rose to 58 percent of the population. Sports organizations were the most popular with 22 percent of respondents indicating membership.[600] Other important organizations included union, professional and business associations, political parties and singing clubs. The connection between cultural identity and participation in

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[599] Nadel, *Little Germany,* 103. Nadel attributes the concept of a church/association duality to the German sociolinguist, Heinz Kloss.

[600] Glatzer, *Social Trends,* 95.

voluntary associations can be traced to the 1950s when, according to investigators, Germans began stressing the "integrative and identity-forming functions of club or affiliative associations."[601]

In Bielefeld the tradition of belonging to a *Landsmannschaft*[602] was firmly entrenched and was a product of the city's high number of postwar expellees. In the 1950s there were numerous associations committed to maintaining a connection to homeland territories, now part of Poland. These associations maintained clubhouses, held dances and sponsored other folk events in native costume and actively lobbied government to enhance integration initiatives and compensation for their members. As the settlement and integration of expellees progressed the role of homeland associations changed. By 1957, the local newspaper, *Westfalen Blatt,* reported that although in their associational life Germans from the East still maintained the folk traditions of their homelands, there was considerable intermarriage and contact between groups and with the native Bielefeld population.[603] Along with active 'homeland' associations, Bielefeld, like other German cities, also had its sports and cultural associations and internationally affiliated Lions and Rotary Clubs.

Connecting successful integration into German life with belonging to an association had implications for ethnic German adaptation to a new home in Bielefeld. Long time Mennonite settlement worker Hans von Niessen suggested that:

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[601] Ibid., 91.

[602] An association of expellees from a certain region in lands lost to Poland after the Second World War, literally translated: "countrymen's association."

[603] "Die Vertriebenen leben sich ein; Zur zweiten Heimat geworden: Im Landkreis Bielefeld fühlen sich viele Ostdeutsche heimisch," *Westfallen Blatt*, 3 October 1957.

> The state understands it in this way. You should work; you should live like all the others live. Join associations like the others. Whether you go to church or not is your business, it is a private matter in any case.

In contrast to the desire of immigrants to attend church, to organize church programs for children, and to participate in Bible studies and youth programs, German society, according to Niessen, wanted them not to "take that so seriously; come and join our associations. We need people in the brass band, in the sports clubs, and elsewhere—in the volunteer fire department."[604]

Ethnic Germans in Bielefeld, like many of their counterparts throughout Germany, were out of step with the German emphasis on participation in secular associations. Surveys and interviews of ethnic Germans consistently showed low levels of participation in the associational life of German society. Klaus Boll found in his interviews with ethnic German immigrants in the south of Germany that "few of those interviewed were members of a German association at the time of the interview." He attributes this tendency to the dearth of German organizations in the Soviet Union.[605] Barbara Dietz agrees with the connection between associational participation and successful integration in Germany. Her analysis of immigrants arriving in the later 1970s and early 1980s, however also confirmed that, in most cases, migrants had minimal contact with German society and its organizations.[606] A mid 1970s study of immigrant youth found that only 7 percent of youth had been invited to participate in an association;

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[604] Hans von Niessen, *Interview*.

[605] Boll, *Arbeitsbericht Nr. 4*, 22.

[606] Barbara Dietz, "Ruckzug oder Mitwirkung," 97.

however 24 percent had taken up such membership on their own initiative.[607] In Bielefeld, the regular meetings of politicians and bureaucrats with immigrants always included questions about immigrant participation in associational life. A 1977 meeting asked the assembled ethnic Germans about their contacts with the wider society. According to the minutes of the meeting, "there was a general ignorance among *Aussiedler* about possibilities of joining associations."[608] It was agreed that city officials should make an effort to advise various associations of the presence of ethnic Germans and to encourage them to include immigrants in their activities. Just over a year later when the question was asked, the minutes again reported that "associations and recreational clubs were unknown" to the group and only a few immigrants mentioned contacts with such organizations.[609]

Education materials prepared for Nordrhein-Westfalen teachers explained the difference in attitudes between ethnic German immigrants and German society concerning primary and secondary forms of association. The writer suggested that the "strict moral and ethical value systems and the intimate family connections of ethnic Germans in the East are no longer held to be appropriate for the times by many in Germany."[610] German society and Bielefeld society in particular, it seems, had moved beyond what were perceived to be nineteenth century notions of family, church, and moral proscription as essential defenders of German identity. For western Germans marks

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[607] Hans Harmsen, "Forschungsprojekt: Integration jugendlicher Spätaussiedler aus den Ostgebieten," in *AWR* 17 (1979): 54.

[608] *Sozial u. Wohnungswesen Protokolle,* 15.03.1977, BSA.

[609] *Sozial u. Wohnungswesen Protokolle*, 13.06.1978, BSA.

[610] Alfred Eisfeld, "Rußland/Sowjetunion," 22.

of belonging to nation and culture included participation in public and relational life. That meant participating in the various associations that gave structure to recreational and leisure activities. Sectarian ethnic Germans in Bielefeld, on the other hand, kept church at the core of their social and metaphysical life worlds while opposing participation in the dominant society's associational life.

Although associations may not have been the centres of ethnic German life, many newcomers did have connections to specific ethnic German organizations. In the tradition of expellees who preceded them, ethnic German immigrants also established associations devoted to promoting their distinctive cultural experience and lobbying for their interests in the public arena. Expatriates from the Soviet Union established the *Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland* in the aftermath of the Second World War. The association was founded by religious leaders and initially functioned under the wing of churches. It was legally incorporated with offices in Stuttgart and over time evolved into a general ethnic association. The mandate of the organization was to research and disseminate the history and culture of ethnic German experience in the former Soviet Union. The organization published a monthly newsletter, *Volk auf dem Weg,* and published and distributed books about ethnic German history and literature.[611] The association maintained local chapters; the Bielefeld chapter was established in 1976 and provided settlement services at the *Teichsheide* temporary housing facility. The first chair of the

[611] Adam Giesinger, "Germans from Russia in Germany in the 1950's: The Early Years of the Landsmannschaft," *Journal of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia* 4(1981):26-33.

Bielefeld chapter was Jakob Reimer, of Leopoldshöhe just outside the city.[612] In 1981, a sister organization devoted specifically to cultural promotion was established.[613]

Even participation in the ethnic German immigrant association, the *Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Rußland,* remained marginal compared to church participation. Most sectarian ethnic Germans did not stay or even become members. Membership in the association was, however, important for some ethnic Germans. Barbara Dietz found 44 percent of the respondents in her survey belonged to some association. The *Landsmannschaft* accounted for almost a third (27 percent) of them. Her analysis showed that many older immigrants became members while those less than forty years of age had few connections with it.[614] Others have found that membership was transitory and that immigrants did not maintain their membership for the longer term. Klaus Boll reports that only 11 percent of all ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union subscribed to the monthly newsletter sent to all members of the association. Based on ethnic Germans he interviewed, Boll concluded that while many Soviet ethnic Germans became members initially, they frequently became less involved as time went on and eventually allowed their membership to lapse. According to Boll, interview respondents had several complaints:

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[612] See Victor Holzer, "20 Jahre Ortsgruppe Bielefeld," *Volk auf dem Weg,* 47, (1996): 19 and Maria Hecht, *Notes of an Interview.*

[613] Herbert Wiens, *Deutsche in Rußland*, 38.

[614] Dietz, "Rückzug oder Mitwirkung," 97-98. A representative of the *Landsmannschaft* indicated in presentation in the United States that the organization had 5000 members in 1979. Eduard von Sarnowski, "Recent German Emigres from the Soviet Union now in West Germany, *Journal of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia* 4(1981): 13.

> music and dance offerings were purely folk-based and inappropriate. Others complained about a fixation on the former homeland, the 'super Germanness' in speeches and presentations, and the leadership's orientation to the past rather than to the present and the future.[615]

Immigrants with strong ties to sectarian churches objected to excessive consumption of alcohol by a small minority of those attending the association's events and some bemoaned the lack of actual immigrants from the Soviet Union among the association's leadership.[616]

Ethnic Germans migrating to Winnipeg seemed to share this ambivalence about participation in non-religious organizations and associations. In Winnipeg, however, they were soon immersed in a culture that challenged their German identity. Immigrants entered a society that spoke English and assumed that postwar immigrants would become Canadian, which at the time was still thought of as British. After they had established themselves, immigrants to Winnipeg in the late 1940s and 1950s sought to preserve some of their German identity. For many, that identity was not exclusively defined by religious affiliation. As late as 1986, when most ethnic Germans had been living in Winnipeg thirty to thirty-five years, Manitoba's German community was surveyed in preparation for an attempt to strengthen the province's German organizations. The "German Socio-cultural Survey" final report indicated that over 90 percent felt that Germans in Canada "should actively promote the development of their language, culture, and institutions."[617]

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[615] Boll, *Kulturwandel,* 346.

[616] Ibid., 347.

[617] "Sociocultural Survey, Appendix A.

In Winnipeg the politics of ethnic German associational life illustrated the competing notions of what it meant to be German. Ethnic Germans were divided over many of the same issues as those that kept their Bielefeld counterparts away from participation in ethnic associations. There were differences of opinion about appropriate group behaviour, alcohol use, dancing, and participation in Carnival festivities.[618] There were disagreements about how their children's identities could be infused with a German flavour and what that flavour should be.

Participation in the existing local German Club by Baptist and Mennonite ethnic Germans was also not as widespread as by their Lutheran counterparts who were instrumental in rejuvenating the society after the war. Winnipeg's earlier German immigrants established the German Society of Winnipeg in 1892 to provide mutual aid and to encourage German culture in the city. By the First World War the society boasted 293 members, its own clubhouse on Heaton Avenue, a healthy financial situation and good member participation. The First World War was a disaster for the society; social and cultural activities ended and membership dropped drastically. The Second World War caused a similar decline in activities; this time even the society's facilities had to be sold. In 1948 faithful members again revived the organization and immigration during the postwar years assured the success of the society's rebuilding plans and the purchase of a new club facility, the *Deutsches Haus.*[619] Some ethnic German immigrants became members and the society was able to retain a loyal core of such members throughout the years. In 1986, the German Socio-cultural survey found that 9.9 percent of respondents

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[618] *Fasching.*

[619] *100 Years German Society of Winnipeg*, not paged.

had some involvement with the German Society, which was the highest of any association even though the sample included areas outside of Winnipeg.[620] Ernst Hansch was an example. He was an active supporter of German-Canadian culture, prominent Winnipeg construction contractor and a postwar Lutheran ethnic German immigrant from Soviet Ukraine. He served as President in the 1960s and there were other ethnic Germans in leadership among the society's affiliated clubs.[621] Otto Plonke, a Baptist, and his wife who was Lutheran, attended the Club's functions and listed it among the institutions that helped maintain their German identities.[622] Although the German Club of the post Second World War period took great pains to emphasize its non-religious, or inclusive orientation, it failed to attract large numbers of ethnic Germans and even fewer sectarians.[623] Maria Rogalski's family was too busy with church related activities to find time to attend events at the German Club. Wilhelm Maretzki and his wife had been invited to the club facilities of the German Society, but had never become very interested and claimed that it had been too far away from where they lived to attend regularly.[624]

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[620] "Sociocultural Survey." There were ten associations listed on the survey form.

[621] Dieter Roger, "Ernst Hansch zum Gedenken," in *German Canadian Yearbook,* eds. Gerhard Friesen and Karin Gürttler (Toronto: Historical Society of Mecklenberg Upper Canada, 1988): 170.

[622] Otto Plonke, *Interview.*

[623] For examples of the society's desire to be seen as non political, non religious and inclusive, see James Crampton, "German Society marks 100 years in Winnipeg: Group has become one of Western Canada's largest and oldest ethnic societies," *Winnipeg Free Press*, January 14, 1992; the Club's newsletter, *Verein-Kalender; Club Calender*, and its motto: "Strictly non-political and non-sectarian. Retaining German traditions and culture in our adopted land—Canada" as printed in its anniversary book.

[624] Wilhelm Maretzki, *Interview.*

Most sectarian ethnic Germans preferred those associations, or autonomous branches of associations, that were compatible with their religious and church objectives. Mennonites organized the *Mennonitischer Verein zur Pflege der deutschen Muttersprache in Canada.*[625] The association was dedicated to maintaining the German language in part because churches, "in which one still speaks German, are at the forefront of those interested in the maintenance of our German language…." Church leaders were encouraged to become members and support the membership of parishioners and the association actively pursued the support of national Mennonite church conferences.[626]

The conflict between German identities located in religion and those located in more secular, associational and folk-culture domains was illustrated by attempts to organize a joint German response to Canada's centennial celebrations in 1967. The tension between religious and associational affiliations and the resulting problems of developing a unified project were apparent very early in the process. At a preliminary organizational meeting of what would become the German Canadian Centennial Council a pastor cautioned that the assembled representatives could not decide on behalf of their organizations but rather, that "all participating groups would have to be asked their

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[625] Loosely translated as the 'Mennonite Association for the Nurture of the German Mother Tongue in Canada.'

[626] "An die Ältesten und Leiter der menonitischen Gemeinden in Canada, 1. November, 1952, " *Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization*, vol. 1334, file 1020, MHC. At the 1956 Conference of Mennonites in Canada meetings at Niagara on the Lake, Ontario the committee indicated it had 1305 members. *Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Kanada, 1956* (Rosthern: *Der Bote*, 1956), 122.

opinions" before any joint project could be initiated.[627] Suggested projects included a German cultural centre and a senior citizens housing project. When the German government failed to support the cultural centre and constituency support for the housing project was felt to be lacking the group had to scale back its vision. At a second meeting, to which seventy organizations had been invited but only fifteen sent representatives, the group finally settled on the construction of a gingerbread house in a city park because "it would not be contentious for the various religious groups and was absolutely neutral."[628] Even this project was soon in danger of failing and the blame was laid at the feet of the religious groups. A participant at a subsequent meeting complained that one particular religious group "only participated in projects that they had initiated and planned." Another organizer had found groups willing to sell fairy tale books to raise funds for the project but hinted that churches would have preferred organizing a choir. In general it was felt that generating support for the project was a problem because churches were already soliciting the energies, time and money of the German community.[629] The inability of one of Manitoba's largest immigrant groups to get together for a project was frustrating and embarrassing for non-church immigrant leaders. A statement in the *Free*

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[627] "Niederschrift ueber die Plannungssitzung fuer Centennial-Projekte der deutschsprachigen Gruppe in Manitoba am 12. Oktober 1965, durchgefuehrt im Moores Restaurant, Winnipeg," *Roeder Collection,* HG 128 MG 31, vol. 10, file 9, NAC.

[628] "Protokoll ueber die Versammlung zur Vorbereitung des deutschen Beitrages zur Kanadischen Hunderjahrfeier abgehalten am 26. Januar 1966 im Moores Restaurant, Winnipeg, " *Roeder Collection,* vol. 10, file 10, NAC. See also: Carmen Litta-Magnus, "Gingerly Steps Taken," *Winnipeg Free Press,* November 4, 1966. The newspaper account of the meeting claimed that 2000 people had been sent an invitation and only 50 showed up.

[629] "Protokoll ueber die Vollversammlung des German Canadian Centennial Council vom 13. September 1966 in Moore's Restaurant," *Roeder Collection*, vol. 10, file 10, NAC.

Press attributed to W.C. Barthel, the chair of the Centennial committee, betrayed this frustration. Barthel hoped that the proposed gingerbread house project could "show once and for all [that] German-Canadians can make a worthwhile contribution for the centennial year."[630] After calling on individuals to step in to help fund the gingerbread house and after convincing the province to cover the printing costs of the fairy tale booklet sold to raise funds, the house was finally completed in 1970. A plaque inside informed visitors that the gingerbread house was "a gift from the German speaking peoples of Manitoba, dedicated and donated to the children of Canada on occasion of Canada's Centennial 1967."[631]

The contest between religious and secular groups in the immigrant community was also illustrated by the politics of language school associations. A tug of war developed between more secularly oriented German immigrants as represented by the Trans Canada Alliance of Germans (TCA) and sectarian ethnic German immigrants who, at least in Winnipeg, had initiated the schools that provided the largest enrolment. The TCA was established in 1951 as an umbrella organization of various German societies in Canada with impetus coming from the Saturday language school movement.[632] The alliance was an attempt to focus the efforts of German Clubs across Canada, but its main

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[630] Carmen Litta-Magnus, "Gingerly Steps Taken," *Winnipeg Free Press,* November 4, 1966.

[631] Hans Peter Langes, "Es war einmal...Once upon a Time: The Witch's Hut, Kildonan Park, Winnipeg, Manitoba," in *German Canadian Yearbook,* eds. Gerhard Friesen and Karin Gurttler (Toronto: Historical Society of Mecklenberg Upper Canada, 1988), 117.

[632] Gerhard P. Bassler, *The German Canadian Mosaic Today and Yesterday: Identities, Roots, and Heritage* (Ottawa: German-Canadian Congress, 1991), 13 and Fritz Weiden, *The Trans-Canada Alliance of German Canadians: A Study in Culture* (Windsor: Tolle Lege Enterprises, 1985), 21.

supporters were German-Canadians from Ontario.[633] The Manitoba Branch was organized in 1952, its main support coming from the German Society and affiliated clubs.[634] The TCA enjoyed some success until the 1970s when it disintegrated due to infighting.[635]

German schools that cropped up throughout the city of Winnipeg in the 1950s had formed their own association known as 'The German Language Schools of Manitoba and Saskatchewan'.[636] These schools had loosely affiliated with the TCA after 1963 to protect themselves from outside interference. When the German government became involved in supporting language schools the members of the association received their allocation of funds through the TCA. In the summer of 1965 Hans Roeder, an immigrant from Hanover and the elected coordinator of the school association, found his position in jeopardy because of an apparent attempt to consolidate control of all German language education activities under the auspices of the TCA and its national coordinator for language schools, Karl Heeb of Ontario. At a reorganization meeting of the Manitoba Branch of the Alliance, Roeder was replaced largely because of the votes of the German Society which was closely affiliated with the TCA. The twenty-six church-based German

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[633] Weiden, *Trans-Canada Alliance,* 11.

[634] The Manitoba Branch of the TCA included: The German Society of Winnipeg; *Der Treue Hussar* (Carnival Club); *Schuetzenverein*, Little Britain; F.C. Germania (Soccer Club); Berliner Club; *Hoerergemeinschaft* (Radio Fan Club); German Canadian Business & Professional Association of Manitoba; St. Hubertus (Hunting & Fishing Club) and the German Canadian Theatrical Club.

[635] Fritz Weiden's account of this disintegration is polemical and partisan but offers valuable insights into the German-Canadian political scene of the postwar period.

[636] The association was not limited to schools in Winnipeg but city schools comprised most of its membership and student population.

language schools were not directly represented at the meeting since they were not members of the TCA. The controversy highlighted the need for autonomy, particularly for church-based language schools. As Roeder pointed out to the TCA's secretary, the conflict appeared to be "a battle between those with a secular as opposed to a Christian outlook." Mennonites, who accounted for over 50 percent of Saturday school enrolment, were particularly sensitive about interference from the secular clubs. In his representations to the TCA regarding his replacement, Roeder suggested that "the Mennonite language schools, ...say they do not need to be affiliated with the TCA, [they] will go as a group to the *Verein zur Pflege der Deutschen Sprache* and [their] own education association."[637]

There were numerous other associations created by Germans in the postwar period. German nationals, who began arriving in Winnipeg after 1951, were more active in seeking to establish a German identity through associations. They naturally believed that their fellow ethnic German immigrants would be supporters of such initiatives. Promoting ties to Germany or participating in celebrations of regional German customs were, however, often foreign to ethnic German ways of thinking.

Connections to Germany were fostered in various ways by different associations. In addition to funnelling German government support for language schools, the TCA's activities included sponsoring exchanges and charter flights to Germany. The German-Canadian Business and Professional Association had as its goal "to cultivate healthy

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[637] See the exchange of correspondence between Hans Roeder, Karl Heeb, TCA secretary and W.C. Barthel, TCA Manitoba Branch President. October to December 1965, "German Language Schools in Man. & Sask-German language school of German Society of Winnipeg—corr. with TCA & related material, n.d., 1961-1966," *Roeder Collection,* vol. 12, file 5, NAC.

relations between Canada and Germany and to further mutual understanding of its peoples."[638] Ethnic Germans from the Soviet Union and some areas of Poland had created a German identity unconnected to that of the Germany created by Bismarck in 1871. Particularly for some sectarian group members, identification with Germanness was religious and cultural—not national. The German Canadian Business and Professional Association was also inaccessible to working class ethnic Germans. It had a limited membership of the ethnic German elite who had the time and resources to become members and attend its luncheon meetings featuring speakers such as NASA scientist Wernher von Braun. Walter Koberstein, for instance, never joined the German Society or attended its Club facilities. For him the German Canadian Business and Professional Association "was the only organization he ever became a member of."[639] The Business and Professional Association tended to be a greater attraction for those closer to a German national identity. Hans Pazulla, an immigrant from what became East Germany was the first editor of the association's publication, the *German Canadian Business Review.* Pazulla was also the editor of the German language newspaper *Der Nordwesten.* When Pazulla moved to Toronto in 1959, Hans Roeder succeeded him. Along with the editorship of the association's publication, immigrants from Germany proper usually held the executive positions in the organization.[640]

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[638] "German Canadian Business Review—manuscripts of articles submitted for publication, n.d," *Roeder Collection,* vol. 10, file 5, NAC.

[639] Walter Koberstein, *Interview.*

[640] "German Canadian Business Review—manuscripts of articles submitted for publication, n.d.," *Roeder Collection,* vol. 10, file 5, NAC,"German Canadian Business and Professional Association of Manitoba: Correspondence, membership directives, news release, program, 1965-1972," *Roeder Collection,* vol.10, file 34, NAC, "Manitoba

Ethnic German reluctance to join associations aggravated the tendency among German-Canadians to find other connections more relevant to their new experience in Winnipeg. The 1986 German-Canadian Socio-cultural survey asked respondents about the pattern of their participation in German-related organizations over the past ten years. Although more than two thirds (68.8 percent) believed there had been no change, almost a quarter (23.3 percent) of the respondents thought their participation had decreased. Only 5 percent thought it had been increasing during the period. Respondents seemed to be at a loss to explain their increase or decrease in participation. Of the 25 percent indicating a reason for their reduced participation, many (23.4 percent) thought their greater involvement with other non-German organizations was the cause while a significant number (13.3 percent) indicated that German-Canadian organizations had become less relevant for them.[641]

The 1986 survey was part of new organization efforts by Winnipeg's German-Canadian community. Ethnic German businessman Ernst Hansch, Heinz Daniels from the Business and Professional Association, Abe Peters, listed as representing the Mennonite community, Guenther Sikert from the German Society, and Dr. E. Schluderman from the Austrian community had met in 1984 to establish the Manitoba Branch of the German-Canadian Congress. This new group organized a German-Canadian community development conference in the fall of 1984 where Abe Peters, the apparent Mennonite

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Government News Release, June 12, 1968, German Canadians at Home in Manitoba," *Roeder Collection,* vol. 10, file 4, NAC. See also *Der Nordwesten*, 20. October 1964 and "German Canadian Business Review," in *The Multilingual Press in Manitoba*, eds. Joyce Bowling and M.H. Hyckaway (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Press Club, 1974), 111-113.

[641] "Sociocultural Survey,"Appendix A.

representative, gave the keynote address. In his address Peters maintained that one of the reasons for the lack of strong ethnic associations among German-Canadians was that they were "not sure whether ethnic identity is a gift to treasure or an 'albatross'." He went on to suggest that "[p]ride in their identity is largely a private matter since there are few positive public expressions to enhance their identity."[642]

Ethnic newspapers, like associations, connected immigrants to others like them and to events in their former homelands. Reading ethnic German newspapers was a means to maintain contact among fellow immigrants. In Winnipeg there were numerous opportunities to read German language periodicals including non-church related newspapers. The *Courier* and the *Nordwesten*, two German language newspapers published in Winnipeg, originated before the First World War. The *Nordwesten* began publishing in the city in 1889 and was very involved in establishing the German Society. By the First World War it had more than twenty thousand subscribers, mostly in Western Canada. The *Courier,* initially published in Regina, began as the *Saskatchewan Courier* in 1907. It was part of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party's electoral machine. The Liberal MLA for Rosthern was also the president of the publishing company that started the paper.[643] Both the *Nordwesten* and the *Courier* benefited from new subscribers during the peak immigration period in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1958, the *Courier* moved

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[642] Peters, "Keynote Address," 10.

[643] Werner Entz, "Der Courier" and his "Der Nordwesten," in *The Multilingual Press in Manitoba* eds. Joyce Bowling and M.H. Hyckaway (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Press Club, 1974), 101-110. For an overview of the political affiliations of the pre-First World War German Press in Winnipeg, see Arthur Grenke, "The Secular German Language Press of Winnipeg, 1889-1914," in *German Canadian Yearbook*, eds. Gerhard Friesen and Karin Gurttler (Toronto: Historical Society of Mecklenburg Upper Canada, 1988), 81-97.

its offices to Winnipeg from Regina. German language press historian Werner Entz suggests that the *Courier,* whose lobbying for the admission of Germans was more strident than that of its competitor, "helped greatly to convince the Canadian government that they should allow renewed immigration from Germany."[644]

After immigrants began arriving in Winnipeg in large numbers, the *Nordwesten* and the *Courier* quickly changed their focus from advocating the admission of ethnic Germans to providing settlement assistance. The *Nordwesten* ran an irregular feature called "Das interssiert den Neueinwanderer!" (Of interest to new immigrants!). The articles offered suggestions for immigrants trying to adjust to their new life. There were answers to questions about transferring qualifications, purchasing on credit, paying for medical care, politics, government bureaucracy and other topics of interest to newcomers. The papers brought immigrants up to date on events in their homelands and provided opportunities for German language businesses to entice new customers to their establishments. In addition to his role as editor, Hans Pazullo also published a guide for newly arrived immigrants at the height of the postwar immigration period. In the guide he tried to impress upon immigrants the value of the German language press. It had "an important assignment and mission to fight for and defend German-Canadian interests, the honour of the motherland and, wherever it might be, to foster justice, loyalty, and commitment to the new chosen homeland of Canada…."[645]

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[644] Entz, "Der Courier," 105.

[645] Hans Pazulla, *Canada: Deine Neue Heimat* (Winnipeg: By the Author, 1951), 165.

For the *Nordwesten*, the influx of immigrants shored up its flagging fortunes for a time but did not insure its ultimate success. The *Courier* fared better and under its managing director, Wilfred J. Ehman, the paper "gained many thousands of new subscribers due to skilful and effective publicity."[646] In 1968 the two papers were read nation-wide; *Der Courier* published seven editions on a weekly basis for its 17,500 subscribers, while *Der Nordwesten* was distributed to almost 14,000 subscribers.[647] Even with the inflow of new German readers the *Nordwesten* was unable to remain viable and in 1970 the *Courier* and the *Nordwesten* amalgamated to become the *Kanada Kurier-Der Nordwesten.*

The arrival of ethnic Germans, followed slightly later by immigrants from Germany itself, was seemingly unable to give sustained support for German language newspapers. By 1986 the German-Canadian Socio-cultural survey reported low readership for almost all German language publications in Manitoba. The Mennonite *Der Bote* enjoyed the highest level of readership. Among the other Mennonite publications, the *Mennonitische Rundschau,* and the *Mennonitische Post* also recorded high readership.[648] The *Kanada Kurier* was the second most commonly read German language newspaper in the province with more than 7 percent of respondents indicating they read

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[646] Entz, "Der Courier": 105.

[647] "Manitoba Government News Release, June 12, 1968, German Canadians at Home in Manitoba," *Roeder Collection,* vol. 10, file 4, NAC.

[648] The *Mennontische Rundschau* was initially published in the United States for a Mennonite Brethren audience. The paper moved to Winnipeg in 1923 and its postwar circulation peaked at over 8,000 falling to 6,000 by 1974. See Erich L. Ratzlaff, "Mennonitische Rundschau," in Bowling and Hyckaway, 131-135. The *Mennonitische Post* was published in Steinbach, Manitoba and catered to conservative Mennonite groups who had migrated to Mexico and South America.

the paper regularly or at least occasionally. At the same time the English language *Winnipeg Free Press* was read either regularly or occasionally by 65 percent of all respondents.

Table 3. Readership of German Language Periodicals in Manitoba, 1986.[649]

Periodical	Read Regularly	Read Sometimes	Total
Der Bote	7.3%	3.3%	10.6%
Mennonitische Rundschau	2.6%	3.1%	5.7%
Mennonitische Post	2.7%	2.3%	5.0%
Kanada Kurier	4.0%	3.3%	7.3%

(percent of respondents, n=900)

The German Socio-cultural Survey found that support for media such as radio and television tended to divide along lines similar to those in other ethnic activities. Two sister radio stations whose signal was heard in Winnipeg, CFAM and CHSM, were owned by Mennonite entrepreneurs and their German language broadcasting was aimed at a Mennonite audience. Most of this German language programming consisted of religious broadcasting by Mennonite and other churches. The two stations' German language programming was listened to regularly by 25 percent of respondents while fewer than 7 percent (6.9) regularly listened to the secular German programming of CKJS, a local radio station specializing in ethnic language programming. The German television program offered on a local channel featuring stories from Germany enjoyed

[649] "Sociocultural Survey," Appendix A. The survey was a personal interview of a sample of over 900 respondents drawn from areas representative of the distribution of German-Canadians in Manitoba. Approximately one-half of the respondents were from Winnipeg.

limited support with fewer than 2 percent indicated they watched it regularly and 83 percent of respondents indicated they never watched the program.[650]

In Bielefeld, there were few general interest newspapers or publications addressed specifically to ethnic German immigrants or widely read by them. One publication that had a small following was the German language immigrant newspaper *Der Bote,* published in Winnipeg primarily for Mennonite immigrants in Canada. The newspaper was begun in the 1920s and gave voice to their horrors of their experience during the upheavals in Russia and offered them a way to stay in touch with their fellow immigrants wherever they had settled. *Der Bote* enjoyed some readership among immigrants in Germany.[651] The paper featured regular articles about ethnic German immigrants and their experiences in Germany. Peter Epp, a Mennonite immigrant from Bielefeld was a regular contributor to the paper. His writings ranged from articles about events in the Bielefeld church to his memoirs and other stories of life in the Soviet Union.

Associational life and connections to other immigrants through the ethnic press and other media were not of major importance in the integration of ethnic German immigrants. In both Bielefeld and Winnipeg, there were serious constraints to finding common ground on which associational life could be built. In Bielefeld the conflict was

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[650] Ibid.

[651] The number of subscribers in Bielefeld is not known; however it appears to have been fairly low. A table of subscription statistics going back to 1991 obtained from Lois Bergen at the offices of the paper in Winnipeg listed 649 subscribers in all of Germany.

between immigrants and the dominant society. For Baptist and Mennonite ethnic Germans, joining the associational life of German society was antithetical to their belief in the church as the centre of social contact. The dominant society's view of integration included participation in associational life, which meant that ethnic German immigrants could not become fully integrated.

In Winnipeg, conflicts between the secular and the sacred spheres meant that sectarian and other ethnic Germans never felt comfortable with wholehearted participation in joint efforts to preserve a German identity. The attraction of participating with other German speakers in a shared Germanness was real for all immigrants in Winnipeg. However, sectarian ethnic Germans could never fully come to terms with collaboration with secular German associations. These associations tended to co-opt ethnic Germans under their umbrella without developing a real sense of ownership and commitment among the newcomers.

The initial strong desire to have contact with those with whom they shared a past and with whom they now experienced their new home was apparent in both Winnipeg and Bielefeld. Immigrants tended to join their respective ethnic associations, but membership often was nominal and then was given up entirely. Only a minority with particularly strong ties to their ethnic identity as Germans remained dedicated to nurturing participation in ethnic associations. Those who did feel the need or purpose of such close ties to secular groups found their ethnic connectedness in their religion and church. Still others abandoned their Germanness, or at least their German associations in favour of rapid integration in the dominant society.

Comparing the two countries' approaches to who was eligible to become a citizen reveals the stark contrast in the very conception of the nation. Germany conceived membership in ethnocultural terms while Canada's basis for membership was based on place of birth and voluntary affiliation. For ethnic Germans in Bielefeld the notion of their membership in the German nation on the basis of ethnicity went to the very heart of their reasons for immigration. Otherwise, for ethnic Germans in both countries, participation in the polity of their new country as citizens was similar. In both cities immigrants came with the knowledge that a return to their homelands in the Communist east was not possible or desirable. In Canada, they chose to become Canadians as quickly as possible and participated in the country's political affairs unobtrusively. Citizenship legitimized their official status. It completed the sense of community membership that they were acquiring in the workplace, neighbourhood, and in daily communications with other Canadians. In Germany, citizenship was something immigrants had desired for a long time and it was granted immediately. For Bielefeld's immigrants official membership in the state was, however, not accompanied by legitimacy in other domains. Bielefeld's immigrants continued to feel they were incomplete citizens.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the processes involved in an immigrant group's integration into two medium sized cities, one in Germany and one in Canada. The cities of Winnipeg and Bielefeld are two urban environments large enough to encompass the range of urban experience yet small enough that the influence of adding a single immigrant group embracing thousands of members is detectable. What were the important processes and institutions that either assisted or hindered integration in these two environments?

Integration has been thought of here as the degree to which first generation immigrants came to 'feel at home' in a new city. It has been argued that integration involves the transformation of social and cultural tension arising from the introduction of an immigrant group into a host society to a point where their experience is that which common in the society in general. The aim here has not been to sketch an endpoint for this transformation but rather to examine the processes that moulded it. Our point of departure has been the reformulations of the concept of assimilation. Elliott Barkan and others have sought to retain its utility in describing the cultural change experienced by immigrant groups without ascribing universality, linearity or immutability to its processes.

The themes that are important to understanding integration in Bielefeld and Winnipeg have been the processes of finding work and homes, of public discourse and association, of contact with and participation in the host society, and of establishing membership in the more circumscribed and sometimes private worlds of family, church

and language. Ironically, by these measures, first generation ethnic Germans immigrants in Winnipeg were better integrated, that is the tension between their worlds and that of their host society was reduced to a greater extent, than was the case among their Bielefeld counterparts.[652] In spite of the expectation that new arrivals in Bielefeld would experience less difficulty because of their ethnic and linguistic similarity to the host society, this thesis argues that the Winnipeg immigrants, who had a greater chasm to bridge, integrated into their host society more quickly and experienced fewer, less disruptive tensions in the process.

Comparing ethnic German integration in the two cities has uncovered significant similarities and differences in the two environments and in the groups that came to make their homes there. Ethnic Germans demonstrated similar behaviour in the two cities in selecting areas in which to live, in their approach to work and in their views of associational life.

In Bielefeld and Winnipeg, immigrants had a strong desire to live in the same neighbourhoods, at least initially. This preference was most apparent among sectarian immigrants—Mennonites and Baptists—in both cities. In spite of a regulated, proscribed housing environment in Bielefeld and a laissez-faire, market driven housing situation in Winnipeg, both groups of immigrants found reassurance in living close to others like them. In both cities, ethnic Germans were intent on owning their own homes. In Winnipeg that desire translated into women and youth joining the work force to provide extra resources, saving for down payments by living with other ethnic Germans in

[652] These conclusions are in contrast to those of Tony Waters's study of six German groups. Although ethnic Germans migrating to Germany were not part of his study, Waters asserts that they assimilated rapidly. See Waters, "Migrant Germans," 538.

crowded conditions, or co-owning a house with family members. In Bielefeld it meant transplanting a homeland custom of exchanging labour to construct homes for each other. Older family members also provided the capital for the young to build their own homes.

Both groups of immigrants took pride in their ability to work. In both cities, ethnic German workers legitimized their presence by referring to their resourcefulness, their contribution to their respective country's economies, and their ability to please their employers. In spite of differing economic climates, both groups of immigrants integrated easily into the working worlds of the two cities. Finally immigrants eschewed strong associational ties in both environments. Religious life was a much greater force in ethnic German social and metaphysical worlds in both cities. In Bielefeld and Winnipeg this was most apparent for sectarian immigrants who preferred not to immerse themselves in associational life, whether in the host society or with their fellow ethnics.

There were also significant differences in the integration experiences of the two groups. Winnipeg and Bielefeld had long experience with the processes involved in absorbing an immigrant group and with the changes in a group's social and cultural behaviour that would be necessary if it was to be integrated successfully. In spite of both cities having a history of integrating immigrants there were significant differences in how that history informed their approach to ethnic German newcomers.

Winnipeg was a polyglot city built by migrants who arrived in a great wave between 1880 and 1914. By the time ethnic Germans arrived, Winnipeg was home to a cacophony of tongues and its people had become accustomed to a diversity of cultures. Bielefeld was a much older place but it too had the experience of absorbing newcomers. After the Second World War, the city was inundated with expellees and the experience of

integrating them provided the model for its approach to ethnic Germans who began arriving in the 1970s. As in other German cities, Bielefeld became home for foreign guest workers who were never thought of as immigrants but rather as temporary residents. Ethnic German immigrants, unlike their 'foreign' counterparts were to become German Bielefelders.

There were significant differences in how the state approached settlement services in Bielefeld and Winnipeg. Winnipeg's immigrants were essentially left to their own. The Canadian state's approach saddled families and church groups with settlement costs. Immigrants did benefit from limited state initiatives directed particularly at immigrants, such as voluntary English language classes that were offered during the peak immigration period. In comparison to earlier immigrants, they benefited from the improved supports provided by a developing welfare state. The state pointed some immigrants to potential work placements, but most immigrants had to find their own work, their own home, and their own ways of obtaining the necessary language skills to function in the city. Limited interference in immigrant lives was a corollary of this minimal formal government settlement assistance. Even the requirement that immigrants serve out their contracted terms in the Farm Workers or Domestic labour schemes was largely ignored by the government. Immigrants lived wherever they could find housing, worked where there was work, and started their own enterprises when the opportunities presented themselves.

Bielefeld immigrants, on the other hand, were offered extensive settlement assistance by the German state. The state believed it had an obligation to compensate ethnic German immigrants for the suffering they had endured as a result of the Nazi regime's attack on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The state came as close to

providing everything the newcomers needed as it could. The city gave them preference for social housing, the *Arbeitsamt* steered them to suitable work, paid for and supplied language and skills training, and church organizations and associations offered counselling and advice.

Examination of the two experiences has shown that the results did not conform to the pattern that might have been expected. A buoyant economy in Winnipeg in the 1950s allowed the Canadian state to get by with its low-key settlement assistance policies. In Bielefeld the all-encompassing settlement assistance brought some frustration for immigrants in that they were restricted in their choice of an initial home and in their job mobility. The economic situation during their arrival in the 1970s seemed to require more support. Thus, state support seemed not to ease their integration compared to their Winnipeg counterparts.

The path of immigrant integration was also shaped by attitudinal differences in their host societies. Canada and Germany differed fundamentally in their conception of membership in the state. Ethnic Germans could achieve citizenship easily by virtue of the country's conception of nationality. In comparison to foreign guest workers, for whom it was all but impossible, citizenship was granted to ethnic Germans easily.

Citizenship, in the sense of being accepted as a full member of the society, was perceived differently in Winnipeg. By the 1950s and 1960s Canada was increasingly thinking of itself as a multicultural country and Winnipeg, in particular, had a history of accommodating itself to a diversity of ethnicities. Although there were occasional references to Germans as the former enemy, Canada in general and Winnipeg in particular embraced West Germany as the clearest example of the superiority of Western

ideas. In Winnipeg, German immigrants were believed to be hard working and unobtrusive and Winnipeggers devoted little energy to worrying about how the newcomers might fit in. The environment was ideally suited to an ethnic German immigrant group that was entirely focused on finding work, owning a home and participating in the burgeoning Canadian consumer society.

The ethnic German immigrants who arrived in Bielefeld in the 1970s faced an environment in which postwar reconstruction and the German economy's leap forward were already over. Bielefeld was German; its guest workers were foreign. Bielefeld's non-German minorities were held at a distance and although provided with the benefits of the welfare state, they remained foreign guests. Ethnic Germans, on the other hand, were to become full members of Bielefeld society, as it was understood by that society. Bielefeld's ethnic German immigrants had to adapt to what it meant to be German on native German terms. The host society was averse to having concentrations of ethnic Germans, demanded fluency in modern German, and looked for evidence of participation in its leisure and associational life. Living together as immigrants was equated with not having integrated into the host society. Germany did not believe itself to be a country of immigration and ethnic Germans were not considered immigrants but rather, as their label '*Aussiedler*' implied, resettling citizens.

Another central theme in this comparative study is newcomers' expectations. The imagined trajectory of experience in their new city home emerges as the most important difference between the two groups. Bielefeld immigrants imagined a future in which the tension between the dominant culture and their own sense of German identity would be easily resolved. Ethnic Germans had become virtual pariahs in the Soviet Union and

Poland. The memories of being labelled as Fascist enemies of the Soviet state, and the continuing sense of not belonging created Germany as their imagined ideal homeland. In Bielefeld they would be at home. 'Feeling at home' for them meant being free to speak German as the language of work and public communication, not just as the language of the home and private conversation with fellow ethnics. They nurtured a sense that the dominant culture of Bielefeld would share their idea of what it meant to be German, even though they had been separated culturally by the Iron Curtain and the Cold War. Ethnic Germans believed 'Germanness' included a respect for authority, particularly in the relationship of children to their fathers, teachers and other elders. It included a sense of propriety in dress, particularly for women, and an accompanying demand for restraint in public discussions and in media images of sexuality. Although intermarriage with non-Germans had increasingly become a reality of their lives in Eastern Europe, the immigrant cohort was much more inclined to maintain a social distance from other groups and viewed such marriages with suspicion.

The conflict between an imagined Germany as a traditional homeland and the reality of the modern, secular, and Anglicized Germany was an initial shock and a continuing source of estrangement. The chasm between the Germany of their imagination and the Bielefeld of reality was greatest in the worlds of language, family and church. Modern German was Americanized; their own was perceived as technically inadequate and quaint. Their families were large and intimately connected; German families were small and dispersed. Their world revolved around conservative faith and church worlds; Germans believed that an integrated citizen belonged to society's associational life. There seemed to be nothing that enabled the newcomers to bridge the gap. Their

coreligionists did not share their history and were unable and unwilling to embark on a path that would meld their symbols and practices. Bielefeld society viewed the newcomers as problems. Its efforts at language education and other integration programs reflected its desire to solve the 'problem' of ethnic German integration.

Winnipeg's immigrants expected to be immersed in a strange and foreign culture. They imagined themselves fashioning new lives using the resourcefulness acquired through their wartime experiences. While family in Canada provided reassurance in bridging the gaps in language and social skills, the new arrivals were not embarking on a path to isolated ethnic worlds. They knew they would be living in a host society that spoke English, and knew they would have to learn English as well. Though they likely assumed that German would remain important in their lives, they were under no illusions about the importance of English. It would be the language of work, school, and other relations with the host society. They expected Canada to be a land of opportunity, and it was. Although finding work, a home, and a path to prosperity was more challenging than they may have anticipated, the opportunities of the postwar economy brought these goals within reach of most of them. Their religiosity, even if sectarian, was not challenged by the host society. Although not without tension and struggle, and although they had to change in significant ways, they were able to find acceptable accommodations with their coreligionists in Winnipeg and to secure a satisfactory integration into the religious life of their respective denominations.

An imagined trajectory for immigrant lives in Bielefeld and Winnipeg was historically conditioned. Both groups of immigrants shared a common fate up to their postwar experiences. However, Winnipeg's newcomers left their previous ethnic German

worlds behind. They were soon immersed in a new world where contact with other Germans was a matter of choice. They may have imagined themselves retaining and valuing German language and culture but realized the trajectory of their lives would include cultural change. Ethnic Germans who remained behind in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union lost their wider German cultural contacts at the end of the war and developed their own ethnic German cultures in isolation. They imagined the 'Germanness' of their understanding to be universal. When they contemplated immigration to West Germany, they expected to find the cultural norms of that society to be the 'Germanness' they had faithfully preserved.

The difference in the two conceptions of 'who belonged' created two different reactions from immigrants. In Bielefeld, identity tended to be polarized. The only possible identities were the host society definition of what it meant to be German or that of a foreigner and hence a stranger. Ethnic Germans seemed not to fit either category. Although officially ethnic German immigrants gave credence to the validity of descent-based membership for German society, in daily life ethnic Germans felt they were being treated more like the non-German ethnic minorities and they responded by developing defensive strategies. In Winnipeg a multiplicity of identities were possible for immigrants. Ethnic Germans were just one of a number of ethnic minorities, speaking different languages and having different customs. Some had arrived long before them and provided examples of their possible life trajectories. Others of different ethnic identity were arriving at the same time and shared the disorientation they felt. Whether in church, at work, or in public life, immigrant life in Winnipeg allowed for a range of religious,

regional, and class identities. Ethnic Germans were, to a considerable degree, left alone to fashion their new lives.

It must be acknowledged, however, that 'feeling at home' is a somewhat amorphous way to define the outcome of settlement experiences. This study has not examined the path of integration beyond the immigrant generation. Among the thirteen thousand new citizens of the two cities there were many different patterns of integration. Many elderly immigrants, who may have never learned English, likely never felt quite at home in Winnipeg. Family members who stayed behind provided an ongoing connection with the former homeland and gave cause for never feeling quite at home in Bielefeld. Many immigrants did not realize how integrated they had become until they made a trip back to Germany or until they welcomed later arriving family members from the Soviet Union at the Frankfurt airport. Others felt quite at home in some aspects of their new life while other aspects of their new world remained strange and foreign even after many years. The comparisons pursued here cannot lay claim to having uncovered to any substantial degree these complexities of ethnic German immigrant worlds. Even the texture of separate religious worlds and the regional and individual variations in experience have only been captured partially in this comparison.

It is also certain that in Bielefeld public perception of the course of ethnic German immigrant adaptation will be substantially influenced by the wave of immigrants that came to Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the establishment of a unified Germany in 1989-90. Bielefeld was again the new home for many of them. This study has been limited to those immigrants who arrived before these momentous events. During the period examined here the number of arriving immigrants was low enough that issues

of their admission, status and integration remained uncontroversial. After 1989 ethnic German immigration became the subject of national debate. The integration experiences of earlier ethnic Germans are being dwarfed by these later events. The path of integration for the second generation descendants of earlier immigrants and for the first generation immigrants of this later mass exodus mostly from the Soviet Union, awaits analysis on another, future day.

Ethnic German worlds in Eastern Europe had come apart completely in the turmoil of the first half of the 20th century. The Russian Revolution, the Stalinist terror, the Second World War, and the reconstruction process in the war's aftermath shattered the accustomed institutions of community life. The course of this history brought immigrants to Winnipeg and Bielefeld where they faced integration into Western cities. The newcomers brought with them the capacity for work, a desire to re-establish cohesive communities, and a determination to rebuild their lives in the social environment of the modern capitalist city. As this first generation looks back at its experience in Winnipeg and Bielefeld it must see that the most important factor shaping their integration was the trajectory they had imagined for their lives. They must also see that the particular social and historical contexts of Bielefeld and Winnipeg, though very different from each other, were of secondary importance in this process. A comparative framework for historical analysis, one that is sufficiently broad to encompass many different aspects of lived experience, thus casts light on the very subtle forces that shape the extraordinary experience of immigrant integration into two modern urban settings.

APPENDIX

It is difficult to determine directly the number and characteristics of ethnic German immigrants that immigrated to Canada in the postwar period. The numbers in Table A-1 are tabulations of those assisted by two church related organizations. Statistics for Mennonite immigration are from: Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution* (Altona: D.W. Friesen & Sons, 1962), 442. C.C.C.R.R. sponsored refugee numbers are from: "General Survey C.C.C.R.R. Bremen—Germany," July 26, 1955, *Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization Collection,* vol. 1330, file 990, MHC where it also indicates that an additional 1446 ethnic Germans not included in the above numbers found their own transportation after being processed by the C.C.C.R.R.. The count of the number of Mennonites appearing in both tabulations is in vol. 1348, file 1109. The numbers in the 'Total German' column is from "Immigrant Arrivals, by Ethnic Origin, Canada, 1946-60," in Warren E. Kalbach, *Impact of Immigration*, Appendix A, Table A 1, 424. In addition to the above numbers, some ethnic Germans immigrated without the benefit of church assistance. Catholics, for example, only participated in the C.C.C.R.R. to a limited extent. T.O.F. Herzer, the head of the C.C.C.R.R. and member of the Canadian Lutheran World Relief organization in a report in the *Lutheran Witness* in 1952 claimed that at least 65,000 ethnic Germans had immigrated, one-half of whom could be accounted for by the C.C.C.R.R.. See T.O.F. Herzer, "DP's Make Impact on Lutheranism in Canada," *The Lutheran Witness*, July 8, 1952, 10. A copy of the article is in *Canadian Lutheran*

World Relief, MG 28 V120, vol. 31, file 1, NAC. The method used in Table A-5 estimates the ethnic German immigration in this period to be approximately 61,000.

Table A-1. Church Supported Ethnic German Immigration to Canada, 1947 to 1961.

	Mennonites	C.C.C.R.R.	Total	Total German
1947	542	51	593	1186
1948	3828	3842	7670	3713
1949	1635	6285	7920	6721
1950	580	4438	5018	6642
1951	1118	7075	8193	33234
1952	611	3884	4495	29344
1953	431	5781	6212	36241
1954	417	6128	6545	31106
1955	558	2039	2597	19588
1956	465		465	27843
1957	706		706	31191
1958	439		439	15842
1959	316		316	12481
1960	258		258	12430
1961	148		148	
Mennonites included in C.C.C.R.R. #'s		-777	-777	
Total	12052	38746	50798	

Tables A-2 and A-3 summarize the numbers and specific characteristics of postwar immigrants to Winnipeg. Table A-4 illustrates the increasing ethnic diversity of Winnipeg's population not only because of immigration but also due to the migration of ethnic groups from rural Manitoba to Winnipeg after the Second World War.

Table A-2. Ethnic Origin of Postwar Immigrants in Winnipeg –1961 Census

Period of Immigration	1946 to 1950	1951 to1955	1956 to 1961	Total	Percent
Total Immigrants	12060	17101	20355	49516	
Origin					
British	2967	2830	4941	10738	21.7
French	96	168	217	481	1.0
German	2522	6608	5225	14355	29.0
Italian	172	914	1516	2602	5.3
Netherlands	475	1818	1350	3643	7.4
Polish	1615	1041	929	3585	7.2
Russian	225	177	83	485	1.0
Scandinavian	124	353	525	1002	2.0
Ukrainian	2013	1017	392	3422	6.9
Other European	1713	1875	4570	8158	16.5
Asiatic	81	242	401	724	1.5
Other and not stated	57	58	206	321	.6

Source: *Census of Canada*, 1961.

Table A-3. Religion of Postwar Immigrants in Winnipeg –1961 Census

Period of Immigration	1946 to 1950	1951 to 1955	1956 to 1961	Total	Percent
Total Immigrants	12060	17101	20355	49516	
Religion					
Anglican	1433	1448	2401	5282	10.7
Baptist	370	951	409	1730	3.5
Greek Orthodox	711	569	604	1884	3.8
Jewish	854	401	522	1777	3.6
Lutheran	1139	4202	3236	8577	17.3
Mennonite	1409	713	875	2997	6.1
Pentecostal	60	142	78	280	.6
Presbyterian	269	408	706	1383	2.8
Roman Catholic	2785	4972	8056	15813	31.9
Uk. Catholic	1450	665	353	2468	5.0
United Church	1173	1333	1766	4272	8.6
Other	407	1297	1349	3053	6.2

Source: *Census of Canada*, 1961.

Table A-4. Winnipeg Ethnic Population

	1951	1961	1971	Change In 50s	Change In 60s
British	183529	213964	232125	16.6%	8.5%
French	26668	39777	46205	49.2%	16.2%
German	24499	50206	62000	104.9%	23.5%
Italian	2455	5785	9395	135.6%	62.4%
Jewish	18096				
Netherlands	7494	14881	15020	98.6%	0.9%
Polish	17637	24904	25910	41.2%	4.0%
Russian	2788	4102	2105	47.1%	-48.7%
Scandinavian	13341	17834	17530	33.7%	-1.7%
Ukrainian	41437	53918	64305	30.1%	19.3%
Other European	10160	40934		302.9%	
Asiatic	2131	3198	7305	50.1%	128.4%
Hungarian			3860		
Other	3834	6486		69.2%	
Total	354069	475989	540265	34.4%	13.5%

Source: Census of Canada, 1951, 1961,1971

In Table A-5 the number of ethnic Germans in Winnipeg is estimated. The method employed subtracts those born in Germany from those indicating German as mother tongue. Table A-6 summarizes the Winnipeg data and compares it with the numbers of ethnic German immigrants in Bielefeld.

Table A-5. Ethnic German Immigration to Winnipeg and Canada –1961 Census

Period of Immigration	1946 to 1950	1951-1955	1956-1961	Total
Winnipeg				
Immigrant Categories				
Origin –German	2522	6608	5225	14355
Birthplace –Germany	894	4670	4085	9649
Mother Tongue – German	2757	7152	5447	15356
Ethnic German Immigrants	1863	2482	1362	5707
Canada				
Ethnic German Immigrants	13165	32204	15632	61001

Source: *Census of Canada,* 1961.

Table A-6. Ethnic German Immigration to Winnipeg and Bielefeld

Period of Immigration	Winnipeg	Bielefeld
1946-1950	1863	
1951-1955	2482	
1956-1960	1362	
1961-1965	190	2100
1966-1970	515	
1971-1975		1528
1976-1980		5548
Total	6412	9176

Sources: Winnipeg numbers are from the table above and from the 1971 Census.

Bielefeld numbers are from *Sozial u. Wohnungsaussuß Protokolle, 18. 12. 79*, "2100 Aussiedler fanden eine neue Heimat in der Leinenstadt: Mit dem letzten 'Transport' kam im November auch Familie Wiebe an," *Westfalen Blatt*, 8 December 1970 and "Aus der

UdSSR kamen bis 30. Juni weniger Aussiedler nach Bielefeld: Zahl der deutschstämmigen Übersiedler aus Polen blieb gleich," *Neue Westfälische*, 29 July 1982.

Table A-7. Religion of Ethnic German Immigrants in Germany, 1970s and Canada, 1950s

Period of Immigration	Germany 1973-1979 USSR only		Germany 1976 Poland only	Canada 1951-1961 Calculated Estimate	
Total	57899		1031 sample	61001	
Religion					
Catholic	17177	29.7%	88.3%	35919	41.1%
Baptist	8556	14.8%	<.1%	4300	7.0%
Lutheran	24744	42.7%	11.1%	17700	29.0%
Mennonite	5576	9.6%	0	12052	19.8%
Other	1846	3.2%	.2%	1830	3.0%

Sources: The numbers in the "Canada 1951-1961 Calculated Estimate " column come from a variety of sources. The total number of ethnic Germans is from Table A-5 above. Baptist numbers are calculated from estimates made by Baptist immigration worker, William Sturhahn. See "Report—Baptist World Alliance Immigration, January 21, 1954," *Baptist World Alliance Collection,* MG28 V18, vol. 1, file 7, NAC. Mennonite numbers are from Table A-1 above. The estimate of Lutherans is from Arthur Grenke, "Canadian Lutheran World Relief," *Archivist* 15 (1989): 13 adjusted to reflect those Lutherans who came under other programs. The 'Other' category is an estimate by the author and the remainder is considered to represent the number of Catholics. The Germany statistics are for Soviet origin immigrants only. The statistics are from Peter J. Foth, "Unsiedler in Zahlen," *Alexander Neufeld Papers*. Their origin is attributed to the

Mennonitische Umsiedler Betreuung. See also "Übersicht über die Zahl der Aussiedler aus der UdSSR in den Jahren 1973-1988," Dieter Götz Lichdi, ed., *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch 1990: Aussiedler—Gemeinsamkeit suchen.* Karlsruhe: Arbeitergemeinschaft deutscher Mennoniten Gemeinden in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin (West) e.V., 1990: 44. Polish statistics come from a sample of 1822 ethnic German immigrants in the Friedland processing facility. See Hans Harmsen, "Probleme der inneren Beheimtaung deutscher Spätaussiedler: Ein wissenschaftliches Kolloquium der Deutschen AWR-Sektion." *Association for the Study of the World Refugee Problem (AWR) Bulletin: Vierteljahreshefte für Flüchtlingsfragen* 21, no. 4 (1983): 90.

Table A-8. Postwar Divorces per 10,000 in Manitoba and Bielefeld

Year	Manitoba	Bielefeld	Year	Manitoba	Bielefeld
1947	9.0	22	1955	4.0	12
1948	6.4	21	1956	3.7	11
1949	5.4	18	1957	3.5	14
1950	4.0	22	1958	3.3	14
1951	4.7	14	1959	3.4	15
1952	4.2	15	1960	4.0	17
1953	4.6	15	1961	3.4	19
1954	4.5	15	1962	3.6	20

Source:
Statistics Canada, *Statistics Catalogue 84-202, Vital Statistics,* 1962.
Statistisches Amt der Stadt Bielefeld, *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Bielefeld*, annual issues, 1947-1962.

Note: Statistics for Winnipeg alone are not available. Divorce rates for Winnipeg are likely higher than this data indicates.

Table A-9. Cumulative Number of Expellees and Refugees in Bielefeld

Year	Total Refugees	Expellees	East Zone Migrants
Up to December 1947	21037		
1948	24079		
1949	25336		
1950	29022		
1951	33029		
1952	35578		
1953	37546		
1954	49700	37301	12399
1955	52439	38732	13707
1956	54637	40030	14607
1957	57489	41557	15932
1958	59331	42660	16671
1959	58664	42963	15971
1960	59510	43049	16461

Source: Statistisches Amt der Stadt Bielefeld, *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Bielefeld*, 1947-1960.

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