

Report on Conditions in Central Europe

"EXPELLEES"

concerning the
FLIGHT AND EXPULSION OF
GERMAN MINORITIES IN EASTERN EUROPE



GERMAN EXPELLEES IN TRANSIT

Report No. 4



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AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE
20 South Twelfth Street
Philadelphia 7, Pennsylvania

FOREWORD

The trend in Europe to eliminate minorities still persists. This movement, nurtured by Hitler, has begun under the Allies with the organized expulsion of minorities of German ethnic origin and the evacuation of citizens of ceded German territories.

The displaced persons of German ethnic origin are among the hated of the earth's people. They are destitute, unwanted and at the bottom of the list of the needy who may hope to receive help from others. There is a real danger that the German refugees and expellees are becoming a minority group within Germany. The German people are unable to meet the situation in their present condition.

The reconciliation of antagonistic elements is always a major Quaker concern. The American Friends Service Committee sees the problem of integrating the incoming strangers as a long-range program about which something constructive needs to be done by outside agencies. The thoughtful people of Germany who are trying to create a democracy are faced with conditions which are favorable only for fascism.

The American people should be informed that by the expulsion of German minorities two basic evils are being supported in their name: (1) this racial transfer is an acceptance of the very theory of blood and race unification against which a costly war has just been fought; (2) a dangerous precedent is involved in sanctioning this expulsion, for the boundary changes now being written into the peace treaties could result in similar minority expulsions of millions of Europeans.

Peace is not secured by intensifying pride in nationalism nor by fostering the belief of the incompatibility of diverse cultures. The American Friends Service Committee is deeply concerned that the native German and incoming German populations find a basis for reconciliation; that the German minorities who remain in the countries of eastern Europe will retain their civil rights; and that the expulsion of minorities from any country will be outlawed by world opinion and world government.

The following report is based upon reports received from AFSC representatives in Europe, other reliable eyewitness reports, statements from church and voluntary relief agencies having representatives in Europe, occupying military governments of Germany, German civil administration, and official reports issued by governments of the countries of eastern Europe.

This report is concerned with:

1. Citizens of eastern European countries, who have their ethnic origin in Germany, and who have fled, have been expelled or are subject to expulsion by the terms of the Potsdam agreement from the countries in which they hold citizenship and in which they are minority groups. The countries specifically mentioned in the Potsdam agreement are: Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary.

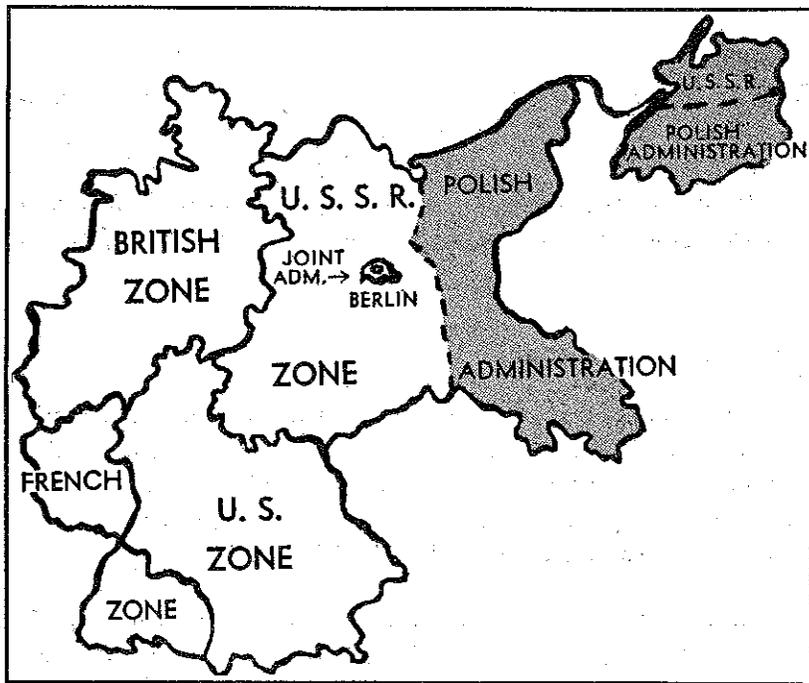
2. Other German minorities whom the Potsdam agreement indirectly affected: those holding citizenship in Rumania and Yugoslavia, and to some extent, Austria. These countries have resorted to expulsion of Germans in conformity with the precedent established at Potsdam. The Potsdam procedure indirectly affects all persons in Eastern Europe whose cultural home and ethnic origin is Germany. Hitler called these people his "Volksdeutsche," establishing his Fifth Column on the claim he made to their allegiance.

3. The Reichsdeutsche, or German citizens, of the eastern provinces of Germany now under Polish administration. These Germans fled westward into the interior of Germany as the Russian Army advanced. Those who remained are being expelled by the Poles in order to make room for repatriated citizens of Poland, a country which suffered tremendous losses under German occupation.

Many Reichsdeutsche were in the pre-1938 boundaries of the countries of eastern Europe at the end of the war and were part of the hordes of refugees and evacuees moving westward. These German citizens were returning to their rightful home and were not "refugees" in the sense that this report employs the term.

FLIGHT AND EXPULSION

We can roughly estimate how many "Volksdeutsche" were living in the countries of eastern Europe, and how many Reichsdeutsche were living in the



Map shows German boundaries of December 31, 1937. Shaded areas indicate territories ceded to Poland and Russia subject to ratification by the peace treaty. The remaining area is divided into four zones of occupation as indicated on the map.

eastern provinces of Germany now under Polish administration as the war drew to a close.

3,000,000*	Old Polish territory
3,000,000	Czechoslovakia
500,000	Hungary
1,250,000	Rumania and Yugoslavia
5,000,000*	Eastern German provinces now under Polish administration.
<hr/>	
12,750,000	

There is little possibility at this time of finding out how many of these people have actually been received into the present boundaries of Germany.

As the Russian Army advanced, many escaped from the east fleeing into the interior of Germany by foot. These refugees came from Czechoslovakia, Poland and the eastern provinces of Germany and are included in the estimated figure of

* Figures obtained from a report entitled "Social Welfare Problems Arising in Poland as a Result of Hostilities," prepared by the Polish Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, December, 1945.

12,750,000. Transportation was broken down; millions of people—liberated Allies, German refugees and homeward-bound Nazi opportunists—crowded the roads all over Germany like currency in constant circulation. The actual numbers involved are open to question. The greater mass of them were moving westward.

At the close of the war Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary began to expel their German minorities and evacuate German citizens of the eastern provinces of Germany in such numbers that these people became a serious burden to the military occupation of Germany. The problem was discussed at Potsdam. The Big Three validated the transfer of German populations ("any transfer that takes place should be effected in an orderly and humane manner"), but recognizing that "an influx of a large number of Germans into Germany would increase the burden already resting on the occupying authorities" they requested the Czechoslovakian Government, the Polish Provisional Government and the Control Council in Hungary to suspend further expulsions pending examination of reports on "an estimate of the time and rate at which further transfers could be carried out, having regard to the present situation in Germany."

This was in August, 1945.

In November, 1945, at a Quadripartite meeting in Berlin, arrangements were completed for organized transports in conformity with suggestions outlined at Potsdam. Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary were to send regularly scheduled transports of German expellees into the present boundaries of Germany where the German civil authorities of each zone in cooperation with their military occupation authorities would receive them.

Organized movement of transports was scheduled to begin on December 1, 1945. The plan called for organized expulsion to be concluded about July 31, 1946. It was agreed to ship about 28,000 persons per day from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and the eastern provinces of Germany now under Polish administration. Simple arithmetic indicates that the anticipated transfer would amount to about six and one-half million persons.

The number of German expellees officially reported received in organized transport.

In organized transport the American Zone had received up to June 30, 1946:

Swabians from Hungary	102,111	
Sudetens from Czechoslovakia	329,912	
	<hr/>	432,023
German minorities from Austria	63,230	
Sudetens from Austria	43,226	
	<hr/>	106,456
		<hr/>
Total "Volksdeutsche"		538,479
German citizens from Austria	14,684	
German citizens from Czechoslovakia	2,421	
	<hr/>	17,105
		<hr/>
TOTAL		555,584

These are U. S. Department of State figures.

Regarding German expellees received into the British Zone, the British Zone Review of April 27, 1946, states, "Recent figures published in connection with Operation "Swallow" show that up to 6th April, 171,402 German expellees—the official name for those Germans now being sent from East Prussia to other zones of Germany—had been received into the British Zone under the scheme in execution of the Potsdam agreement. These were in addition to the 136,114 already checked into the zone from October 1945 to 28 February who came from Poland and who are being counted against the commitment of 1,500,000 which is the total to be absorbed finally into the British Zone. These figures do not take into consideration the unknown number who crossed into the Zone before October."

We do not have any statement from the French or Russian Zones, but our representatives in Europe report that German expellees are well distributed over the four zones. The Russian and British Zones are receiving German expellees from Poland and the eastern German provinces. Germans from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and in some cases Austria are being sent to the French and American Zones. German expellees from Rumania and Yugoslavia have been held up en route pending decision regarding their inclusion in the Potsdam agreement.

Estimates from various sources concur that about four to five million German refugees and evacuees entered the shrunken boundaries of the Reich before organ-

ized expulsion. Of the six and one-half million accepted by the Allied Control Council as an estimate of those to be received in organized transports only a small percentage can be officially accounted for. Also to be accounted for are those Germans who continue to come into the four zones on their own initiative.

"Volksdeutsche" who remain in the countries of eastern Europe will be those who can prove their loyalty to the countries of their citizenship and those employables among the "Volksdeutsche" who will be retained because of the manpower shortage in the countries of eastern Europe.

An accurate census would be valuable. If a substantial number of Germans still remain in the countries of eastern Europe it may not yet be too late to hope for a revision of the agreements relating to their expulsion and the denial of their civil rights.

Of those actually received into the reduced Germany, numbers are important in ratio to the food supply and available housing. The integration of one individual into a community where there is room to accommodate him is a much simpler procedure than welcoming great numbers of strangers into an already overcrowded home.

PROBLEMS CALLING FOR RECONCILIATION

Germans in the countries of eastern Europe, even persons having a German name, are suspect. Innocent and guilty alike are now undergoing reprisal for the atrocities that took place with the knowledge of Germans or in the name of Germany. German minorities are treated as the Jews were treated under Hitler, insofar as discrimination measures are concerned.

During and before the time of organized expulsion, due to reprisal measures, insufficient rail facilities, shortages of food and fuel, and the haste of post-war planning, the Germans were exposed to brutal treatment. They were expelled from their homes on as little as one-half hour's notice. They could take with them only the possessions they could carry. During the winter especially, they had insufficient clothing for the long trip to Germany in unheated freight cars. Innumerable instances have been recorded of very old people, pregnant and nursing women, and babies forced to undergo days of travel without food. They were held over many hours and nights in railroad stations, exposed to all kinds of weather. Sometimes they had to walk for great distances. Their baggage was looted and women were raped. In every transport there were some who died from illness, over-exposure or physical indignity. En route to Germany, many waited weeks for transportation in hastily devised quarters where the most unsanitary and immoral conditions prevailed. In some cases families were separated; husbands, fathers and sons are not always expelled with their families because of the shortage of manpower.

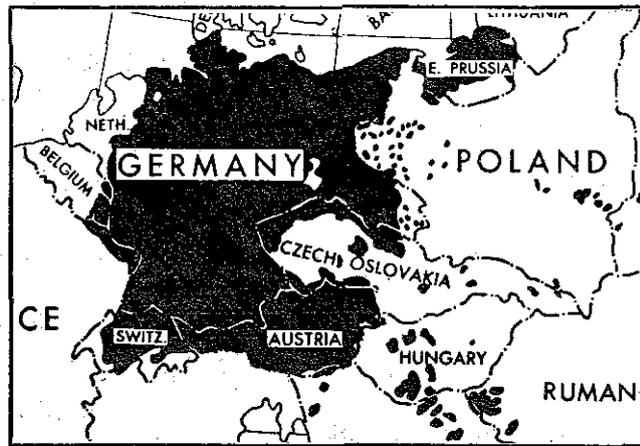


FIG. 2 EUROPE
GERMAN ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION



Map showing European boundaries of December 31, 1937. Black areas indicate distribution of German citizens and German minorities. People of German ethnic origin are being forced into the present reduced boundaries of Germany as shown on FIG. 1.

Whether expellees or refugees, these Germans are outsiders, uninvited and unwilling guests. They are still numb from recent hardships. No home awaits them. Only crude and temporary places are prepared to receive them.

The incoming Germans, most of whom are old, weak and sick people, are the responsibility of the German civil administration. Their presence in the present German economy is catastrophic. The military occupation authorities are forced to help; an engulfing increase in Germany's population at a time when its land area is reduced, its cities lie in ruins and its industrial production is checked, creates a threat to internal order.

The total German population (women greatly outnumber men) is being withdrawn into boundaries which have reduced the arable land of the pre-1938 Reich by 25%: in this shrunken area the cities have been destroyed almost completely, throwing urban populations upon village resources; quarters have been requisitioned for occupying military personnel and their families; Displaced Persons of Allied nationality numbering 800,000 still remain to be cared for; and an unknown number of prisoners of war are returning home.

HOW THE PROBLEM IS MET IN THE AMERICAN ZONE

In the American Zone representatives of the three Laender (comparable to states in the U.S.A.), Bavaria, Wuerttemberg-Baden and Greater Hessen, meet once a month in Stuttgart to coordinate their administrative activities. [Each Land (state) is made up of districts and the districts are sub-divided into Kreise (comparable to counties in the U.S.A.), the final units into which the German expellees and refugees must be integrated.]

A Commissioner for Refugees in each Land attempts to house, feed and clothe the overwhelming influx of new citizens in already overcrowded villages.

When the German Expellees arrive at the border of the American Zone in organized transport they are admitted to a reception center (Durchschleusungslager) where they are registered, given a medical examination, de-loused and fed. The whole process takes between four and five hours. Food is provided for the coming trip to the transit camp (Regierungslager) in the American Zone. Sick people are sent to a hospital and their relatives remain in the camp so that the family is not separated.

There are five reception centers on the eastern boundary of Bavaria, each accommodating about 3,000 persons (8,000 in Hof). The daily rate of arrivals in April, 1946, was 9,000 persons into the American Zone.

German expellees remain in transit camps for four to six weeks after leaving the reception centers. Conditions in these camps are not good due to the enormous shortages. Hygienic facilities are not adequate. As many as 40 persons are crowded in one small room and in some camps there is no separation of sexes.

After being transferred from the transit camps German expellees live in base camps (Landsratslager) and remain there until integrated into the local community. Conditions in the base camps vary a great deal from deplorable to fairly good. In some camps the expellees lie on dirty straw mattresses in rooms that are unheated and overcrowded with persons of both sexes. Those who wait for a home are without work, money or possessions.

The Germans who filter in on their own initiative because of untenable conditions in the homes of their citizenship find shelter on farms and in villages. When food allocations are planned the number of these people cannot be foreseen, and when food is distributed the ration for all becomes less than the amount specified.

Homes are so crowded that groups of families share the same cooking pots and stoves that are used to heat fodder for the animals.

WHAT THE QUAKERS ARE DOING FOR GERMAN REFUGEES AND EXPELLEES

In Vienna AFSC workers have distributed clothing among German minorities expelled from Rumania and Yugoslavia. This has been done in cooperation with Caritas (Catholic relief agency) and the Austrian civil authorities, who care for "Volksdeutsche" held in camps while waiting for transportation to the American Zone.

Austria is admitting some Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia as residents. Some are being given Austrian citizenship. A member of an AFSC team has been instrumental in helping these people to obtain recognition as permanent residents and to establish the engineers and workers in the group in industries which will give them steady employment.

Some of the industrial projects initiated by the AFSC are: a glass blowing factory, a weaving school, a paper mill, a shoe industry, an art iron-work shop and machine shops.

In the British Zone of Germany, the AFSC assists the FRS (Friends Relief Service, British) in providing relief to needy Germans. When organized expulsion first began a number of teams were assigned to assist the incoming strangers, most of whom were in desperate circumstances. They also undertook to help local residents work out a solution to some of the problems of integrating the refugees and expellees into the community.

GLOSSARY

Below are definitions of terms as they are used in this report:

"Volksdeutsche"—As used by Hitler: citizens of other countries who have their ethnic origin in Germany.

Reichsdeutsche—all persons of German citizenship.

German refugees—"Volksdeutsche" from the countries of Eastern Europe and Reichsdeutsche from the eastern provinces of Germany who entered the present boundaries of the Reich on their own initiative at the close of the war and since.

German evacuees—Reichsdeutsche evacuated from the eastern provinces of Germany now under Polish administration before organized expulsion beginning December 1, 1945.

German expellees—

1. "Volksdeutsche" expelled by the governments of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary from their pre-1938 territories between the end of hostilities and the Potsdam Agreement, which temporarily stopped expulsions; and between October and December, 1945, before organized expulsions from these countries began according to the terms of the Potsdam Agreement; and between December 1, 1945, and July 31, 1946, the date when organized expulsion was to have been completed; and all expulsions of Germans from these countries since that time.
2. "Volksdeutsche" expelled from countries adopting the Potsdam precedent: Rumania, Yugoslavia, Austria.
3. Reichsdeutsche expelled from the eastern provinces of Germany now under Polish administration in organized transports as planned in accordance with the Potsdam Agreement, between December 1, 1945, and July 31, 1946, and since.

(The official military term, Expellee, is applied to Germans expelled from the countries of Eastern Europe, and from the eastern provinces of Germany in organized expulsion as outlined in Quadripartite arrangements following the Potsdam Agreement. For greater accuracy in the event that future developments may introduce new problems of a like nature, the qualifying term, German expellee, is used in this report.)

AFSC FOREIGN RELIEF PROGRAM

Relief programs for Austria, China, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Poland and Spain are supported by funds made available to the American Friends Service Committee through contributions from interested individuals and groups. Quaker relief to the needy is given without regard to race, creed or politics.

Checks may be made payable to the American Friends Service Committee and mailed to 20 South Twelfth Street, Philadelphia 7, Penna.