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Canadian Postwar Immigration Policy and the Admission of German Enemy Aliens, 1945-50

When the Second World War ended, it did not appear as if immigrants of German nationality would be admitted to Canada for some time to come. German nationals had been declared enemy aliens on 14 September 1939 by Order-in-Council and their entry had been prohibited since then. In April 1946 this prohibition was renewed as Canada remained officially in a state of war with Germany until July 1951. In 1947 and 1948 Canadian officials informed authorities in Germany that a Canadian law of 1873 barred the immigration of citizens from countries at war with Canada, excepting only the wives and unmarried children under eighteen of legal Canadian residents, or proven opponents of an enemy government. German nationals would be considered prohibited enemy aliens as long as a peace treaty had not been signed with Germany.[1]

Canada, furthermore, as a charter member of UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) and IRO (International Refugee Organization) had initially agreed to the exclusion of displaced persons of German ethnic origin, whether *Reichsdeutsche* (German nationals) or *Volksdeutsche* (members of German minorities from East European countries), from all forms of international relief and legal protection available to a *bona fide* displaced person (DP).[2] Twelve million uprooted German-speaking refugees and expellees[3] were thus abandoned and stigmatized as enemy aliens at a time when their resettlement to the New World seemed to be the only viable solution to their problem. The American military governor in Germany, General Lucius D. Clay, characterized their situation in 1946-47 as

> a tragic movement of peoples from their homes, in many instances of a hundred years, to a new and uncompromising environment without any resources with which to start anew. It was a cruel and heart-rending sight to witness their arrival with a handful of belongings in a country where they were not welcomed, where the available housing had been dras-

tically reduced by bomb and artillery damage, where the food supply was inadequate prior to their arrival and where opportunities for employment in a disrupted economy were few and far between.[4]

Anti-German feelings were understandably strong in Canada, and so were anti-immigrant feelings in general. A high official of the Immigration Branch, referring to *Volksdeutsche* refugees in early 1947, "would not hear of having these Nazi Germans come to Canada."[5] Gallup polls in October 1946 had revealed that 61 percent of Canadians were opposed to any European immigration. On a polled scale of undesirable categories of immigrants, Germans ranked third after Japanese and Jews (with hostility ratings of 60, 49 and 34 percent).[6] Postwar Canada, in the judgment of some historians, appeared to present the spectacle of a country where anti-Oriental, anti-Semitic, anti-German and anti-refugee prejudice conspired to refuse admission even to Holocaust survivors "fully three years after some death camps had been liberated."[7]

An examination of the available evidence does not bear out the assumption that, in the immediate postwar period, immigrants of German origin as such were considered undesirable and excluded from Canada. On the contrary, they were, as will be shown, not only among the first contingent of displaced persons admitted in 1947 but also constituted the second largest group of non-British persons landing in Canada between 1947 and 1951.

Canadian immigration policy has always been highly selective and has distinguished between preferred and non-preferred settlers. Immigrants of German origin have, as a rule, been in the preferred category, except on two more recent occasions. After the First World War Germans and Austrians were excluded from Canada for five years. In 1919 even large-scale roundups and mass expulsions of pre-World War I German-speaking immigrants were proposed.[8] German-speaking Mennonites and Hutterites were barred for three years in 1919 as undesirable. Few Canadians cared to acknowledge that Mennonites had pioneered the opening of the West and established the first model farms on the Canadian prairies. It is to the credit of the Canadian Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King that, in spite of adverse public opinion, this decision was reversed in 1922. In the following decade twenty thousand Mennonite refugees from the Russian revolutionary upheavals plus an additional thirty-six thousand Germans from Eastern Europe were offered a haven in Canada.[9] The United States remained closed to these "East Europeans." The second instance of Canada's rejection of German-speaking immigrants was in the late 1930s when the pleas of German-Jewish refugees for a haven found no mercy, and Canada acquired a reputation for being the "worst of all possible refugee receiving states."[10] Ironically, however, more than one thousand non-Jewish Sudeten German refugees were admitted in 1939 under a special arrangement with the British government.[11]

In 1945 immigration to Canada, apart from the prohibition of enemy aliens, continued to be subject to the severe restrictions imposed in 1931.

These confined eligibility to (a) British subjects and American citizens, (b) the wife and unmarried children under eighteen and fiancé(e) of a Canadian, and (c) agriculturists having sufficient means to farm in Canada. In 1946 and 1947 these categories were only cautiously extended to include a wider circle of close relatives and came to be known as the Close Relatives Scheme. Starting in 1947 special project schemes were introduced, especially for displaced persons, under the auspices of the Department of Labor and in cooperation with mining, forestry and agricultural industries looking for immigrant labor.[12] Displaced persons from Europe, however, even if admissible under these schemes, were unable to enter Canada until mid-1947. An exception were four thousand Polish ex-servicemen who were to take over the farm chores that had been assigned to the bulk of the thirty-five thousand German POWs returning to Germany.[13] Canada's immigration bureaucracy, which for fifteen years had been geared to keeping immigrants out, was hopelessly understaffed and neither willing nor able to process any large influx until 1948.

Canadian immigration policy began to change as the initial fears of a continuation of the prewar depression and of adverse effects resulting from demobilization proved unfounded. During 1947 Canadian industries requested the employment of more than twenty thousand displaced persons and in the summer of 1947 a Gallup poll indicated that 51 percent of Canadians favored immigration of "the right type."[14] The signal for the opening of the country to immigrants was given by Prime Minister King in May 1947. Canada, he declared, would henceforth encourage select immigration to the limit of its "absorptive capacity" and in accordance with the present character of its population. Of immediate concern, the statement stressed, was Canada's moral obligation to help resolve "the urgent problem of the resettlement of persons who are displaced and homeless."[15] Among the immediate beneficiaries of this new policy were *Volksdeutsche* refugees, thanks to the structure of the German community and its well organized and determined lobby.

For the masses of *Volksdeutsche* eager to emigrate to North America at the end of World War II, the United States was inaccessible. Under the still valid 1924 quota law, *Volksdeutsche* were classified as East Europeans who were allotted a minimal quota. Until June 1948 only German and Austrian nationals were eligible, up to a combined annual quota of 27,350 which was not filled until 1950. From the 200,000 DPs to be admitted under the United States Displaced Persons Act of June 1948, ethnic German refugees were to be excluded. Only a last minute amendment opened 50 percent of the quotas for German and Austrian nationals to the *Volksdeutsche*.[16] The American government argued that the millions of German-speaking refugees, as well as the absorption of a portion of the non-German DPs crowded into Germany, were the responsibility of Germany.[17] By the end of 1949 a total of merely 3,270 visas from 58,000 applications by *Volksdeutsche* had been approved by American consuls and for 1950 a maximum of 7,000 visa approvals were projected from the annual quota of 13,700 for *Volksdeutsche*.[18]

Canada seemed therefore the only gateway to North America for *Volksdeutsche*. There these refugees had a large number of close relatives among the 50,000 to 60,000 ethnic Germans who had immigrated from Eastern Europe between the two world wars. Two-thirds of the pre-World War II and pre-World War I newcomers in Canada's German community had their roots in Eastern Europe. No more than 25 percent of Canada's German-speaking immigrants since the 1870s had been *Reichsdeutsche*, and the secular associations founded by them never played a significant role. Instead, the church, as among the German minorities of rural Eastern Europe, was the preferred form of association among German Canadians. It structured Canada's German community along traditionally denominational lines and appeared after 1945 as the main lobby for German immigration.[19] The admission to Canada of some twenty-two thousand *Volksdeutsche* refugees between spring 1947 and the end of 1950 must primarily be credited to two separate efforts of church organizations, one undertaken by the Mennonites, and one by a coalition of Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Baptist and Mennonite groups, known as the Canadian Christian Council for the Resettlement of Refugees (CCCRR).

The most spectacular effort to rescue *Volksdeutsche* refugees abandoned by international relief organizations was that undertaken by Canada's so-called *Russländer* Mennonites. These were the twenty thousand Mennonite immigrants from Russia of the 1920s who constituted about one-third of Canada's Mennonite community. Identifying more with modern German culture and the German people than other Mennonite groups in North America, the *Russländer* sympathized greatly with the plight of German-speaking refugees and expellees. The *Russländer* had at their disposal the largely American-funded Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization (CMBC), which had been formed in 1920 and 1922 respectively, to bring about their own resettlement from Soviet Russia. By 1945 MCC had developed into the chief international relief agency of the Mennonites and CMBC was in charge of liquidating the two million dollar travel debt *(Reiseschuld)* of the *Russländer* to the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR).[20]

These two organizations sprang into action as soon as the extent of the catastrophe that had befallen Europe's *Volksdeutsche*, particularly the Mennonite communities in the Ukraine and in East Prussia, became known. As early as the summer of 1945 two leading representatives of the *Russländer* Mennonites, C. F. Klassen and Peter Dyck, managed to enter war-ravaged Germany as special emissaries of MCC tracking down the surviving groups of their people. Working tirelessly, they brought relief, emergency accommodation and, above all, hope not only to Mennonites, but to as many as 100,000 non-Mennonites at the peak of their operation.[21] Klassen and Dyck discovered that of the 100,000 Mennonites living in the USSR in 1940, 35,000 were known to have fled to Germany and only 10,000 had reached the Western zones of occupation.[22] Thousands had perished on the last leg of their disorganized trek in the winter of 1944-45 and many more, classified as Soviet citizens,

were being forcibly repatriated to the USSR after they thought they had reached safety.[23] They were sent, as it turned out, not to their abandoned Ukrainian settlements, but to permanent banishment in Central Asia and to forced labor in Siberia. In the process, many refugee families were torn apart and separated forever. As late as the end of 1946 Germans from Russia were not safe even in the Western zones of Germany, since the Allies were not interested in their fate and UNRRA's mandate was to repatriate displaced persons. Material relief was therefore not enough and their emigration from Germany had to be organized as quickly as possible.

Canada's Mennonite community was galvanized into action when in 1945 the Soviet government permitted the resumption of mail contact by Soviet citizens with the West and the fate of relatives and friends in the Soviet Union became known. The letters from Soviet Asia in 1945 inquired, after the loss of contact with Canada since Stalin's purges of the 1930s, who of their relatives were still alive, and informed about the forcible resettlement, deportation and banishment of Germans in Russia, in the late 1930s, on the eve of World War II, and at the end of the war. Throughout 1945 and 1946 Canada's German-language Mennonite newspapers published hundreds of those letters, telling a horrid tale of suffering, loneliness and despair. Most of the letters from the deportees to the Ural region and to Kazakstan relate in unambiguous language that these innocent people were buried alive and alerted Canadian Mennonites to their responsibility for the speedy rescue of those in danger of forcible repatriation. Three random samples illustrate the tenor of these letters.

From her place of deportation in North Kazakstan Anne Voth, after having lost her husband and two of her three children, grieves to her Canadian relatives in January 1946: "Oh my dear ones! So far away. That is the hardest part. . . . Often I went alone into the steppe where no one could hear me but the heavenly father and screamed." She wrote that she lived with two other Mennonite families in the poorest circumstances in a Russian village and was not allowed to join other Germans. "Please my dear ones, if at all possible," pleads the letter, "bring us over so that I can rest with my child from all this suffering."[24] Aron A. Janzen, who awaited the Red Army in his Ukrainian village in October 1943, writes from his banishment in Kirov district, where "it is eight months winter," that his ration consists of "200 grams bread, nothing else." He "enjoyed a good soup three times" and is "always hungry."[25] Heinrich and Sara Boldt, deportees in the summer of 1941 to Kazakstan, had never become reconciled to their "terribly hard" fate of being *heimatlos*. Their letter of 26 May 1946 is a never-ending litany of woes:

> Our grief and poverty are so great, that we know neither in nor out. . . . How terribly poor has that war made us all! . . . How abandoned are we. Oh, how many tears have flowed this year. It is a terrible word to be *heimatlos*. Our farm consists of two chickens, that is all. We live like Elijah and are dressed almost like our forebears in paradise. One wishes the

> sun would not rise, if one considers everything, that winter is coming and that we have neither outerwear nor underwear. One would rather die today than tomorrow. Greetings to all who remember us. And think of us, when you put on clean shirts and still have clothes to wear. Oh, what has the bad war done to us. I close with a thousand tears.[26]

Nothing could better rally Mennonite resolve to rescue the remnants of their scattered people and bring them all to Canada, than what occurred upon the publication of newspapers full of stunning letters like these. Most of the relatives of the refugees and deportees already in the West lived in Canada, and there in 1929-30 an additional thirteen thousand Mennonites from Russia had intended to migrate, had not the Depression and Stalin's Five-Year Plans forced them to stay.[27] After being brainwashed by Stalinist propaganda into believing that their Canadian relatives were either dead or confined to concentration camps, and considering the first news of their well-being a fairy tale,[28] the refugees in western Germany were as desperate to come to Canada, as were their deported coreligionists in Siberia and Central Asia. Although Canada's refugee admissions policy was not announced until June 1946 and application forms for sponsorship were not available until the beginning of July 1946, more than one thousand Mennonite applications had been forwarded to Ottawa by November 1946 and more than $100,000 had been deposited with CMBC by sponsors.[29] Receipt of Canadian affidavits of sponsorship in November 1946 was reported to have saved at the last moment Mennonite refugees in the British Zone of Germany from forcible repatriation to the USSR.[30] Mennonites were among Canada's first batch of displaced persons arriving in April 1947. Yet no more than 542 Mennonite refugees were able to reach Canada in 1947. In 1948 the number went up to 4,227.[31]

Suspecting difficulties and delays with Canadian immigration, MCC pursued from the outset alternate courses of action. In October 1946 it was decided to send twenty-three hundred refugees to Paraguay, the only country willing to take them immediately. Furthermore, in order to receive the legal protection and travel assistance available to registered DPs, Dyck and Klassen filed an application with the Preparatory Commission of IRO, declaring the Mennonites to be of Dutch origin. Of the Mennonite applicants 90 percent turned out to be eligible for IRO assistance.[32] In order to qualify for official DP status they had to prove to IRO that (a) they did not leave the Ukraine voluntarily, (b) they were not *Volksdeutsche* but of Dutch origin, and (c) they did not serve in the German army or the *SS*. In 1949 American officials in Germany and an IRO eligibility officer, however, discovered and argued that most Mennonite refugees in Europe had accepted voluntary naturalization in Germany, that 30 to 40 percent had served in the *Wehrmacht*, and some had even been members of the *Waffen-SS* and the *SD*. Klassen was able to avert the termination of further Mennonite admissions to Canada by convincing IRO and Canadian officials that most Mennonite refugees had assumed German citizenship only under extreme duress.[33]

By 1950 all the schemes for accommodating refugees with and without relatives in Canada had been exhausted. Canadian immigration officials, eager for more refugees, began to admit so-called hard-core cases, i.e., medical and political rejects and German nationals. By September 1950, 6,500 German-speaking Mennonites had immigrated to Canada (as well as 5,600 to South America and less than 600 to the United States[34]), most of whom are listed in the Canadian immigration by racial-origin statistics as Russian-born of Dutch origin.

A parallel effort on behalf of *Volksdeutsche* refugees of all backgrounds was launched in January 1946 with an appeal by the Winnipeg Lutheran pastor R. E. Meinzen to Prime Minister King for permission to collect and export private relief to displaced millions in Germany for whom UNRRA did not provide. Meinzen's appeal was endorsed at a meeting held on 2 February 1946 in Winnipeg by twenty leading German Canadians, including ministers of the main German-Canadian denominations, one German-language newspaper editor and one college president, as well as by one CPR representative and the Liberal member of Parliament for the Mennonite district of Rosthern, Saskatchewan, Walter Tucker. It was agreed to avoid public protests and petitions except through veterans' organizations, boards of trades, etc., which could not be branded as pro-Nazi. Instead they decided to form an interim committee of one Lutheran, one Catholic, one Baptist and one Mennonite minister, as well as T. O. F. Herzer as CPR representative. This committee would exert steady pressure on the Prime Minister through Tucker, Secretary of State for Veterans Affairs.[35]

The interdenominational movement for relief to the refugees in Germany rapidly gained momentum and was supported by sprouting organizations of German Canadians and their press. The director and driving force of the movement was T. O. F. Herzer, General Manager of the Canada Colonization Association (a CPR subsidiary) and Treasurer of Canadian Lutheran World Relief. Born in Wisconsin of German-Danish descent and trained for the Lutheran ministry, Herzer was characterized by a junior co-worker as "a vigorous and tireless schemer who pursued a cause with diplomatic tact and persistency."[36] In 1914 he joined the CPR where his managerial abilities and humanitarian concerns made him one of the key figures in assisting the immigration of tens of thousands of German-speaking immigrants in the 1920s and their settlement on CPR land.[37] Herzer had excellent contacts with government departments and officials and was recommended to the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources by a personal friend for his "exceedingly broad experience with immigration matters" and his desire "to do everything possible to help the government solve its immigration difficulties, rather than in any way be embarrassing."[38]

Herzer's strategy was first to make the Canadian government aware of and recognize the problem of the *Volksdeutsche* refugees, by obtaining approval for the shipping of private relief supplies to Germany (not until October 1946 was international parcel delivery to the British Zone permitted), and then ask for the admission of the refugees. Herzer's strategy was successful, for in March 1946 private relief supplies were

approved and in May 1947 the government announced that it would admit refugees of German ethnic origin *(Volksdeutsche)* who were not natives or nationals of Germany on the same basis as registered DPs.[39]

Using his international church and Canadian railway contacts, Herzer proceeded without delay to form an organization which, like IRO, would prepare and present nominees to the Canadian screening teams in Europe and without which no *Volksdeutsche* could be moved to Canada. Thus, the CCCRR was founded in Ottawa on 23 June 1947 at a meeting attended by nineteen different agencies, including affiliates of the Canadian Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Baptist and Mennonite churches, committees of Sudeten Germans and Latvians, two federal government departments, five American Protestant Church organizations, the CNR (Canadian National Railway) and CPR, as well as the Lutheran World Service and the Inter-Governmental Committee (forerunner of the IRO). While the first seven groups became the constituent members of the CCCRR with Herzer as chairman, the remaining attendants assured the CCCRR of their cooperation and assistance. Each of the member groups assumed responsibility for its own overhead. Additional support was secured from American and German churches and the Lutheran World Federation. Starting in 1948 the Canadian government provided a monthly supplementary grant of $10,000.[40]

Faced with more than ten thousand applications under the Close Relatives Scheme from the first day of its operation in Germany, the CCCRR had to overcome staggering problems before it could function properly.[41] "All of us were clergymen, inexperienced in the art of diplomacy and negotiation," recalled one of its officers.[42] The CCCRR started out with no camp and shipping facilities and with little cooperation from the Allied Powers in Germany in contacting applicants outside the British Zone and in obtaining travel and exit visas. By its decree No. 161 of 1945, Germany's four-power Control Council had prohibited the emigration of *Volksdeutsche* and *Reichsdeutsche,* except for anti-Nazis, victims of the Nazi regime and separated family members seeking reunion. Not until June 1948 did the American Military Government in Germany permit the departure of Germans sponsored by foreigners and officially admitted by a foreign country.[43] "All the rules had to be broken to bring the first 50 people" to Canada by Christmas 1947.[44] When, in 1948, the Canadian government had chartered the S.S. *Beaverbrae* for the CCCRR with a carrying capacity of almost eight hundred people, a larger volume of *Volksdeutsche* could be moved—7,000 by July 1949 and 10,000 by January 1950 (including 276 Mennonites under CCCRR auspices).[45]

From mid-1947 to mid-1949 the CCCRR was the only agency to which prospective immigrants to North America from among Germany's four million *Volksdeutsche* refugees could turn. Due to the support of the Canadian government, the CCCRR was able to function almost as a quasi-official government immigration agency. CCCRR records suggest that government and immigration officials accommodated a growing number of marginally eligible German refugees, such as medical rejects and *Volksdeutsche* with German citizenship, for whose

admission on humanitarian grounds CCCRR officers left no stone unturned. The gradual liberalization of the prohibition applying to German enemy aliens was the logical consequence of this development. The events of 1949-50 illustrate this linkage clearly.

In the winter of 1949-50 suddenly up to two-thirds of the CCCRR refugee nominees were being rejected by American and Canadian officials because new evidence was discovered that the refugees had assumed German citizenship not only after but also before 1945. In lengthy memoranda to the Minister of Immigration the CCCRR had argued that the only way for these refugees to obtain ration cards and shelter within Germany after the war was to obtain German citizenship and it was the only means of protection against forcible repatriation to the USSR. During the war German citizenship was individually and summarily conferred upon *Volksdeutsche.*[46] Herzer pointed out that new American legislation of 1950 as well as Australian practices ignored the question of German citizenship of ethnic German refugees. On 15 March 1950 he cabled to Immigration Minister Walter E. Harris:

> If the regulations with respect to German citizenship had been enforced as stringently as they are now, fully 90 percent of the approximate 11,000 refugees (and the 6,000 Mennonites) processed and brought to Canada under the auspices of CCCRR during the last two years would have been denied admission to Canada.[47]

Immigration officials now faced the unenviable dilemma that Canada "would be waiving the Enemy Alien Regulation in regard to immigrants who voluntarily assumed German nationality by naturalization during the war and does not admit the German-born relatives of residents of Canada whose citizenship was acquired by birth."[48] The government's way out was Order-in-Council P. C. 1606 of 28 March 1950 which admitted all *Volksdeutsche* who were not German citizens prior to September 1939 as well as German nationals with close relatives in Canada. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration informed Member of Parliament Tucker that the government had endeavored to enact all the changes that the CCCRR had hoped to get. "I am certainly pleased," wrote an elated Tucker to CCCRR director Rev. Warnke, "that we decided to ask them to do more than deal with the *Volksdeutsche.*"[49] The Minister even issued a directive that service in the German armed forces as such not be a cause for rejection.[50]

The final readmission of all German nationals on the same basis as the nationals of other countries was now no more than a formality. In a CCCRR brief of September 1950, addressed to Minister Harris, Herzer noted with satisfaction that

> the action of your government has permitted us to bring to Canada about 15,000 *Volksdeutsche* and 6,500 Mennonites—a total of about 21,000 immigrants. . . . Canada has been in the forefront of all the nations in thus facilitating the movement of the least befriended among the

prospective immigrants, *Volksdeutsche* refugees or expellees, who were ineligible to receive help from IRO.[51]

For the period 1945-50 Canadian immigration statistics list only 7,500 ethnic Germans born in the homelands of the *Volksdeutsche*—3,000 in Poland, 1,500 in Yugoslavia, 1,000 in Russia and Romania each, 600 in Hungary and 450 in Czechoslovakia.[52]

Canadian immigration statistics also list 3,000 German citizens and 12,000 natives of Germany entering Canada from 1945 to 1950.[53] Excepted from the prohibition of German nationals were only the wives and children under eighteen of legal Canadian residents as well as Germans who had neither served in the German armed forces nor been a member of the Nazi party. Among these were one thousand refugee internees from Germany who had been interned in Britain in 1939 and had been transferred in the early 1940s to Canada, where they received permanent status in 1945.[54] Two other identifiable small groups of *Reichsdeutsche* were war brides (about one hundred in 1948),[55] and German scientists (about fifty by 1949).[56]

The decision to recruit German scientists and technicians was made in May 1947 on the initiative of several government departments. While German scientists were to assist in the realization of Canada's atomic energy project, the technicians were to create jobs for Canadians. It was expected that with their help a host of new industries would be established, producing everything from drugs, leather, glass, heavy machinery, engineering design and dental burs to motorcycles. The German scientists and technicians did not enter Canada as regular immigrants, but were invited on a renewable one-year contract basis, some without their families, under special Minister's permits. If they decided to remain in Canada after the expiration of their permits, they had to submit to regular Canadian immigration procedure.[57]

Further admissible categories of Germans as of June 1948 were those who had been residents of Danzig prior to 1939, when that city was a Free State.[58] Sudeten German postwar expellees, who had German citizenship conferred upon them after 1938, were also excluded from the enemy alien prohibition.[59] In September 1949 the cabinet decided to deal favorably on an individual Order-in-Council basis with applications for the permanent admission of approved German nationals who were first-degree relatives of Canadian residents. In December 1949 the cabinet agreed to allow the temporary entry of German businessmen as well as university students and approved scholarship holders.[60]

Until May 1949 the Immigration Branch systematically turned down requests from or on behalf of German nationals not eligible under the specified exceptions. In spite of "the volume of cases in which Canadian citizens have indicated a desire to bring out relatives of German nationality," it stuck to the view that the prohibition should remain in force until a peace treaty had been signed with Germany.[61] The event that triggered the change in official attitude shortly thereafter was the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany and the formation of a West German government following free elections in August 1949.

Canada's Department of External Affairs urged the restoration of complete freedom of movement between Canada and Germany as early as 5 September 1949:

> The exclusion of German nationals wishing to migrate to Canada has dampened German interest in this country and has given rise to protests by some German elements in this country. The objection to our present policy is not that Canada is failing to do its share to relieve the present over-population of the Western zones, but that the Germans are now the only people who are excluded because they were enemies in the last war.[62]

Canada's formal attitude towards Germany as an enemy state, the Department of External Affairs warned, was becoming anachronistic, inexpedient and counterproductive to good relations and the furtherance of democracy.

The reorientation of Canadian foreign policy towards Germany as a new ally, and the development of economic ties, went hand in hand with a growing demand in Canada for German labor. A resolution of Canadian Army, Navy and Air Force veterans of October 1949, favoring a relaxation in the enemy alien regulations so as to permit German immigration, may be taken as an indication of public support for a change in policy. "There is no doubt that Germans have made good citizens," affirmed the Minister of Mines and Resources in October 1949 as he inquired whether the Canadian Legion shared the views expressed in the veterans' resolution. Many Germans, he pointed out, "have served in the Canadian forces in both wars against Germany, which was a rather stiff test of loyalty to Canada."[63]

In 1950 the final readmission of German nationals on the same basis as the nationals of other countries appeared no more than a formality. In a memorandum to the cabinet of 18 August 1950 the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration argued that the existing enemy alien restrictions were depriving Canada of substantial numbers of German immigrants "whose professional, technical or industrial skills would be a valuable asset to the national economy." Canada could only gain from an abolition of the enemy alien prohibition, he stressed, for "it is averred that German immigrants who came to Canada in earlier years have become an important, industrious and loyal element of the Canadian population."[64]

The Order-in-Council of 14 September 1950, removing nationals of Germany from the class of prohibited enemy aliens was, however, kept confidential for more than two weeks at the request of the Minister of Immigration. This is indicative of a considerable residue of public opposition to the move. The Minister was apparently "forced" to release the news on 29 September 1950 when the Order-in-Council was published in the *Canada Gazette*. In a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation interview of 6 October 1950 concerning the change in policy, an External Affairs official was instructed by the Immigration Branch to assure the public that the admission of German nationals "must not have the effect

of altering the fundamental character of the Canadian population."[65] Nevertheless, as of September 1950, the entry of German nationals was not only allowed, but expressly desired by the Canadian government, although Canada's state of war with Germany was not officially terminated until 9 July 1951.

In conclusion, the admission of an estimated thirty thousand Germans (*Volksdeutsche* as well as *Reichsdeutsche*)[66] from the end of World War II to the end of 1950, ranks Germans after Poles as Canada's second lagest group of non-British immigrants for the period when the admission of German enemy aliens was officially prohibited. Canada was obviously anything but closed to Germans as such. High government officials from different departments, who favored the admission of Germans as early as spring 1947, were not motivated by any particular sympathy for Canada's former enemy number one, but by a combination of national economic self-interest, public opinion and diplomatic as well as humanitarian considerations. The flexible attitude of government officials enabled the well organized and determined German-Canadian lobbies of the Mennonites and the CCCRR to make Canada a haven for twenty thousand *Volksdeutsche* refugees and expellees when these were ineligible to receive help from IRO and were inadmissable to the United States. Canada's Mennonites and the CCCRR deserve much credit for relaxations of the ban upon German nationals and for the Canadian government's adoption by September 1950 of the view that "German immigrants have the reputation of being excellent settlers and we intend to encourage the admission of these immigrants."[67]

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Notes

[1] Bundesarchiv, Koblenz (BA), Z1, vol. 887, "Übersicht über Auswanderungsmöglichkeiten (Anfang 1948)"; vol. 885 "Unterlagen für die Auswandererberatung: Einwanderungsbestimmungen für Kanada," 8 December 1948. All translations of German-language documents are my own.

[2] Louise W. Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization: A Specialized Agency of the United Nations, Its History and Work, 1946-1952* (Toronto, 1956), 586. The constitution of IRO excluded the following from its mandate: "Persons of German ethnic origin, whether German nationals or members of German minorities in other countries, who (a) have been or may be transferred to Germany from other countries, (b) have been, during the second world war, evacuated to Germany from other countries, (c) have fled from, or into Germany, in order to avoid falling into the hands of Allied armies." Among the IRO benefits of official DP status were food, clothes, shelter and general care in IRO camps, legal and political protection, education in the displaced person's mother tongue, vocational training and employment opportunities, as well as free transport to places of resettlement. See Holborn, 203-328, 368.

[3] The figure of 12 million is the widely accepted total for 1950, of which 7.8 million were counted in West Germany, according to Hilde Wander, *Die Bedeutung der Auswanderung für die Lösung europäischer Flüchtlings- und Bevölkerungsprobleme* (Kiel, 1951), 22, and Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten: Ursachen, Ereignisse, Folgen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), 12. The first German postwar census of October 1946 counted a total of 9.5 million Germans who had been expelled from their former homes, 5.9. million

of them were in the Western zones. The 12 million refugees of 1950 consisted of four different categories: (1) *Volksdeutsche* who had fled from the advancing Red Army: about 500,000, including 200,000 from Yugoslavia, 100,000 from Russia, 100,000 from Romania, 60,000 from Hungary, (2) *Volksdeutsche* expelled from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia at the end of the war: about 4 million, (3) *Reichsdeutsche* expelled from the territories east of the Oder-Neiße line; 6 million, and (4) Interzonal refugees from the Soviet Zone of Germany: 1.6 million by 1950.

[4] Lucius D. Clay, *Decision in Germany* (New York, 1950), 315.

[5] William J. H. Sturhahn, *They Came From East and West: A History of Immigration to Canada* (Winnipeg, 1976), 76.

[6] Jean Bruce, *After the War* (Don Mills, Ontario, 1982), 14.

[7] Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948* (Toronto, 1983), 237. See also Gerald E. Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* (Montreal, 1977) and Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians* (Toronto, 1976).

[8] Donald Avery, *'Dangerous Foreigners': European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932* (Toronto, 1979), 76-77.

[9] Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution* (Altona, Man., 1962). The order rescinding the ban of the Mennonites was not published in the *Canada Gazette* because the government feared public antagonism. See Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940: A People's Struggle For Survival* (Toronto, 1982), 157, 183. For the immigration of Germans from Eastern Europe, see Heinz Lehmann, *The German Canadians, 1750-1937: Immigration, Settlement and Culture* (St. John's, 1986), 158.

[10] Abella and Troper, vi.

[11] Andrew Amstatter, *Tomslake: History of the Sudeten Germans in Canada* (Saanichton, 1978), 6, 71.

[12] Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern* (Montreal, 1972), 89 ff.

[13] Canada, *Report of the Department of Mines and Resources For the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1947* (Ottawa, 1948), 240. Dirks, 141–42. *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* (Winnipeg), 16 January 1946.

[14] Abella and Troper, 246.

[15] King's statement is reprinted in Howard Palmer, ed., *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism* (Toronto, 1975), 58-61.

[16] Robert A. Divine, *American Immigration Policy, 1924-1952* (New York, 1972), 124. Robert Henry Billigmeier, "Recent German Immigration to America," in D. L. Cuddy, ed., *Contemporary American Immigration: Interpretive Essays (European)* (Boston, 1982), 115.

[17] Clay, 100. This American view was in accordance with the Potsdam Protocol and the SHAEF Plan of April 1945. See M. J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees 1939-52: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (London, 1957), 389 ff., 445 ff.

[18] Francis A. Walter, *Expellees and Refugees of German Ethnic Origin,* House Report No. 1841, 81st Congress, 2d Session (Washington, 1950), also known as the *Walter Report.*

[19] Lehmann, 133, 158, 257-81.

[20] Epp, *Mennonite Exodus,* 335 ff., 348. *Der Bote* (Rosthern, Saskatchewan), 13 June 1951.

[21] *Der Bote,* 14, 21 and 28 November 1945, 26 January and 24 April 1946, and 20 August 1947. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus,* 365-66.

[22] *Der Bote,* 20 August 1947.

[23] *Die Mennonitische Rundschau,* 27 March 1946.

[24] Ibid., 30 March 1946.

[25] Ibid., 22 May 1946.

[26] Ibid., 18 December 1946.

[27] Epp, *Mennonite Exodus,* 236.

[28] *Die Mennonitische Rundschau,* 9 January 1946.

[29] *Der Bote,* 3 July and 20 November 1946.

[30] *Die Mennonitische Rundschau,* 27 November 1946.

[31] Epp, *Mennonite Exodus,* 395, 399.

[32] Ibid., 398, 401.

[33] National Archives of Canada, Ottawa (NAC), RG 26, vol. 122, file 3-32-4, part 1. *Der Bote*, 11 August 1948 and 17 August 1949. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 406-7.

[34] Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 423. *Der Bote*, 11 and 25 May, and 1 June 1949, 25 Janaury 1950.

[35] NAC, MG 28 V 120, vol. 22, file 2.

[36] Sturhahn, 76.

[37] James B. Hedges, *Building the Canadian West: The Land and Colonization Policies of the Canadian Pacific Railway* (New York, 1939), 367-86. *Der Bote*, 23 June 1948.

[38] NAC, RG 26, vol. 122, file 3-32-9.

[39] *Der Bote*, 2 October 1946, 14 May 1947.

[40] NAC, MG 28 V 120, vol. 29, files 1 and 2.

[41] NAC, MG 28 V 120, vol. 29, files 25 and 26.

[42] NAC, MG 26 L, vol. 13, file 70-C. Sturhahn, 82.

[43] BA, Z 1, vol. 885, "Aus- und Einwanderungsbestimmungen 1947-49."

[44] Sturhahn, 80.

[45] *Der Bote*, 27 July 1949, 18 January and 12 April 1950.

[46] NAC, MG 28 V 120, vol. 29, files 3 and 5.

[47] NAC, MG 28 V 120, vol. 29, files 3 and 4. RG 26, vol. 122, file 3-32-13.

[48] NAC, RG 26, vol. 122, file 3-32-13.

[49] NAC, MG 28 V 120, vol. 29, file 5.

[50] NAC, MG 28 V 120, vol. 29, file 4.

[51] NAC, MG 28 V 120, vol. 29, file 5.

[52] See tables "Immigration . . . Showing Country of Birth By Racial Origin," in Canada, *Report of the Department of Mines and Resources for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1946* (Ottawa, 1947), 241ff.; *Report . . . 1947* (Ottawa, 1948), 256ff.; *Report . . . 1948* (Ottawa, 1949), 256ff.; *Report . . . 1949* (Ottawa, 1950), 240ff. Canada, *Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1950* (Ottawa, 1951), 38ff., and *Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration . . . 1951* (Ottawa, 1952), 38ff.

[53] These data were supplied (upon request) by the Department of Employment and Immigration Canada in January 1984.

[54] Canada, *Report . . . 1946*, 237-38. Eric Koch, *Deemed Suspect: A Wartime Blunder* (Toronto, 1980).

[55] NAC, RG 26, vol. 122, file 3-32-7, part 1.

[56] NAC, RG 76, vol. 649, file B6737, part 2.

[57] NAC, RG 76, vol. 649, file B6737, part 1. RG 25, A 12, vol. 2086, file AR 22/5, parts 2/4.

[58] J. J. Thiessen, "Recent Mennonite Immigration to Canada," *Mennonite Life* 4, no. 3 (July 1949): 35.

[59] NAC, RG 26, vol. 122, file 3-32-8, part 1.

[60] NAC, RG 76, vol. 31, file 682, part 5. The admission of German nationals, since September 1949 of approved individual cases and as per order of 29 March 1950 as a general policy, was confined to the following: the husband or wife; the son, daughter, brother or sister together with husband or wife and unmarried children; the father or mother; the orphan nephew or niece under twenty-one years of age; and the prospective husband or wife, of a person legally resident in Canada.

[61] NAC, RG 76, vol. 31, file 682, part 5.

[62] NAC, RG 25, A 12, vol. 2086, file AR 22/2 part 9.

[63] NAC, RG 76, vol. 31, file 682, part 5.

[64] NAC, RG 26, vol. 127, file 3-33-13, L. Fortier to A. MacNamara, 20 September 1950.

[65] NAC, RG 26; vol. 127, file 3-33-13.

[66] The estimate of 30,000 German immigrants is obtained by the following calculation:

MCC count (*Volksdeutsche* from overseas), 1947/48-1950	6,500
CCCRR count (*Volksdeutsche* from overseas), 1947/48-1950	15,000
Racial origin-Germans born in Germany (from overseas) 1947-1950	3,727
Racial origin-Germans from U.S.A., 1945-1950	4,525
Racial origin-Germans from overseas, 1945-1947	572
	30,324

This figure excludes 2,176 Jewish natives of Germany (from overseas), 1945-1950, and 1,233 racial origin-Germans born in Austria (from overseas), 1945-1950.

According to official Canadian statistics, the largest non-British ethnic groups of immigrants were:

	Displaced persons by racial origin 1947-1951	Total from overseas and from the U.S.A. by racial origin 1945-1950
Polish	29,303	38,723
Jewish	12,821	24,393
Ukrainian	22,347	23,663
German	12,813	22,661

Sources: Canada, *Report of the Department of Mines and Resources,* for the fiscal years ended 31 March 1946, 1947, 1948 and 1949, and Canada, *Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration,* for the fiscal years ended 31 March 1950 and 1951.

[67] NAC, RG 26, vol. 127, file 3-33-13.