

## CHAPTER IX.

### VOLKSDEUTSCHE

#### A. GENERAL

1. It has been seen from the preceding section that the aim of the Nazi Government was to take ethnic German resettlers who formed minorities in many of the countries of Europe and colonise the conquered territories with them after they had been made German citizens. The notes on the Nazi Resettlement Policy (supra) have dealt with the various agencies charged with carrying out this programme, the agreements made before and during the war for their repatriation or resettlement to Germany as well as the numbers involved and the categorisations made by RuSHA in processing these groups. The purpose of this section is to give a brief outline of the general problem as it exists to-day.

2. The expression "Volksdeutsche" is an innovation of the Nazi party and was coined to embrace all persons outside Germany and Austria who qualified as members of the German race. It differs from the term "German minorities" only in the fact that it includes Austrians as well as Germans.

3. Early in the Hitler Regime a bureau was established to look after the "Auslandsdeutsche". They were organised in a foreign "Gau" ruled by the Foreign Organisation of the Nazi Party (NSFO) which was headed by Ernst Bohle. He was also in charge of the Volksdeutsche or "racial" Germans who had taken foreign citizenship. The Organisation to which they belonged was called "Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland" (VDA) which was under Karl Haushofer, formerly a professor of Geography at the University of Munich. Under its general supervision operated such agencies as the Deutsche Volksverbund, the Deutsche Volksbund, the Jungdeutsche Partei and the Deutsche Vereinigung.

4. Many of the Volksdeutsche in countries other than Germany succumbed to the Nazi propaganda and became the "Fifth Column" in those countries. After the occupation or in the case of axis satellite countries, dominated by Germany some of these persons were given preferential treatment and formed a pool for Hitler's factories as well as his armies. As one of the results of this fact, the native populations of those countries became embittered against them which may account for the harshness of the treatment meted to them when they were expelled from those countries to Germany after the end of World War II.

#### B. MOVEMENTS INTO GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

5. Some of these Auslandsdeutsche came to Germany before the war as a result of German propaganda; others came in 1941, and two large groups came in 1944 and after the end of the war. The 1939 group came mostly in small numbers from all parts of the world but mostly the South Tyrol, the Baltic countries and from the Sudetenland. The

1941 group came as a result of treaties made in Germany with various countries in 1940 and 1941. The 1944 group consisted of persons fleeing with the retreating German armies, and persons forced to evacuate by the Germans. It is estimated that as a result of the above moves one million persons came into Germany. The post-war group which constituted the largest exodus into Germany was composed of "expellees" from the various countries but principally Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and Yugoslavia.

6. The Potsdam Agreement which was adopted on 2nd August 1945 provided for the expulsion to Germany of the German minorities in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. It instructed the Control Council to study the problem with a view to making an equitable distribution of these people in Germany. As a result of this study the implementary Berlin plan was put into effect in November 1945. This plan was as follows :—

- (a) All Germans expelled from Poland (3,500,000 persons) would be sent to the British and Soviet Zones of occupation.
- (b) All Germans expelled from Czechoslovakia, Austria and Hungary (3,500,000 persons) would be sent to the U.S., French and Soviet Zones of occupation. (Note : The Germans from Austria were not considered by the Potsdam Agreement but was the result of the Control Council Meetings.)

In execution the above plan worked out as follows :—

- (i) *Soviet Zone of Germany* :—
  - Expellees from Poland — 2,000,000 persons;
  - Expellees from Czechoslovakia — 1,750,000 persons;
- (ii) *British Zone of Germany* :—
  - Expellees from Poland — 1,500,000 persons
- (iii) *U.S. Zone of Germany* :—
  - Expellees from Czechoslovakia — 1,750,000 persons
- (iv) *French Zone of Germany* :—
  - Expellees from Austria — 150,000 persons

These movements are now almost complete and Germany has an additional population of some 6,500,000. It should be pointed out here that in addition to the moves from the Potsdam countries large numbers of persons of German ethnic origin have been expelled or have fled from Rumania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia during the war. Yugoslavia requested the permission of the Allied authorities to expel her estimated 80-100,000 remaining Volksdeutsche to Germany but this was refused because of the congestion caused by the expulsions from the so-called Potsdam countries.