THE GERMAN MINORITY IN YUGOSLAVIA, 1941-1945

By

HELGA HORIAK HARRIMAN

Bachelor of Arts
Wells College
Aurora, New York
1952

Master of Arts
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
1969

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College
of the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
December, 1973

THE GERMAN MINORITY IN YUGOSLAVIA, 1941-1945

Thesis Approved:

Douglas Hale
Thesis Adviser

Charles Dollar

Bogumil W. Fiala

G W Emery

Neil J. Hackett

N N Durham
Dean of the Graduate College

PREFACE

When the Third Reich opened its attack on Yugoslavia on the night of April 6-7, 1941, there were within the Yugoslavian borders some 500,000 people who, despite their citizenship in this South Slavic country, thought of themselves as Germans.[1] The position of the members of this minority during World War II is a topic which merits considerable study. In the first place, a systematic review of their life during the four years when Yugoslavia ceased to exist as a political entity has yet to appear. Moreover, the degree of responsibility of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen for their suffering at the end of the war is an issue which still evokes heated controversy. Upon the defeat of Germany, most of them were either annihilated or expelled from Yugoslavia. More impartial treatment than has yet been given to their involvement in the Nazi occupation should be welcomed by contemporary historians. Finally, the manipulation of these people by Berlin indicates that Nazi policy toward Southeastern Europe was deeply rooted in the völkisch movement of the mid-nineteenth century. This study purports to identify those precedents or predispositions in German history which contributed to the ideological foundation for Hitler's New Order for Europe.

---

[1] Yugoslav census figures for 1931 will be utilized throughout this presentation. German estimates on the total number of ethnic Germans within Yugoslavia in the interwar period run 200,000 higher than the half million indicated.

At the onset, several terms referring to German minorities abroad and widely used in the Nazi era must be clarified, insofar as it is possible to apply strict definitions to vague ethnic concepts. Ethnic Germans who were non-citizens of Germany were called Volksdeutsche. In order to qualify as volksdeutsch, a person had to have some "German blood," rather than a mere knowledge of the German language and customs. German nationals were known as Reichsdeutsche. Both categories of people were embraced by the expression Auslandsdeutsche, to the dismay and confusion of some diplomats in the 1930's.[2] They felt that the term Auslandsdeutsche should only include German citizens living abroad, in that ethnic German citizens of other countries were in the strictest legal sense by no means abroad. But Nazi nomenclature paid little heed to strict legalities.

A comprehensive view of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen during the war years is exceedingly difficult to achieve, in that the community was split into four segments after Hitler's partition of Yugoslavia. Each had an entirely distinct organization and set of goals within separate component parts of the former Yugoslav state. The political divisions in which the Volksdeutschen found themselves between 1941 and 1945 were: The Independent State of Croatia, Hungary, the Banat within Old Serbia, and the Slovene areas annexed to the Third Reich. Studies appearing so far on the Volksdeutschen of Yugoslavia during World War II are

---

[2]Report of Otto von Erdmannsdorf, German Minister in Hungary, October 5, 1937. United States Department of State, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945 (18 vols. to date, Washington, 1949-), Series D, Vol. V, p. 192. Hereafter each volume of the Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, will be designated DGFP followed by the series letter and volume number.

incomplete. Scholars have tended to concentrate on one or two of the four wartime groupings, with little, if any, mention of the others.[3] The five-volume series on the Germans expelled from Eastern Europe after World War II, published by the German government, includes one volume on the Yugoslav Germans. Documents on all four political segments appear on its pages.[4] Nevertheless, since the publication centers on the postwar expulsions, the picture of Volksdeutsch wartime existence is sketchy and disjointed.

A major reason for this deficiency in Germany has been the inaccessibility of source materials on the war period. A foremost authority on the German minority in Yugoslavia during the war has been Johann Wuescht, a former leader of the group and an archivist in the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz from 1957 to 1964. When he assumed his position in the archives, Wuescht found that documentation on the Germans from Southeastern Europe during the years 1939-1945 was practically non-existent, for official records had been lost. He was thus forced to create a provisional archive.[5] Problems involved in recreating history by collecting eye-witness testimonies many years after the event are

---

[3]See for example: Leopold Rohrbacher, Ein Volk-ausgelöscht. Die Ausrottung des Donauschwabentums in Jugoslawien in den Jahren 1944-1948 (Salzburg, 1949); G. C. Paikert, The Danube Swabians (The Hague, 1967); Johann Wuescht, Beitrag zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Jugoslawien, 1934-1944 (Kehl, 1966) and Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich. Eine dokumentierte Geschichte der deutsch-jugoslawischen Beziehungen von 1933-1945 (Stuttgart, 1969).

[4]Theodor Schieder, et al., Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa (5 volumes in 11 parts, Bonn, 1954-1961). Volume V, Das Schicksal der Deutschen in Yugoslavien (1961). (Hereinafter cited as Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V).

[5]Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, p. 352.

attested to by the Schieder collection. For example, it includes a report on the resettlement of the Bosnian Germans in 1941/1942 which was written from memory in 1958.[6] The German archival holdings on the German minority in Yugoslavia were greatly enriched in 1958, when the German documents confiscated by the American and British governments after the war were returned to Bonn. However, these records, now housed in Koblenz, had not been made available to scholars for research by the mid-1960's.[7]

On the Yugoslav side, source material on the Volksdeutschen has also been scarce. The archives in Yugoslavia hold few documents emanating from the offices of the occupiers during the war.[8] While Dusan Biber has published an excellent book on the German minority in Yugoslavia between 1933 and 1941, no major work has yet appeared in that Balkan land on the group between 1941 and 1945. Biber lamented that in many instances it was easier to find important documents of Yugoslav origin in German archives than in Yugoslav repositories.[9] Presumably, this holds true for many documents in the war period.

---

[6]Report of Ferdinand Sommer in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 37-63.

[7]Dušan Biber, Nacizem i nemci v Yugoslavijie 1933-1941 (Ljubljana, 1966), pp. 281-282.

[8]Wayne S. Vucinich, "Postwar Yugoslav Historiography," Journal of Modern History, Vol. 23 (1951), p. 47; Tone Ferenc, "Le Système d'Occupation des Nazis en Slovénie," tr. Sidonija Jeras, in Petar Brajovich, Jovan Marjanovich and Franjo Tudman, eds. Les Systèmes d'Occupation en Yugoslavie, 1941-1945 (Belgrade, 1963), p. 121; Franjo Tudman, "The Independent State of Croatia as an Instrument of the Policy of the Occupation Powers in Yugoslavia." tr. Miroslav Beker and Leonardo Spalatin, in Brajovich, Les Systèmes d'Occupation en Yougoslavie, p. 135.

[9]Biber, Nacizem i nemci, pp. 272-275.

An American scholar is in an advantageous position to help correct this problem. In the United States National Archives, rich source materials are available dealing with the Volksdeutschen in Yugoslavia during World War II. These may be found among 15,000 rolls of microfilm which contain the confiscated German records produced in Alexandria, Virginia, between 1956 and 1958. Although finding aids for these microfilms are as yet incomplete, it is relatively easy to find the pertinent material.[10]

Not only have publications on the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen during the Second World War been fragmentary, but they have usually been written to bolster preconceived conclusions on the degree of responsibility of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen for their fate in 1945. While most German scholars are eminently fair in assessing the guild of the Volksdeutschen, their understandable sympathy for these people so tragically displaced after 1945 detracts from the objectivity of their judgments. Wuescht is a radical spokesman for the view that the Volksdeutschen were innocent victims of events beyond their control. Since the Nazis were magnanimous in their wartime conduct toward the Yugoslavs, the German minority was hardly a tool of aggression.[11] His tone verges on the polemical. On the other hand, Yugoslav historians tend to indict summarily the German minority for involvement in the odious

---

[10] United States National Archives, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia (65 vols. to date, Washington, 1958-). When completed, the guides will number 70 volumes. For an excellent account of German records in the United States, see John A. Bernbaum, "The Captured German Records: A Bibliographic Survey," The Historian, Vol. 32 (1970), pp. 564-575.

[11] See entries on Wuescht in footnote 3.

occupation of their country.[12] A more balanced statement than has yet been advanced on the role of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen in forging their fate is sorely needed.

In order to present a complete account of the Yugoslav Germans, it is necessary to place their experience into historical context. It would be remiss to recount and interpret the wartime chronicles of these people without making indispensable connections with the past. Their years within the Habsburg Empire and within interwar Yugoslavia colored their history under Axis control. Certainly, Hitler's decisions which resulted in the splintering of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen into four divisions are meaningless without a proper appreciation of the Habsburg past. Those arrangements actually achieved for the Yugoslav Germans by the Nazis and those plans drafted for them but not carried out--all these had "slender threads", to use the term of Henry Cord Meyer, leading back almost a century to Pan-German ideology.[13] Therefore, this study will trace the volkisch outlook and German dreams of destiny in Eastern Europe from their origins to their impact upon the Yugoslav Germans.

This work is the outgrowth of the author's earlier research for the Master of Arts degree.[14] It is based on a number of primary source

---

[12]Brajovich, Les Systemes d'Occupation en Yougoslavie, passim; Ahmet Donlagic, Zarko Atanackovic and Dusan Plenca, Yugoslavia in the Second World War, tr. Lovett F. Edwards (Belgrade, 1967), p. 36; Ljubisa Stojkovic and Milos Martic, National Minorities in Yuguslavia (Belgrade, 1952), p. 22.

[13]Henry Cord Meyer, Mitteleuropa in German Thought and Action, 1815-1945 (The Hague, 1955), pp. 30-56.

[14]Helga H. Harriman, "Slovenia as an Outpost of the Third Reich" (unpub. M.A. thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1969).

materials. Twenty-two microfilm rolls of German records dealing with the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen were utilized.[15] Most of the emanated from the offices of the German Foreign Institute (Deutsches Ausland-Institut, DAI). The DAI files are particularly useful, because that agency studied all aspects of the problems of the Auslandsdeutschen in a highly competent manner. Since the microfilm rolls represent approximately 26,400 pages, they were most helpful in illuminating the history of the German minority in Yugoslavia between 1941 and 1945. Also extremely valuable to this study were the Documents on German Policy, 1918-1945, published jointly by the United States Department of State and the British Foreign Office.[16]

I wish to express appreciation to members of the advisory committee for my program for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Oklahoma State University who gave helpful criticism in the preparation of the text. Professor Douglas Hale, my long-time mentor, served as committee chairman and offered valuable advice concerning the study from its inception to its conclusion. To Professors Bernard Eissenstat, Charles Dollar and Neil Hackett of the Department of History and to Professor Bogumil Frenk of the Department of Foreign Languages, all of whom read the study in its final form, I am also indebted.

---

[15]United States National Archives Microfilm Publication, Microcopy T-81, Records of the National Socialist German Labor Party (NSDAP), Rolls, 136, 150, 270, 279, 284, 285, 306, 307, 322, 428, 444, 521, 522, 544, 553, 554, 559, 564. United States National Archives Microfilm Publication, Microcopy T-71, Records of the Reich Ministry of Economics, Rolls 61, 78. United States National Archives Microfilm Publication, Microcopy T-74, Records of the Reich Commissar for the Strengthening of Germandom, Roll 17.

[16]See footnote 2.

In addition, I wish to thank Professor Joseph Suhadolc of Northern Illinois University and Professor Milos Rybar of the University of Ljubljana for their kind assistance. I acknowledge with gratitude also the financial aid provided in the course of this undertaking by the Danforth Foundation through its Graduate Fellowship for Women program. Further, my appreciation is extended to the competent staff of the Oklahoma State University Library for aid in the procurement of material.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF MAPS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AO - Auslands-Organisation (Foreign Organization)

AW - Aussendeutscher Wochenspiegel (Weekly Mirror of Germans Abroad)

DAI - Deutsches Ausland--Institut (German Foreign Institute)

DJ - Deutsche Jugend (German Youth)

DM - Deutsche Mannschaft (German Team)

DUT - Deutsche Umsiedlungs-Treuhandgesellschaft (German Resettlement Trustee Company)

DVK - Deutsche Volksgruppe in Kroatien (German Ethnic Colony in Croatia)

ES - Einsatzstaffel (Standing Guard)

EWZ - Einwandererzentralstelle (Central Immigration Office)

NDH - Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (Independent State of Croatia)

NSDAP - National-Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei (National Socialist German Workers' Party)

NSDGK - National-Sozialistische Deutsche Gefolgschaft in Kroatien (National Socialist German Fellowship in Croatia)

RKFDV - Reichs Kommissariat für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums (Reich Commission for the Consolidation of the German Ethnic Heritage)

RSHA - Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office)

RuSHA - Rasse-und Siedlungshauptamt (Race and Settlement Main Office)

SA - Sturm Abteilung (Storm Troop Corps)

SD - Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service)

SS - Schutzstaffel (Elite Guard)

UDV - Ungarländisch-Deutscher Volksbildungverein (Hungarian-German Ethnic Educational Association)

UDVP - Ungarländische Deutsche Volkspartei (Hungarian German National Party)

VDA - Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland (Association for Germandom Abroad). Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland (Ethnic Union for Germandom Abroad)

VDU - Volksbund der deutschen in Ungarn (German Ethnic League in Hungary)

VOMI - Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (Liaison Office for Ethnic Germans)

CHAPTER I

SHORT HISTORY OF THE VOLKSDEUTSCHEN OF YUGOSLAVIA TO APRIL, 1941

Some groups of the Volksdeutschen within Yugoslavia at the time of the Nazi invasion in April, 1941 had been in possession of their land for as long as six centuries, while others had settled there as recently as the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Almost all of them were located on territory formerly incorporated in one form or another in the Habsburg Empire. How they had arrived and how they had fared under the Habsburgs, particularly in the last years of the Monarchy, forms one important facet of their history. After the collapse of the Habsburgs in 1918, as a consequence of the defeat of the Central powers in World War I, these ethnic Germans suddenly found themselves within a brand new political unit, one of several successor states established at the Paris Peace Conference. An understanding of their aspirations and endeavors during the twenty-odd years of rule from Belgrade is indispensable to a study of their experiences between 1941-1945.

Some of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen, who had lived in old Hungary under the Habsburgs, were restored to Budapest's control after the Nazi partition of Yugoslavia. Their fate was once again intimately entwined with that of the Hungarian Volksdeutschen as a whole. Consequently, a note on developments among the German minority within Hungary in the

interwar period is relevant to a short history of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen before the Nazi invasion. In view of the above observations, the historical survey which follows will be divided into three sub-divisions: I. The Germans within the Habsburg Empire on lands destined to form Yugoslavia; II. The Volksdeutschen within interwar Yugoslavia; and III. The Volksdeutschen within interwar Hungary.

Part I: The Germans Within the Habsburg Empire on Lands Destined to Form Yugoslavia

In order to alleviate the complexities which surround any study of the multinational Habsburg Empire, modern scholars are accustomed to differentiate between its two most clearly recognizable components--the Austrian and the Hungarian. For this purpose, they turned to a relatively insignificant river which separated these halves along a short stretch of their long common border. Travelers between Vienna and Budapest in the days of the Empire crossed the Leitha; when they did, they stepped from Austrian onto Hungarian soil. Thus, the term Cisleithania was utilized to refer to that part of the Empire which was bound historically to Vienna, while Transleithania referred to those territories bound to Budapest.

More than geographical convenience is involved in this division. A study of the Habsburg Empire, as it existed in the late nineteenth century, shows substantive differences in the development of the peoples

of Cisleithania and Transleithania.[1] (See Map 1). The first formed the core around which the Habsburg power (Hausmacht) evolved during the Middle Ages and the early modern period. The largest portion of Cisleithania, excluding a few late additions (Galicia, Bukovina, Dalmatia and part of Istria), was included in the Holy Roman Empire. This medieval structure, which survived until 1806 despite its obsolete character, was led by Habsburg rulers for nearly four hundred years. Although the association with the Holy Roman Empire was largely meaningless, it did serve to tie more firmly the destinies of Cisleithania to those of Germany as a whole. Furthermore, the Turks, while they pressed upon the gates of Vienna twice--in 1529 and 1683--never interrupted the progress of the state. Although Czechs and Slovenes respectively dwelt in the northern and southern confines of Cisleithania, the more culturally advanced Germans provided the driving force for centuries. The addition of Polish and Ruthenian lands in the eighteenth century diluted German strength. By 1910, the Germans of Cisleithania numbered less than ten million (thirty-six per cent) among eighteen million non-Germans, largely Slavs. The national movements of the nineteenth century served to swing the balance of influence gradually away from the German toward the Slavic element in the population. Such "centrifugal forces" within the Empire, to use the term of Oscar Jászi,

---

[1] For excellent introductions to the most recent history of the Habsburg Empire, see: C. A. Macartney, The Habsburg Empire, 1790-1918 (New York, 1969); Fran Zwitter, J. Šidak and V. Bogdanov, Les Problèmes nationaux dans la Monarchie des Habsbourgs (Beograd, 1960); Oscar Jászi, The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy (Chicago, 1966); R. A. Kann, The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848-1918 (2 vols., New York, 1950).

Map 1. The Habsburg Empire Before World War I

contributed to its collapse in 1918.[2] However, the decay within the Empire does not gainsay the observation that the peoples of Cisleithania were oriented toward the West and progressive by Central European standards.

By contrast, the peoples of Transleithania suffered severe setbacks in the course of their history. Unified loosely during the Middle Ages under Magyar leadership, they were rent asunder by the Turkish assaults on the early sixteenth century. For over a century and a half, Hungary lay exhausted, the largest part of its territory occupied by the Ottoman power. Only a slender Western strip fell under the de facto rule of the Habsburgs. When the Hungarian kingdom was finally freed from the Turks at the end of the seventeenth century under Habsburg auspices, the Magyars were too weak to form a dynamic ruling class. The Croatians, Slavonians, Serbians, Saxons and Rumanians, who lived in areas to the south, as well as Slovaks and Ruthenians to the north, shared the destiny of the Magyars for another century and a half--life as a backward and downtrodden people. The Magyars finally succeeded in obtaining what they deemed a fair share in the rule of the Empire under the terms of the Compromise of 1867, by which the Empire was rearranged into the Austro-Hungarian or Dual Monarchy. But they were not magnanimous toward the numerous ethnic groups under their control. The Hungarians missed holding a bare majority because they accounted for only ten million (forty-eight per cent) among nearly eleven million non-Magyars in 1910 (including Croatia-Slavonia). In desperation, they instituted a repressive policy

---

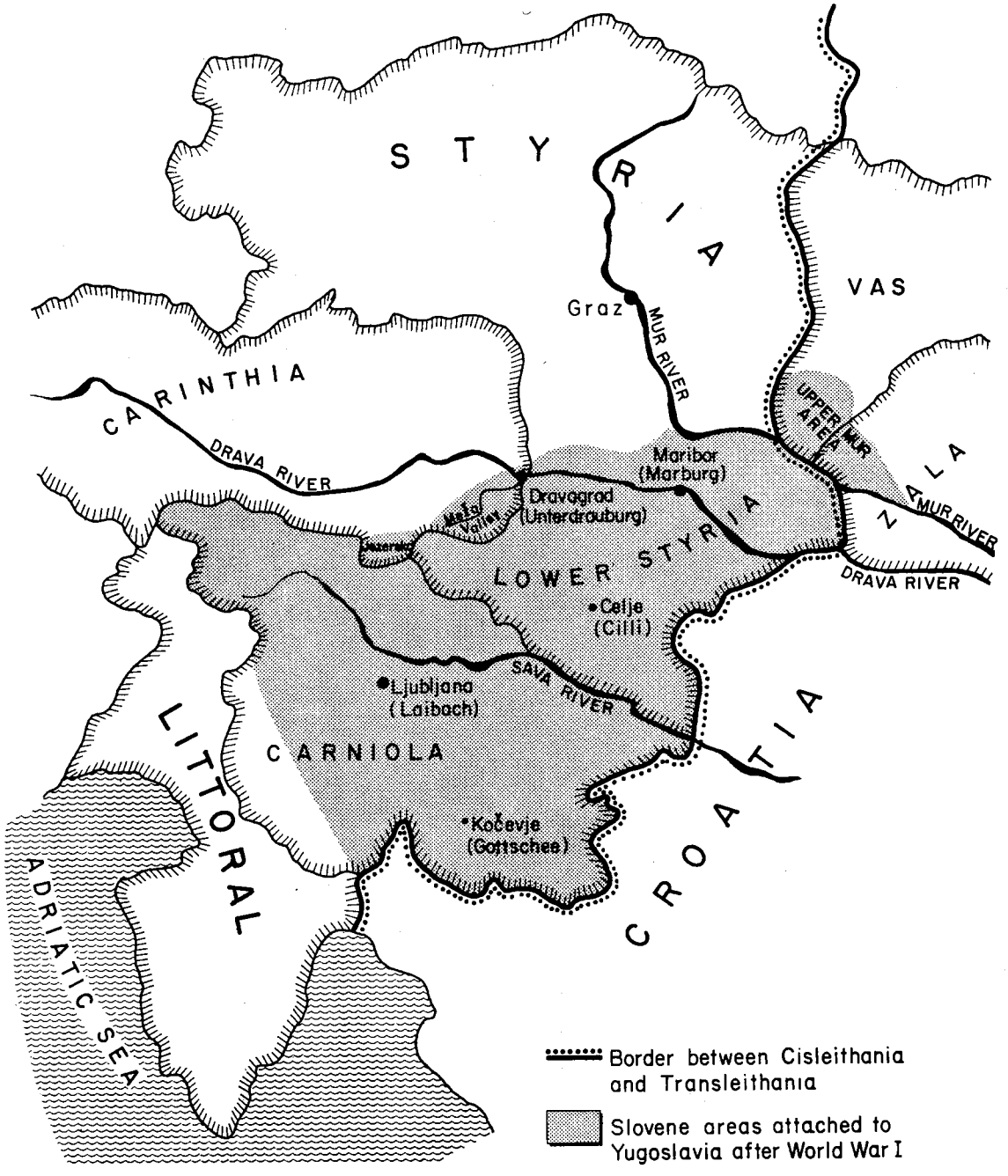
[2] Jaszi, Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy, passim.

toward non-Magyars and actively promoted Magyarization of the minorities. In short, when the Empire disappeared after World War I, the peoples of Transleithania were only just beginning to formulate their national aspirations and to emerge into the modern world.

The differences between the peoples of Cisleithania and Transleithania in general are reflected in the history of the Germans within the Habsburg Empire who settled on future Yugoslav territory. Those found in Cisleithania, and most particularly in Slovenia, enjoyed an advanced existence in every sense. The German minority in Transleithania, both in Hungary proper and in Croatia-Slavonia, were by comparison slow to realize their potentialities. The Volksdeutschen of Bosnia will be considered in the section on Cisleithania, although Bosnia was an exceptional case and technically separate from the Dual Monarchy. An elaboration on the development of these Volksdeutschen as they were grouped within the two divisions of the Empire follows.

1. The Cisleithanian Half

Slovenia.--The Germans living on Slovene lands were never unified into one political unit under the Habsburgs, since Slovenia existed only as a concept, not a reality prior to 1918. (See Map 2). Slovene areas were found in three crownlands: Styria (Steiermark, Štajerska, Styrie), Carniola (Krain, Kranjsko, Carniole) and Carinthia (Kärnten, Koroška, Carinthie). In addition, they were located in the Littoral (Küstenland, Primorska), situated at the headwarters of the Adriatic Sea, and in the Upper Mur Region of Hungary proper. The Cisleithanian domain of the Habsburgs, which formed Slovenia within Yugoslavia in 1919, included nearly all of Carniola, but only the southern extension



Map 2. Areas of Slovene Residence Within the Habsburg Empire

of Styria or Lower Styria (Untersteiermark, Spodnja Štajerska, Basse-Styrie) and three small districts in the southern corner of Carinthia: the Meža Valley (Miesstal), the Commune of Jezersko (Seeland) and the area around Dravograd (Unterdrauburg).

The Slovene region has been characterized by A. E. Moodie, one of its chief geographers, as "a zone of strain."[3] Spilling over from the northernmost reaches of the Balkan Peninsula into Central Europe, it is located at the juncture of two great geological formations--the Alpine and Dinaric ranges. Here run passes of incalculable strategic value connecting the heart of the Continent with the Adriatic Sea. Indeed, Slovenia has served as the crossroads of the Danubian and Mediterranean powers since ancient times.

The Slovenes, a branch of the South Slavs, came into possession of their land in the sixth century A.D. In the early Middle Ages, they succumbed to German domination. By the fourteenth century, the greatest part of Slovenia had already fallen to Habsburg power. Placed at the borders of the Slavic and Germanic worlds, these Roman Catholic mountain peasants and herdsmen were torn between the two cultures. They retained their language, but were profoundly influenced by German thought. Many of them were assimilated into "Germandom" throughout the centuries. In recent times, when nationalism became a dominant force in Europe, the Slovenes defied clear-cut classification. Were they Germans because of their integral and age-old association with German history, or were they Slavs because of their ethnic heritage?

---

[3] A. E. Moodie, "Slovenia--A Zone of Strain," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. III (1943), pp. 66-68.

The Germans who shared these lands with the Slovenes were no latecomers. Already in the Middle Ages, the aristocracy was German or germanized. On the heels of a conscious German expansion during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, German blood was also infused into the under-stratum of society. Franconian and Rhenish peasants settled in Styria and Carinthia, while Bavarians migrated to Carniola under the auspices of the Church.[4] In the fourteenth century, Count von Ortenburg of Carinthia sponsored a colony of Bavarian, Swabian and Thuringian peasants in an infertile district of Carniola. Eventually, 170 communities developed there around the town of Gottschee (Kočevje). This settlement remained a German enclave in an area dominated by South Slavs for six centuries. In the twentieth century, the isolation of its residents amazed visitors, for the Gottscheers still spoke medieval German.[5]

Although ethnic Germans were in the minority in the Slovene lands, they formed a substantial group, as the 1910 census, the last taken in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, clearly reveals. The imperial census determined nationality on the principle of the language habitually spoken (Umgangssprache). Since the Habsburg administration fostered the German language in the schools at the expense of the Slovene, the 1910 figures weighted heavily toward the Germans. Nonetheless, the imperial census indicates roughly the number of people who thought of

---

[4] J. W. Thompson, "German Medieval Expansion and the Making of Austria," Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. II (1923-1924), pp. 281-282.

[5] Walter Tschinkel, Völkischer Beobachter (Vienna), April 25, 1941. Anneliese Nösselt, Ulmer Tageblatt, April 12, 1941.

themselves as German, as well as of those who spoke the German language. In Carniola, 28,000 Germans (approximately five per cent of the population) were counted among 520,000 Slovenes. In Lower Styria, 76,000 Germans (approximately sixteen per cent of the population) were enumerated among 411,000 South Slavs. In the Carinthian districts later added to Yugoslavia, 3,200 Germans (nearly twenty-one per cent of the population) were reported along with 11,900 Slovenes.[6] In all, 107,200 people who spoke German consistently lived amidst nearly one million Slovenes. It seems reasonable to surmise that the true German minority was considerable.

The significance of the Germans in the Slovene territory extended far beyond actual strength in numbers. For centuries, the German ruling class had not been opposed in this predominantly agricultural region. Even after the Slovenes began to assert themselves in the nineteenth century, German supremacy lingered on. Loyalty to their crownland was more important to Slovenes than a consciousness of nationality based on ethnic factors.[7] They saw themselves as Carinthians, or Styrians, or Carniolans first, then as members of a distinct South Slav group. While the national awakening flourished in Carniola and its capital city of Ljubljana (Laibach), it was weakened by this provincial particularism in the other two political units. The results of the 1910 census, already cited, confirm this development. While Carniola registered only five per cent of its population as German, Lower Styria

---

[6]Robert Langer, The Austro-Yugoslav Problem (New York, 1951), p. 33.

[7]Michael B. Petrovich, "The Rise of Modern Slovenian Historiography," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. XXII (January, 1963), p. 441.

reached sixteen per cent and the Carinthian districts climbed as high as twenty-one percent in this category. By the opening of the twentieth century, the urban population of Carniola had become solidly Slovene, but the bourgeoisie continued to speak German in Lower Styria and the Carinthian districts.[8] Significantly, the most important positions in banking, industry and the professions throughout Slovenia were held by Germans.[9] The Germans still permeated the economically independent middle class, which formed the progressive element of the population, when World War I broke out.

Aware of the dangers to their position inherent in nascent Solvene nationalism, the ethnic Germans of Slovenia were receptive to radical Pan-German ideas. They were identified as a specific group of Austrian Germans, the Südmärker, i.e., residents of the southernmost border area of the German realm.[10] As such, they were prepared to protect the German language and way of living which was threatened at the frontier. Already during the Revolution of 1848, they had expressed a strong desire that Styria, Carniola and Carinthia be absorbed into the German Reich.[11] Such sentiments grew as the century progressed.

The major organizations for advancing the fortunes of the Germans in Slovene lands at the turn of the twentieth century were the German

---

[8]Fran Zwitter, "The Slovenes and the Habsburg Monarchy," Austrian History Yearbook, Vol. III, Pt. 2 (1967), pp. 171, 177.

[9]Biber, Nacizem i nemci, pp. 23-29, 426.

[10]Meyer, Mitteleuropa, p. 40.

[11]Josef Pfitzner, "Die Grenz-und-Auslandsdeutsche Bewegung des Jahres 1848," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLX (1939), pp. 310, 316.

School Association (Deutscher Schulverein) and the Südmark. The former had been formed in Vienna in 1880 to oversee the educational interests of German minorities throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Questions on the language of instruction in schools, courses in the German language and the qualifications of German teachers were among the concerns of this association. Josef Feichtinger, a school administrator in Graz, the capital city of Styria, however, felt that school problems were not the only ones which oppressed Germans in the mixed-language areas of Carinthia, Carniola and Styria. Accordingly, he organized the Südmark in 1889 to promote economic progress. The group sponsored such projects as aid to financially pressed volksdeutsche peasants, in order that they might remain in possession of their land and not be obliged to sell to Slovenes. Südmark grew prodigiously from a membership of 2,500 in 1890 to a zenith of 88,000 in 1913. In 1909, cultural pursuits were added to its activities.[12] Nationalism was strong and unified among the German minority in Slovene lands under the Habsburgs.

The cultural attainments of the minority during the last years of the Empire were noteworthy, if the case of Celje (Cilli), a town located in Lower Styria, may be taken as indicative. From the 1880's into the twentieth century, its German residents sponsored and supported many performances of renowned German musicians. In addition, they maintained a musical association, Der Cillier Musikverein, of high

---

[12] Friedrich Pock, Grenzwacht im Südosten; Ein halbes Jahrhundert Südmark (Graz, 1940), pp. 5-8, 10, 52. Ferdinand Matras, "Leistungsschau deutscher Volkstumarbeit," Volksdeutscher Ruf, Vol. 8, Nr. 3 (1942), pp. 1-5. United States National Archives Microfilm Publication, Microcopy T-81, Records of the National Socialist German Labor Party (NSDAP), Roll 559, Frames 5336040-45. (Hereinafter cited as T-81/Roll 559/5336040-45.)

caliber. The artistic life of these burgers indicated that the Germans of Slovenia knew with every heartbeat that they belonged to the German cultural community.[13]

Perhaps the career of Josef Ornig, the last German mayor of Ptuj (Pettau), another town in Lower Styria, can exemplify the disruptive force which World War I unleashed upon the Germans of Slovenia. Elected to his office in 1894, while still a young man, Ornig feared the growing Slovene pressures. He urged the German youth to learn Slovene in order better to fortify themselves against their adversaries. Under his leadership, the German character of Ptuj seemed assured until 1918. Then suddenly in the midst of the German defeat, Ornig had to flee Slovenia for his life.[14] With him and those like him, went a multitude of German aspirations in the Slovene lands.

Bosnia.--The ethnic Germans of Bosnia stand in sharp contrast to the long-established, prosperous and closely-knit Germans of Slovenia. Their settlements were the most recent of all the German communities outside the Reich. Thinly scattered over a difficult terrain dominated by Slavs, they were also among the poorest.

Ever since their arrival in the Balkans around the seventh century A.D., the Serbs to the south and the Croats to the north had struggled

---

[13]Fritz Zangger, Kunstlergäste. Ein Ausschnitt aus dem Kulturleben der deutschen Minderheit in Slowenien (Celje, 1933), pp. i-ii, 21-26.

[14]Hans Pirchegger, "Mein Freund Saria und Pettau," in Festschrift für Balduin Saria. Vol. XI, Buchreihe der Südostdeutschen Historischen Kommission, (Munich, 1964), pp. 5-7.

for hegemony over Bosnia.[15] The Croatian area of settlement penetrated deep into its isolated mountains. Indeed, the capital of medieval Croatia was a Bosnian town, Banja Luka. After the Pacta Conventa of 1102, by which the Croatian nobility submitted to the Hungarian kings, Croatian influence was buttressed by Hungarian power. Those Slavs in the western portion of Bosnia accepted the Roman Catholic faith as a result of their association with the Catholic Croats and Hungarians. The Serbian impact in the eastern sections of Bosnia led to the conversion of its residents to Greek Orthodoxy, the national church of Serbia. After the Turks conquered this intermediary region in the fifteenth century, the Croatian-Serbian contest for Bosnia remained muted for four hundred years. During the long era of Ottoman rule, a new religious factor was added by the considerable inroads which Islam made upon the Bosnians. In 1878, following a decision of the Congress of Berlin, Bosnia was occupied by Austria-Hungary. By a unilateral action which provoked a violent crisis in Europe, Vienna annexed the province in 1908.

The traditional antipathy between Croats and Serbs has been a driving force throughout Bosnian history, although it is exceedingly difficult to explain. These two peoples are so closely related that their language is almost identical in its spoken form. It is in fact more appropriate to refer to the Serbo-Croatian language, than to Serbian or Croatian. Only in their written manifestations can the two

---

[15]Although Bosnia and Hercegovina are often referred to separately, they have had a de facto political unity since the sixteenth century. For this reason, the term Bosnia is used in this study to encompass both Bosnia and Hercegovina.

languages be distinguished, and then only by the Croat use of the Latin script and by the Serb use of the Cyrillic. These branches of the South Slavs are distinguished mainly by their religion and their area of settlement.[16] Indeed, extreme Croat chauvinists have looked on the Serbs simply as Croats who had gone astray in religious matters or as "Orthodox Croats."[17]

A troubled past, deeply colored by the Croatian/Serbian heritage of enmity, created absurd ethnic problems in Bosnia. At the opening of the twentieth century, the people were almost one hundred per cent Serbo-Croat, but nationality categories were based on religious convictions. Not only were there those who professed Greek Orthodoxy, so-called Serbs, and those who accepted Roman Catholicism, so-called Croats, but also Moslems. The converts to Islan added to the turmoil in Bosnia. Extraordinarily fanatic, they persisted in calling themselves Turks.[18] In 1910, out of a population of nearly two million, there were twenty-one per cent Croats, forty-two per cent Serbs and thirty-four per cent just plain Mohammedians in Bosnia.

At the time of the Austrian-Hungarian occupation, a few hardy German settlers were brought into the primitive and sparsely settled territory under both public and private auspices. The government in Vienna sponsored some of these colonists in the expectation that they would serve to encourage better farming techniques among the native

---

[16] Kann, The Multinational Empire, Vol. I, p. 235.

[17] Peter F. Sugar, "Nature of Non-Germanic Societies Under Habsburg Rule," Slavic Review, Vol. XXII (1963), p. 22.

[18] Jozo Tomasevich, Peasants, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia (Stanford, 1955), pp. 102, 110-111.

peasants. Insurmountable difficulties such as malaria, lack of funds and crop failures caused many of these colonization projects to fail. By 1889, Vienna encouraged the migration of German peasants into Bosnia only if they had sufficient capital.[19] Private settlements fared better. Already in 1868, Trappist monks from the Rhineland had established themselves near Banja Luka. (See Map 3). Their Maria Stern Monastery, known as the first German settlement in Bosnia, served as a focal point for the German Catholics who flocked from Germany to nearby villages such as Nova Topola (Windhorst) and Alexandrovac (Rudolfstal) a decade or so later.[20] Before the turn of the century, evangelical communities such as Glogovac (Schutzberg) and Petrovapolje (Franz-Josefsfeld) also sprang up.

Most of the settlers along the Drina River in eastern Bosnia did not emanate from Germany, but from German colonies in South Hungary. The tale of one young man who migrated from the Banat to Bosnia in 1886, can be taken as a case in point. While in imperial military service, he learned of wasteland available to pioneers in Bosnia. At the time of his move there, his ancestors had already been located in southeastern Europe for 150 years.[21] Several of the Bosnian German villages were known as daughter or secondary communites, since they received overflow population from primary colonies across the Danube (Donau, Dunav).

---

[19]Pauline Irby, "Bosnia and its Land Tenure," Contemporary Review, Vol. LVI (1889), p. 32; Carl Bier, Deutsche Nachrichten in Griechenland, November 28, 1942.

[20]Bier, Deutsche Nachrichten in Griechenland, November 28, 1942.

[21]Hans-Ulrich Plat, Die Zeit (Reichenberg), November 30, 1942.

Map 3. Bosnia and Croatia-Slavonia Within the Habsburg Empire

The German colonization in Bosnia was neither extensive nor compact. In 1910, a little over 23,000 Germans were counted in the entire province. Continguous German settlements could be found on a belt of land to the north along the right bank of the Sava (Sau) river. However, more than half of the Bosnian Volksdeutschen were located in isolated sectors with poor transportation facilities.[22] Although some communities were prosperous, the struggle for survival for most was constant during the brief forty years of their existence under the Habsburgs.

2. The Transleithanian Half

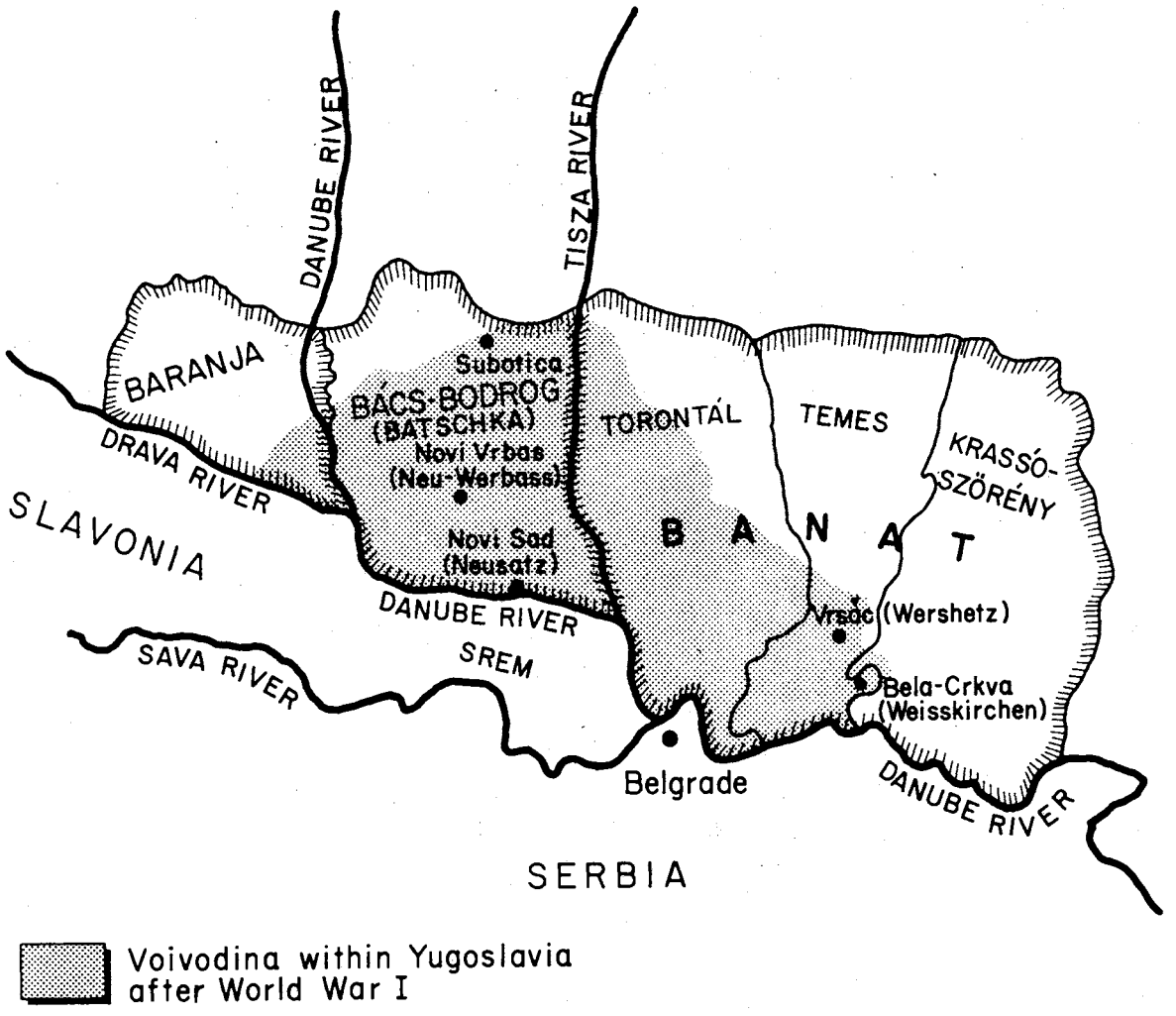
Hungary Proper (Banat, Batschka, Baranja).--Ethnic Germans were heavily concentrated in three divisions of Southern Huntary, parts of which eventually were incorporated into Yugoslavia. (See Map 4). They were located in the counties of Bács-Bodrog and Baranja (Branau, Baranya), as well as in a much larger area known as the Banat. Much of Bács-Bodrog was part of a loess tableland called the Batschka (Bačka, Bacska). The Banat encompassed three counties: Krassó-Szörény, Temes and Torontál. Major rivers traversed these fertile lowlands and helped to form boundaries: the Danube, the Drava (Drau), and the Tisza (Theiss, Tisa). The Germans were only one minority among many in what has rightly been called "The most intricate linguistic mosaic in Europe."[23]

Most of the minorities had arrived in the plains of this region in

---

[22] Ferdinand Sommer, Das Deutschtum in Bosnien, 1929. T-81/Roll 444/5195467-76.

[23] Steven Clissold, ed. A Short History of Yugoslavia from Early Times to 1966 (Cambridge, 1966), p. 122.



Map 4. Southern Hungary Within the Habsburg Empire

modern times. In the Middle Ages, Magyars were apparently the sole residents of Baranja and Batschka.[24] Although it is certain that Serbs and Rumanians were established in the medieval Banat, the question whether Magyars were also located there is open to controversy.[25] Such debate is academic, because southern Hungary was largely depopulated after the Turkish conquest of the sixteenth century. When the Habsburgs finally freed Batschka and Baranja by the Treaty of Carlowitz in 1699 and the Banat by the Treaty of Passarowitz in 1718, they found it necessary to encourage settlers into the devastated realm. To whatever remnants of Magyar, Serbian and Rumanian settlements were left, many new peoples were added. The Serbs were reinforced by a large influx of their countrymen in 1690 under the patriarch of Ipek. These Serbian immigrants, 200,000 strong, received a grant of substantial privileges from Emperor Leopold I. At about the same time, Catholics of Serbian origin, but ardently claimed by the Croats, came from Dalmatia and Bosnia. The Sokci (Schokatzen) settled predominantly in Baranja, while the Bunyevci (Bunjewatzen) colonized the Batschka around Subotica (Subotitza, Maria-Theresiopel, Szabadka).

During this period of migration, many Germans of peasant stock also made their appearance in southern Hungary. Their journeys were undertaken in three great colonization waves under the auspices of the Habsburgs: between 1718 and 1737 under Charles VI, between 1744 and

---

[24] Uj Magyarság (Budapest), June 21, 1941. (German translation.) T-81/Roll 553/5328216-9.

[25] Nicolai Tomici, "Sate romanesti si sate unguresti in Banat - Epoca de aur in istoria Banatului," Revista Institutului Social Banat-Crisiana (October, 1940). (German translation). T-81/Roll 544/5316539-42.

1772 under Maria Theresa and between 1782 and 1787 under Joseph II.[26] Since these Germans came to be called Swabians (Schwaben), their migration into Southeastern Europe during the eighteenth century is known as the great Swabian trek (Der grosse Schwabenzug). The provenance of the immigrants had little to do with their name, since they came from various German regions including Alsace-Lorraine, the Palatinate and Austria. However, the first contingent of settlers originated in Württemberg, which was essentially a Swabian state, and possibly the term Swabian was generalized from its early application to these people to include all Germans.[27] Although the early colonists were Catholic, Protestants also arrived. The first Protestant community in Batschka was Torscha (Torža, Torshau), dating back to 1784.[28] Hard-working, methodical, clean and proud of their possessions, the Swabians of the Banat, Batschka and Baranja struggled to turn the marshy wilderness they found into a productive agricultural area. Nothing can exemplify better the hardships they overcame than their own folk-saying about the first three generations of settlers: "The first had death, the second want and only the third found bread."[29]

The Habsburgs not only encouraged settlers to come into these lowlands, but they organized the southern frontier of the Banat and the

---

[26]Paikert, The Danube Swabians, p. 14.

[27]Anton Scherer, Donauschwäbische Bibliographie, 1935-1955 (Munich, 1966), p. vii.

[28]Heinrich Réz, "Württemberger Protestanten in der Batschka," Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XIX (1936), p. 12.

[29]"Die erste hat den Tod, der zweite die Not und der dritte erst das Brot."

southernmost tip of Batschka into a portion of their famous Military Border (Militärgrenze).[30] Peasant-soldiers or Grenzer (Granicar) resided in regimental communities there as a deterrent to further Turkish attacks. They formed eastern outposts of the Habsburg belt of defense against the Ottoman danger which swept from the Adriatic Sea to the Carpathian mountains. Throughout the eighteenth and late into the nineteenth centuries, the Military Border of the Banat and Batschka was governed directly by Vienna, not through Budapest like the rest of southern Hungary. Possibly this explains the proverbial Habsburg patriotism of its residents, who were mainly of Serbian and Rumanian extraction.

By the mid-nineteenth century, cultural life in the Banat and Batschka came to be dominated by its Serb inhabitants. Far more advanced than their brothers within Serbia, these people sparked the development of Serbian religious and educational life as a whole.[31] Indeed, the Batschka city of Novi Sad (Neusatz, Ujvidek), where a large Serbian population was located, came to be called the Serbian Athens. During the 1848 Revolution, these Habsburg Serbs ignored the numerous non-Serbs in their midst and declared that their area of residence was an autonomous unit under a Serbian military leader (vojvoda). Although the Emperor recognized this Voivodina between 1849 and 1860, he did so in name only. The Serbs of southern Hungary never in fact enjoyed the political self-government to which they aspired under the Habsburgs.

---

[30] For a discussion of the origin of this institution in Croatia, see pages 27-28 infra.

[31] Wayne Vucinich, "The Serbs in Austria-Hungary," Austrian History Yearbook, Vol. III, Pt. 2 (1967), p. 5.

In the post-revolutionary decade, the Voivodina as recognized in Vienna included all of the Banat, Bács-Bodrog and two districts of Srem (Syrmien, Szerém), the easternmost tip of Slavonia to the South. It was peopled by approximately 407,000 Serbs (twenty-nine per cent of the total), 395,000 Rumanians (twenty-eight per cent), 325,000 Germans (twenty-three per cent), 241,000 Magyars (seventeen per cent), and 32,000 others.[32] Despite their attempts to dominate, the Serbs could never make inroads into other ethnic enclaves. The Voivodina as similar areas in the Habsburg Empire was not a melting pot.[33]

In this multinational milieu, the Germans of the Voivodina were slow to form a national movement. Many responded to pressures from Budapest and assimilated with Magyars. However, in the early nineteenth century, German schools were opened to counteract Magyarization. Already in 1809, a four-class middle school for volksdeutsch children began operation in Novi Vrbas (Neu-Werbass, Ujverbász), a Batschka town which emerged as the center for German education. The fact that the German character of the school remained intact for a century bespeaks of a wellspring of German consciousness among the Germans of the Voivodina ready to be tapped.[34] During the 1848 Revolution, they remained by and large indifferent to German aspirations.[35] Yet, portents of things to come were faintly discernible in the revolutionary period.

---

[32] Macartney, Habsburg Empire, pp. 446-447, 449, 507.

[33] Zwitter, Les problèmes nationaux, pp. 15-16.

[34] Aussendeutscher Wochenspiegel (hereinafter cited as A.W.), November 19, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329642-5.

[35] Pfitzner, "Bewegung des Jahres 1848," pp. 314-315.

Although the Bogaroscher Swabian Petition of 1849, which requested autonomy for the Volksdeutschen of the Banat and Batschka, came to naught, it proved to be a beginning. By the 1870's, strong German centers had been rooted in the Banat communites of Vrsac (Werschetz, Versec) and Bela-Crkva (Weisskirchen).[36] Pivotal support was found there for the Hungarian German National Party (Ungarländische Deutsche Volkspartei, UDVP), which was organized in 1905 by Edmund Steinacker and others on behalf of the German minority in Hungary.[37] Never tolerant of minority agitators, the Hungarian authorities forced Steinacker to leave Hungary and to work underground in Vienna. Although he was receptive to Pan-German ideas, his championship of minority rights was moderated by his loyalty to Hungary.[38] The German Hungarian catechism of 1907, which he circulated among volksdeutsch peasants under the disguise of an agricultural impelemnt catalog, popularized a program of reasonable demands: the right to speak German, to maintain German schools and to enjoy press freedom.[39] The national movement among the Germans of southern Hungary, when it finally coalesced in the early twentieth century, was essentially moderate.

Although the term had encompassed wider boundaries in the past,

---

[36]Fritz Valjavec, "Das älteste Zeugnis für das völkische Erwachen des Donauschwabentums," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLIX (1939), pp. 316-317.

[37]Mattias Wolfgang Weiland, Zweihundert Jahre Donauschwaben (Augsburg, 1949), pp. 65-66.

[38]Harold Steinacker, Austro-Hungarica: Ausgewählte Aufsätze und Vorträge zur Geschichte Ungarns und der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie (Munich, 1963), pp. 312-325.

[39]Ibid., pp. 304-311.

the Voivodina was officially resurrected to designate the additions to Yugoslavia from southern Hungary. These included nearly all of Bács-Bodrog, the area generally denoted as Batschka; less than a quarter of Baranja, the Baranja triangle (Baranja-Dreieck) formed by the confluence of the Danube and Drava rivers; and one-third of the total Banat. The ethnic composition of this truncated Voivodina showed a different pattern in 1910 from that of the Voivodina of the mid-nineteenth century. Without the eastern two-thirds of the Banat which was contiguous to Rumania, the Rumanian element was significantly weakened. The Batschka, the Baranja triangle and the western or Serbian Banat included out of a total population of approximately 1,320,000: 382,000 Serbs (twenty-nine per cent), 422,000 Magyars (thirty-two per cent), 300,000 Germans (twenty-three per cent) and only 75,000 Rumanians (five per cent). Whereas it contained now only three major groups rather than four, the Yugoslav Voivodina was still as ethnically mixed as the Voivodina under the Habsburgs had been.

Croatia-Slavonia.--The German minority in Croatia-Slavonia, which was formed later than that in the Voivodina, were for a long time largely overlooked by historians despite their rather substantial number.[40] The intricacies of the history of Croatia-Slavonia and its relationship to Hungary possibly overshadowed the development of this national group and delayed its recognition until after World War I.

The main body of Croatians and Slavonians lived in the region extending in a semi-circular fashion from the narrow corridor between

---

[40]Herman Rüdiger, "Deutschtum in Slawonien und Syrmien," Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), p. 198.

the Danube, Drava and Sava rivers to the Adriatic Sea. (See Map 3). The northern portion of this area was known as Croatia proper; the riverine arm was called Slavonia. The latter term has had no real political meaning since the Middle Ages.[41] As has been indicated, the easternmost tip of Slavonia, Srem, was sometimes considered as part of the Voivodina because of its extensive Serbian population. Here the Serbo-Croat conflict, which animated so much of Bosnian history, also came into play.[42] Croatians in addition inhabited the Littoral, Dalmatia and the Lower Mur Region (Medjumurje, Murinsel) of Hungary proper. The latter area, a triangle at the confluence of the Drava and Mur rivers, was included in the County of Zala.

The central theme around which most of Croatian history before 1918 revolved was the Croatian connection with Hungary. It began in 1102, when the Croatians, no longer able to maintain their medieval kingdom, signed the Pacta Conventa. This union accorded to the Croats a modest degree of autonomy which existed largely on paper. It profoundly influenced the Croatian nobles, in that they assimilated with the Magyar nation. After the disastrous defeat which the Hungarians and Croatians suffered from the Turks at Mohacs in 1526, much of Croatia proper fell to the Habsburgs along with the western strip of Hungary. Slavonia, however, suffered under the Turkish yoke until the Treaty of Carlowitz of 1699, when it too passed under the Habsburgs. The fiction of the privileged status of the Croats was scrupulously

---

[41] Kann, Multinational Empire, Vol. I, pp. 237-238.

[42] For a discussion on the Serbo-Croat conflict in Bosnia, see pages 13-15 supra.

maintained under the Habsburgs, but Croatia was still ruled as part of Hungary, and the Croatian capital, Zagreb (Agram, Zágráb), was never more than a provincial seat. Even their military support to Vienna against insurgent Hungarians during the 1848 Revolution did nothing to give Croats greater autonomy. Their decision to march under an imperial banner was simply dictated by their status as a weak people unable to follow an independent course and could hardly result in rewards.[43] After the Compromise of 1867, the Croats were as firmly under the control of Budapest as before.

The Turkish impact on Croatia-Slavonia can be seen most particularly in the institution of the Military Border. In the sixteenth century, the Habsburgs established communities of peasant soldiers along the then Croatian border to defend the Empire against the Asiatic hordes. In the early eighteenth century, when Slavonia was incorporated with the Empire, the Military Border was extended. It eventually ran the entire length of the southern boundary of Croatia-Slavonia, a strip about 20-30 kilometers wide, stretching from Rijeka (Fiume) to Belgrade (Beograd), where it converged with the military districts of southern Hungary. Since Slavonia had been effectively depopulated during the Turkish occupation, Vienna invited Serbs into the area. As a consequence, most of the Grenzer in the Slavonian portion of the Military Border were of Serbian origin. The Croatian-Slavonian military border district was ruled directly by Vienna until 1881, when it was abolished as obsolete.

---

[43]Charles Jelavich, "The Croatian Problem in the Habsburg Empire in the Nineteenth Century," Austrian History Yearbook, Vol. III, Pt. 2 (1967), p. 95.

German pioneers found their way into Croatia-Slavonia in substantial numbers only in the nineteenth century, and then chiefly as secondary settlers. Although Germans were noted in Zagreb in the Middle Ages as handworkers and craftsmen, they never became a large group in Croatia proper.[44] When the Slavonian regiments of the Military Border were formed, Germans began to enter Slavonia in military capacities. Osijek (Essegg) was a major site for these settlers, who were in the majority there with 87 families by 1702.[45] Later in the eighteenth century, some German communities also were founded, such as Kula (Josefsfeld) and Poreč (Poretsch), both dating from 1786.[46] However, the major immigration of Volksdeutschen into Slavonia took place in the nineteenth century. Peasants from South Hungary streamed into the province, particularly into Srem, to form daughter settlements.[47] Their presence swelled the German minority to the point that by 1910 it comprised about five per cent of the total population of Croatia-Slavonia, which amounted to over two and a half million. The Volksdeutschen numbered 134,000, compared to 106,000 Magyars (four per cent), 1,638,000 Croats (sixty-four per cent) and 645,000 Serbs (twenty-two per cent).

---

[44] Volksdeutscher Ruf, November, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317113-5.

[45] Veröffentlichung aus: Handwörterbuch des Grenz-und-Auslanddeutschtums: Slawonien, p. 7. T-81/Roll 150/0153151.

[46] Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XIX (1936), p. 854.

[47] Egon Lendl, "Die Stellung des Slawonien-deutschtums unter den sudostdeutschen Volksinseln," Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), pp. 202-204; Hermann Haller, "Die Entstehung der deutschen Tochtersiedlungen in Syrmien," Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), p. 235.

The Germans of Croatia-Slovania were even less conscious of their ethnic heritage than their brothers in the Voivodina at the dawn of the twentieth century. Most of them were Catholic and under strong Croatian influence. In 1913, the League of Germans in Slavonia (Bund der Deutschen in Slawonien) was begun, but this remained only a fledgling organization.[48] The retarded nature of the German movement here may be attributed to the fact that the German settlements were widely scattered.[49]

Hungary Proper (Upper Mur Region).--A tiny German enclave was also found in the Upper Mur Region of Hungary proper, called Prekmurje (Übermurgebiet, Muravidék, Outre-Mura). (See Map 2). Before it was awarded to Yugoslavia, where it was included in the Province of Slovenia, this small district, extending north of the Mura (Mur) river, was divided between the counties of Vas and Zala.

The residents of Prekmurje were preponderantly descendants of old Pannonian Slovenes, mentioned by the Romans and known variously as Bunyevci or Wends. In the ninth and tenth centuries, they fell to Magyars, who thereafter formed the ruling class as owners of large estates. Because of the long association with the crown of St. Stephen, Budapest maintained that by modern times the culture of these Slovenes exhibited distinct Hungarian tendencies.[50] Between 700 and 1100, Germans also settled in Prekmurje. They were apparently impervious to

---

[48] Volksdeutscher Ruf, November, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317113-4.

[49] Lendl, "Die Stellung des Slawonien-deutschtums," pp. 205-206.

[50] Alexander Mikola, Kisebségi Körlevél, Vol. V, No. 4 (July, 1941). (German review, September 15, 1941). T-81/Roll 554/5330004-6.

Magyarization, in that they steadfastly maintained their German traditions throughout the centuries.[51] At the turn of the twentieth century, the population consisted of approximately 100,000 Slovenes, 25,000 Magyars and 1,500 Volksdeutschen.

In summary, the Germans on territory within that part of the Habsburg Empire which was to be absorbed by the future state of Yugoslavia developed according to whether they were inhabitants of the Cisleithanian or the Transleithanian half of the monarchy. Those in Slovenia were prosperous and cultivated burgers, whose ancestors had been in the land for centuries. Already in 1889, they had founded a powerful organization in the Südmark to battle for their national interests against Slovene nationalism. By contrast, the Germans in Hungary proper and in Croatia-Slavonia were relative newcomers in a wilderness which the Turks had devastated for nearly two hundred years. They had little time from their labors to protect their German culture from the myriad foreign influences surrounding them--Magyar, Serb, Rumanian, and Croatian. It was not until 1905 that the Hungarian Germans organized and even then only as good citizens of Hungary first, and Germans second. The Germans of Croatia-Slavonia were even more retarded in their national awakening, since their communities were of more recent origin and more widely scattered. Although the Bosnian Germans have been included within Cisleithania for convenience in this study, their case was too special to lend itself to comparison. In 1918, the Habsburgs bequeathed to Yugoslavia individual groupings of Volksdeutschen with vastly different histories.

---

[51] Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), p. 444.

Part II: The Volksdeutschen Within Interwar Yugoslavia

The necessary context for a discussion of the Volksdeutschen within interwar Yugoslavia can be gained by a brief summary of Yugoslav history in those years, which extend from the formation of the state after World War I to its involvement in World War II. The beginning of this period is somewhat obscure. Though the Yugoslav state was proclaimed by the Yugoslavs themselves on December 1, 1918, it was not confirmed until September 10, 1919 by the Treaty of St. Germain for its Austrian awards, nor until June 4, 1920 by the Treaty of Trianon for its Hungarian awards. On the other hand, the Nazi invasion on April 6, 1941 marks the opening of hostilities in Yugoslavia during World War II. Events within Yugoslavia between the wars furnish a turbulent backdrop for the chronicle of the German minority within its borders.

The new South Slav state began its existence as a constitutional monarchy. (See Map 5). Serbia provided the nucleus for the country and its ruling house, the Karageorgevich dynasty. From the Habsburg Empire, Yugoslavia received Dalmatia and the lands discussed in Part I of this chapter: Slovenia, including the Upper Mur Region; Bosnia; the Voivodina, made up of the Baranja triangle, Batschka and the Serbian Banat; and Croatia-Slavonia with the addition of the Lower Mur Region. Montenegro also joined the union. Between 1918 and 1929, the country was called the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to signify the three dominant ethnic groups in its population. Thereafter, it was denoted as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Map 5. Political Divisions Within the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia), 1918-1929

Among the early developments of importance within the new nation was a drastic land reform carried out in the more prosperous provinces of Slovenia, the Voivodina and Croatia-Slavonia. Large landowners, mainly of Austrian-German and Hungarian extraction, were dispossessed in an effort to redistribute wealth. In the Voivodina and Croatia-Slavonia, the beneficiaries were generally Serbs, either of local origin or from other parts of the country. They were called volunteers (Dobrovolzen), in that many qualified for free land as a reward for voluntary service during World War I. By 1935, 250,000 families had been relocated on small properties carved out of the larger estates in former Habsburg areas.[52]

Shortly after Yugoslavia was established, the Croats and, to a lesser extent, the Slovenes began to feel deceived about their hopes for national fulfillment within the new borders. The Serbs with a population of six million significantly outnumbered the Croats, with less than four million, and the Slovenes, with a little over one million. In addition to the obvious advantages of numerical supremacy, the Serbians were dedicated to a "Greater Servian" ideal in the running of the government. The bureaucrats in Belgrade built up a centralist administration which disregarded the cultural and political aspirations and the economic interests of their fellow compatriots.[53] Throughout the entire interwar period, Yugoslav politics were stormy and characterized by bitter rivalry between the Croats and the Serbs.

---

[52]Tomasevich, Peasants, Politics and Economic Change, pp. 329, 366, 368.

[53]Dinko Tomašić, "Struggle for Power in Jugoslavia," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. I (1941), p. 155.

Between the wars, three separate territorial organizations with political implications were instituted. None worked effectively to break down the mutual antagonism of the Serbs and Croats. During the first decade, the component parts of the country retained their historic boundaries. In 1929, when Alexander I reorganized the kingdom, he established a virtual dictatorship in order to introduce stability. Nine provinces (banovinas) were created in an effort to show a Serbian majority in as many administrative districts as possible. (See Map 6). After Alexander's assassination in 1934, Prince Regent Paul ruled Yugoslavia until March, 1941 on behalf of the young Prince Peter. Under his regime, yet another territorial adjustment was made. Sensing that Croatian disaffection within the country had reached dangerous proportions, Paul decided to appease the dissidents. On August 26, 1939, an agreement (Sporazum) was signed, by which an enlarged Croatian province was formed with considerable autonomy. (See Map 6). The agreement did little to ease tensions. On the eve of World War II, Yugoslavia was still very much a house divided.

In international affairs, the position of Yugoslavia was precarious. It was confronted by Italy and Hungary, both of which aggressively coveted Yugoslav territory. Membership in the Little Entente along with Czechoslovakia and Rumania provided no real support against these revisionists states. In addition, as Germany rose in power after the advent of Hitler on January 30, 1933, Yugoslavia fell increasingly under Berlin's influence. Milan Stojadinovich, who became premier in 1935, and Dragiša Cvetkovich, who followed him in early 1939, found it progressively more difficult to resist German demands. They were forced to acquiesce in the abrogation of the Paris peace settlement,

Map 6. Provinces of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1929-1941

the German Anschluss with Austria in March, 1939, and the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia a year later.

The German political hegemony in Yugoslavia was built upon a penetration into the country's markets. The helplessness of Belgrade in this regard was aggravated by the fact that Yugoslavia suffered from enormous problems of over-population in the inter-war period. For example, the surplus agricultural population stood at forty-four per cent.[54] Under these conditions, Yugoslavia had no choice but to enter into trade agreements with Berlin. By early 1938, trade volume between Yugoslavia and Germany had trebled its 1934 level.[55] In that year, Yugoslavia sent to Germany half of its total exports, which represented less than three per cent of total German imports.[56] The South Slav state was rapidly becoming a virtual colony of its Teutonic neighbor, and the increasing power of Germany on the continent after 1938 enhanced German supremacy in the Yugoslav economy even more.

After World War II had begun on September 1, 1939, Yugoslavia attempted valiantly to steer a neutral course. For nineteen months, it succeeded; but early in 1941, Yugoslavia too became embroiled in the conflagration raging on the continent. After the inept invasion of Greece by the Italians in October, 1940, Yugoslav cooperation had become extremely important to the Germans. A quick suppression of the dogged Greek resistance by German forces was an absolute necessity, if

---

[54]Tomasevich, Peasants, Politics and Economic Change, p. 324.

[55]Brief for Hitler-Stojadinovich talks by Clodius, January 7, 1938. DGFP, Series D, Vol. V, pp. 217-218.

[56]Stoyan Pribichevich, "Nazi Drive to the East," Foreign Policy Reports, Vol. XIV (1938), p. 176.

the German attack on Russia, planned for May, was to succeed. Hitler needed assurance of Yugoslav acquiescence toward this military intrusion into the Balkans. As a result, he demanded that Yugoslavia sign the Tripartite Pact, which would safely orient the state toward the Axis sphere. Two days after the pact was signed by the Cvetkovich government, on March 27, 1941, the people of Yugoslavia rose up against this collaboration with Hitler. A revolutionary government under the boy King Peter II was formed by General Dushan Simovich. In a fury over the developments in Belgrade, Hitler held a conference in Berlin on the same day as the coup, during which he determined to smash Yugoslavia militarily and as a state.[57] Shortly thereafter, on the night of April 6-7, German bombers attacked Belgrade without a declaration of war.

The fortunes of the German minority within Yugoslavia fluctuated in an inverse relationship to the course of their host country's history between the wars. As Yugoslavia gradually lost its independence vis-a-vis Berlin, the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen gained more and more concessions. By the late 1930's, although problems remained severe in Slovenia, the minority as a whole fared extremely well compared to other Germans throughout eastern and southeastern Europe.[58] In a treaty signed in conjunction with that of St. Germain, Yugoslavia promised to protect the rights of its minorities residing on former Habsburg lands. Since guarantees were under the supervision of the

---

[57]Minutes of conference in Berlin, March 27, 1941. DGFP. Series D, Vol. XII, p. 373.

[58]Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, p. 37E.

League of Nations, these provisions diminished in value as the League itself lost strength. Eventually, Belgrade accorded concessions to minorities on the basis of how strong the mother country was in backing them. No wonder that the Germans enjoyed exceptional privileges on the eve of World War II. To some observers, they formed almost a "state within a state."[59]

Berlin worked within legal international bounds for the benefit of the Germans in Yugoslavia. The Führer posed as their champion, as well as of all Germans abroad. In his Reichstag speech of March 23, 1933, he said:

> We have particularly at heart the fate of the Germans living beyond the frontiers of Germany who are allied with us in speech, culture, and customs and have to make a hard fight to retain these values. The national Government is resolved to use all the means at its disposal to support the rights internationally guaranteed to the German minorities.[60]

In interviews with Yugoslav diplomats, he often insisted that good German-Yugoslav relations hinged upon acceptable treatment of the group.[61]

The favor thus won for the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen exacted a price, for it generated much ill-will among the Yugoslav population as a whole. Resentment toward the Germans undoubtedly was heightened by the outbreak of World War II and the course of German victories in

---

[59]Stojković, National Minorities in Yugoslavia, pp. 6-8.

[60]Adolph Hitler, My New Order, ed. Raoul de Roussy de Sales (New York, 1941), p. 158.

[61]See, for example: Memorandum on conversation between Hitler and the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, April 21 [sic], 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI, p. 341; Memorandum on conversation between Hitler and Prince Paul, June 5, 1939. DGPF, Series D, Vol. VI, p. 637.

the early years of combat. The German Minister in Belgrade, Viktor von Heeren, reported in May, 1940, that anti-German feeling in Yugoslavia had reached enormous proportions. This situation was so fraught with danger that he counseled the curtailment of German cultural activities to prevent further anti-German incidents.[62] Both the concessions and the prospect of more of them promised by German military prowess made the position of the Volksdeutschen increasingly precarious.

The furor over the German minority far surpassed the numerical strength of the group. In the 1931 Yugoslav census, it numbered only 500,000 members (less than four per cent of the total) in a population consisting of nearly 12 million souls.[63] On the basis of this census, the largest German population, some 310,000 people, inhabited the Voivodina. The second in size, about 130,000 Volksdeutsche, lived in Croatia-Slavonia, while Slovenia counted 29,400 and Bosnia 19,900. A colony of 9,300 Germans also resided in Belgrade. Of these, probably half were not Yugoslav citizens but Austrian Germans and Reichsdeutsche engaged in trade.[64] All of the Volksdeutschen in Yugoslavia, with the exception of those in Slovenia, were known as Danube Swabians (Donauschwaben) during the interwar period. This term was coined around 1922 to denote the one and a half million ethnic Germans living along the

---

[62]Report from von Heeren, May 20, 1940. DGFP, Series D, Vol. IX, p. 384.

[63]Despite the much-vaunted private observations that the German minority ran 200,000 higher, the German Foreign Office accepted the 1931 Yugoslav census as reliable in 1941. (Biber, Nacizem i nemci, pp. 15-23, 425.

[64]Veröffentlichung aus: Handwörterbuch des Grenz-und-Auslanddeutschtums: Südslawien, pp. 1-2. T-81/Roll 150/0153214-5.

Danube in Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.[65]

The national life of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen between 1918 and 1941 was fostered by a number of political, economic and cultural organizations. Foremost among these was the Swabian German Cultural Union (Schwäbisch-deutscher Kulturbund). Founded in 1930 in Novi Sad, it at first encompassed mainly the ethnic Germans in the Voivodina, but eventually expanded to include all in Yugoslavia. The tribulations of this group in the early years of the Yugoslav state and the dilemmas faced after the Nazi assumption of power in Germany were representative in large measure of the total prewar experience of the ethnic Germans in Yugoslavia.

At the time of its formation and for nearly two decades thereafter, the Kulturbund was dedicated to the motto of the Danube Swabians: "Loyal to the state and to the nationality."[66] The goals of the group were listed as economic and cultural; political activity was specifically barred by its constitution. Paragraph 3 read:

> The Union strives for the improvement and stimulation of the material, spiritual, aesthetic and ethnical culture of the people of German nationality residing in the state and authorized by it...Every political activity within the framework of the Swabian German Cultural Union remains excluded.[67]

The guiding spirit and an early presiding officer of the Kulturbund was Dr. Stephan Kraft, a politician who had been a fighter for German

---

[65]Scherer, Donauschwäbische Bibliographie, p. vii.

[66]"Staatstreu und volkstreu." Weiland, Zweihundert Jahre Donauschwaben, p. 80.

[67]Quoted in Theodor Grentrup, Das Deutschtum an der mittleren Donau in Rumänien und Jugoslawien (Münster, 1930), pp. 327-328.

cultural rights within Habsburg Hungary as a member of the moderate UDVP. Born in 1884 in Srem, he had studied at the universities of Marburg an der Lahn and Vienna.[68] In the late 1920's Captain Johann Keks was elected president of the association. He adhered strictly to the constitutional goals, which stressed education and welfare and eschewed political involvement.[69]

Despite a program designed to create a harmonious relationship with Belgrade, the Kulturbund experienced legal difficulties in its early years. The Yugoslav government followed contradictory policies of oppression and appeasement toward the organization in an effort to minimize the threat which many Yugoslavs believed the German minority posed to the country's security.[70] Between 1924 and 1930, the Kulturbund was dissolved and reinstated intermittently. Thereafter, it was allowed to function without interruption, although separate chapters (Ortsgruppen) were closed down sporadically in the mid-1930's. The harrassment by Belgrade did not seem to affect permanently the size of the membership. In 1924, the Kulturbund included 211 Ortsgruppen with 42,000 members.[71] In 1936, it still boasted of 210 Ortsgruppen.[72]

Once the Nazis achieved control in Germany, the unity of the Kulturbund was threatened by younger members who finally took charge of the organization. In 1934, the Renovation Movement

---

[68] Grenzwacht (Osijek), October 23, 1942.

[69] Grentrup, Das Deutschtum, pp. 328-329.

[70] Paul Shoup, "Yugoslavia's National Minorities," Slavic Review Vol. XXII (1963), p. 66.

[71] Grentrup, Das Deutschtum, p. 329.

[72] Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), p. 368.

(Erneuerungsbewegung) was organized by Dr. Jacob Awender, a physician of the Banat town of Pančevo (Pantschowa). Awender and his followers believed that the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen should experience a rebirth of their energies and abilities in order that the German nationality could triumph in hostile territory. While they claimed the same goals as members of the Kulturbund, the Renovators espoused more "enthusiastic" tactics and tempo of operation.[73] The movement's weekly newspaper, the Volksruf, formerly the Pančevoer Post, was edited by Awender in association with Gustav Halwax, an inflammatory agitator. For several years, the Kulturbund leadership was successful in combating forays by the members of the Renovation Movement into its affairs. At the general assembly of the Kulturbund in December, 1935, the policies of the executive committee under Keks were reaffirmed and the Renovators left the organization.[74]

Dissention also split the Renovation Movement in the spring of 1937. A moderate wing was formed by Branimir Altgayer and Dr. Josef "Sepp" Janko. Altgayer, born in 1897 of an old Slavonian military family, had been an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army. He engaged in minority work on behalf of the Volksdeutschen in the Osijek area, where he published the weekly Slavonischer Volksbote.[75] Janko, an assessor in the Banat town of Veliki Bečkerek (Zrenjanin, Petrovgrad, Gross-Betschkerek) was born in the Banat in 1905 and completed his

---

[73]Wuescht, Beitrag zur Geschichte, pp. 23-25, 27-29.

[74]Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XIX (1936), p. 43.

[75]Hans Karl Andras, Weltwacht der Deutschen, September, 1941. T/81 Roll 545/5317405.

education at the University of Innsbruck. After the split, proceedings were instituted to merge the moderates with the Kulturbund.[76] The radicals continued under the leadership of Awender and Halwax, who established a liaison with the tiny Serbian fascist movement under Dimitrije Ljotić.

By the late 1930's, the elder statesmen of the Kulturbund could no longer stem the tide. Berlin accused them of internecine warfare damaging to the organization and Kraft, in particular, of mismanagement of finances. A meeting was held in Vienna on May 15, 1939, at which the problems of the Kulturbund were submitted to arbitration.[77] Whether Kraft and his associates were guilty as charged can be questioned, but the Kulturbund was turned over to the moderate Renovators nonetheless. Janko became head of the union in the summer of 1939.

Now under strong Nazi influence, the Kulturbund became aggressive. The slogan appearing on releases from its press service read "He who is not a member of the Kulturbund can not be a good German!"[78] Rewards were reaped from relentless membership campaigns among the Volksdeutschen. By mid-1939, there were 320 Ortsgruppen in the organization, with a membership of 305,000 or more than half of the total German population.[79] Since the pattern of the Nazi party was

---

[76]Unsigned Memorandum, December 31, 1937. DGFP, Series D, Vol. V, p. 212.

[77]Wuescht, Beitrag zur Geschichte, pp. 26-27, 59-61.

[78]"Wer nicht Mitglied im Kulturbund ist, kann auch kein guter Deutscher sein!" Volk im Kulturbund (1940?). T-81/Roll 521/ 5285848-52.

[79]Biber, Nacizem i nemci, pp. 194, 433; Wuescht, Beitrag zur Geschichte, pp. 62-63.

introduced, these Ortsgruppen were divided into districts (Kreise), which in turn were divided into provinces (Gaue). Programs to strengthen German consciousness were begun, such as the Kinder aufs Land project, which saw young city people sent to rural volksdeutsch families for extended visits in a "healthy" German atmosphere.[80] Loyalty to the state was overshadowed by commitment to the nationality in the ethos of the revamped Kulturbund.

The Nazi leaders of the Kulturbund abandoned the 1920 constitution and entered politics. Between 1922 and 1929, the German minority in Yugoslavia had been represented by the German Party (Partei der Deutschen) under the guidance of Dr. Kraft. The party, which garnered about 45,000 votes in national elections, wielded very little power in the Parliament (Skupština) and held only between five and eight seats in the assembly.[81] After the establishment of the dictatorship in 1929, the party was permanently banned. Thereafter, German delegates usually ran on the government list. By default, the Kulturbund apparently began to fill the vacuum created by the demise of the German Party.[82] Once the Nazis were in control, they openly used its offices for political agitation. In the national elections held in early 1940, Volksdeutsche were blatantly admonished to vote as directed by the minority leadership.[83]

Education for the Germans improved remarkably as Nazi strength

---

[80] Volk im Kulturbund (1940?). T-81/Roll 521/5285848-52.

[81] Grentrup, Das Deutschtum, pp. 325-326.

[82] Volksdeutscher Ruf, November, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317113-5.

[83] Deutschtum im Ausland, Vol. XXIII (1940), pp. 33-34.

expanded in Europe and the Balkans. In the 1920's, Belgrade had been remiss in honoring its treaty obligations toward the Volksdeutschen. Dr. Kraft delivered an impassioned speech in the Parliament in 1927 accusing deficiencies in the number of both German classes and teachers. Two years later, a memorandum was prepared, which charged that 10,000 to 12,000 German elementary school children, out of the 36,000 to 40,000 total, were denied the German instruction for which they qualified.[84] This neglect by the government led to the formation of a foundation for private German schools (Schulstiftung der Deutschen des Königreichs Jugoslawien) in 1931. General progress was made in the 1930's in collecting funds for private schools and in attaining government permission for their operation. By 1940, German secondary schools were reported in Novi Vrbas, Zagreb, Belgrade and Apatin (Abthausen).[85] The Germans never forgot that the schools were the real lifeblood of the minority.[86] They fully realized that the minority could not survive if its youngest members lost their mother tongue.

In the interwar period, many other agencies functioned to better the life of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen in diverse ways. Since seventy-four per cent of them lived on the land, agricultural associations were of the utmost importance.[87] The Agraria coordinated efforts of various volksdeutschen agricultural cooperatives. Designed to stimulate

---

[84]Grentrup, Das Deutschtum, pp. 231, 237.

[85]A. W., August 31, 1941, from Börsenzeitung (Berlin), August 25, 1940. T-81/Roll 522/5287430.

[86]A. W., March 16, 1940. T-81/Roll 521/5286379-81.

[87]Joseph B. Schechtman, "The Elimination of German Minorities in Southeastern Europe," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. VI (1946), p. 153.

production and facilitate marketing, Agraria fell to Nazi control by the late 1930's.[88] An organization made up of welfare cooperatives (Ländliche Wohlfahrtsgenossenschaften) provided hospital and health care for the German peasants and workers. Directed by Wuescht, a pioneer in the area of public hygiene from Batschka, it was supported by 40,000 members in 1937.[89]

Further, a substantial German language press for the Yugoslav minority flourished in the prewar years. In the late 1920's, there were sixteen German newspapers, of which one, the Deutsches Volksblatt of Novi Sad was a daily.[90] By 1935, two more newspapers were added to the list.[91] A year later, a total of 45 newspapers and periodicals were available to the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen, including four dailies with a combined circulation of 35,000. Only two of the dailies were openly committed to a German platform: Deutsches Volksblatt, which served as an organ for the Kulturbund, and Deutsche Zeitung. also of Novi Sad. Most of the weeklies were of a local character.[92] However, Awender's Volksruf and Altgayer's Slawonischer Volksbote took militant Nazi positions; Die Donau, a Catholic weekly published in Apatin, followed a decidedly anti-Nazi editorial policy.

Religious bodies also mirrored the rift which developed among

---

[88] Tomasevich, Peasants, Politics and Economic Change, pp. 618-619.

[89] Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), p. 122. Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, pp. 350-353.

[90] Grentrup, Das Deutschtum, p. 306.

[91] Wilhelm Gradmann, "Die deutschsprächigen Zeitungen im Ausland," Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XIX (1936), pp. 14-15.

[92] Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), pp. 176-177.

Yugoslav Volksdeutschen as a consequence of the rise of Nazism. About seventy-five per cent of the ethnic German population, nearly 400,000 people, were counted as Roman Catholic in the 1931 census. Since the Catholic church was also strong among the Slavs in areas of German settlement, it was a powerful force for assimilation. Volksdeutsche theological students prepared for the priesthood in such Slavic strongholds as Sarajevo.[93] The Protestants, totalling 100,000, were much weaker than the Catholics. Members of the Lutheran Evangelical Church adhering to the Augsburg Confession numbered 85,000; those of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 15,000. While strong nationalistic tendencies were discernible in these Protestant circles, the Catholics played them down. Among the most vocal fighters for German rights in prewar Yugoslavia was the regional bishop of the Augsburg confesssional church, Dr. Philipp Popp.

The picture of the Yugoslav Germans which emerges from a study of their political, economic and cultural organizations is generally valid for the entire country. Certain differences must be noted in various areas of residence, however, and the special problems encountered by the Germans of Slovenia, Croatia-Slavonia, Voivodina and Bosnia provide variety to the history of the Volksdeutschen of Yugoslavia between 1918 and 1941.

The drastic decline in the position of the German minority in Slovenia, or the Drava Province (Dravska Banovina), as it was called after 1929, is reflected in population statistics. (See Map 6). The

---

[93] Letter of Sebastian Werni, October 10, 1934. T-81/Roll 444/5196044-6.

following figures for Slovene cities with the heaviest German concentrations are revealing:[94]

Ethnic German Population

	1910	1931
Maribor (Marburg)	22,653	2,741
Celje (Cilli)	4,625	449
Ptuj (Pettau)	3,672	559

Although many Germans chose to emigrate from Slovenia, the actual population losses between 1910 and 1931 were not as dramatic as pictured above. Many people who had been counted as Germans on the basis of Umgangssprache in the 1910 Habsburg census appeared on the 1931 census rolls as Slovenes, since official Yugoslav nationality figures were based on the criterion of mother tongue. Nevertheless, the most conspicuous loss of German strength occurred here in Slovenia, as seen by comparing the 1910 census (107,200 Germans) with that of 1931 (29,400 Germans). The Germans represented only two and a half per cent of the total population numbering about 1,150,000, mostly Slovenes.

During the interwar period, the ethnic Germans in Slovenia lived in compact enclaves. There was only one major German settlement in Carniola, the Kočevje district, with 12,000 Germans, but a few Germans still resided in Ljubljana. Other German communities, comprised mainly of substantial citizens in market towns, radiated from the Austrian frontier throughout Lower Styria. The most important Styrian cities with small German minorities were Maribor (Marburg), Celje and Ptuj. In the Upper Mur Region, there were 1,500 Volksdeutsche.

---

[94] Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), p. 764.

Anti-German sentiment was particularly strong in Slovenia in the interwar years. Germans blamed much of this exaggerated Slovene nationalism on the Primorzen, former residents of Slovene areas along the Adriatic coast who migrated to Slovenia when their home territory was awarded to Italy after World War I. Presumably, they were sophisticated warriors for the national cause. For whatever reason, Slovenian authorities were preoccupied with strengthening the Slavic elements in their land at the expense of the German between 1918 and 1941. There was some foundation to the charge that the blatant disregard of German minority rights in Slovenia was designed to bring about "the entire pulverization of the German ethnic group in Slovenia."[95]

An early Slovene-German dispute which attracted international attention centered on the German House (Deutsches Haus) in Celje. This case was the only petition on behalf of the German minority in Yugoslavia debated in the Council of the League of Nations.[96] At the turn of the century, a German association was formed in Celje which took the name of its headquarters, the German House. Because they feared that the association served to convert Slovenes into Germans, the Slovene authorities dissolved it immediately after World War I. In 1924, its property was given to the Celjski Dom, a Slavicized version of the German association, to fill the social, artistic and cultural needs of local Germans. Although a League of Nations report on the

---

[95] Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XIX (1936), p. 855.

[96] Paul A. Marrotte, "Germany at the League of Nations Council: The Defense of German Minority Groups in Poland, Memel and Yugoslavia" (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1954), p. 41.

controversy in 1933 absolved the Yugoslavs of wrongdoing, the Germans remained dissatisfied.[97]

The grievances of the German minority against Slovene authorities did not abate as the years passed. In the late 1930's, the Germans charged that the Yugoslav government placed unreasonable restrictions upon ethnic German subjects, such as prohibiting them from owning property within fifty kilometers of the border. Members of the minority were incensed at the anti-German tone of the newspaper Slovenec, a Catholic daily published in Ljubljana, as well as "general chicaneries" practiced against them. They further demanded that cooperative organizations and societies be permitted without official interference. Regulations which restricted German teachers and the German language in schools for children of the German minority aroused particular hostility.[98] Because German teachers were usually transferred from German to purely Slovenian communities, by 1936 hardly a dozen German teachers were left in the Kočevje area, which was eighty-nine per cent German, while the Slovenian teachers there numbered fifty.[99] The Slovene authorities clearly were following a course of Entdeutschungspolitik (de-germanization) to the dismay of their German constituents.

The Kulturbund, which was introduced into Slovenia relatively late, suffered repression as a consequence of the rapid strides toward Nazism made by its members. Only the Kočevje Germans were satisfied with the

---

[97] Ibid., pp. 375-386.

[98] Unsigned Memorandum, December 31, 1937. DGFP, Series D, Vol. V, p. 213.

[99] Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XIX (1936), p. 855.

moderate leadership of the Kulturbund.[100] Elsewhere more radical philosophies prevailed. The Maribor and Ljubljana branches were dissolved by order of the provincial governor in 1935 and 1936 respectively for their covert political activity. Because of such punitive actions, only a few groups operated in Slovenia by 1937.[101] The tale of the chapter in Ljubljana was typical. Formed in 1932, it was Nazified after a three-year battle. Official dissolution forced the group underground, where it operated until recognition was restored in 1940.[102] Thereafter, the Kulturbund expanded rapidly throughout Slovenia under the leadership of its provincial chairman (Gauobmann) Senior Johann "Hans" Baron, an Evangelical priest.[103]

Even the tranquility among the Kočevje Germans was destroyed by agitators who succeeded in radicalizing their Kulturbund by 1938. The moderate leadership of Dr. Hans Arko was challenged by Wilhelm Lampeter, a youth worker in touch with the Erneuerungsbewegung. Ultimately, Arko was deposed, and Nazification begun in a most intense manner. The Kulturbund was renamed a Volksgruppe under a Führer, an office filled by Josef Schober. The German population was divided into twenty-five groups, which were designated with typical Nazi bombast as Stürme to denote their quasi-military role as vanguards of the German race. Each

---

[100] Biber, Nacizem i nemci, pp. 428-429.

[101] Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XIX (1936), pp. 125, 348-349; Vol. XX (1937), p. 123.

[102] Report of Gustav Tönnies, December 10, 1941. T-81/Roll 306/2434051-6. Secret report by Balduin Saria, December 9, 1941. T-81/Roll 306/2434059-66.

[103] Deutsches Volksblatt (Novi Sad), June 6, 1940.

Sturm was subdivided into various groups for men, women and children.[104] Trouble brewed in the Kočevje district by the continued presence of outside agitators. In 1940, a local leader was forced to order all foreigners to leave the area and to allow some to stay only if they surrendered their arms to the police.[105]

Generally speaking, the Germans of Slovenia evinced their heritage of strong nationalistic sentiment and privileged position in the inter-war years. They embraced Nazi doctrines with enthusiasm very nearly to a man. Although only a small group, they were undaunted by obstacles thrown up by the Slovenes. They believed that Hitler would be their savior, and, as Baron said in a speech on January 19, 1941, they confessed to an absolute faith in National Socialism.[106]

The creation of Yugoslavia affected the fortunes of the Germans in Croatia-Slavonia to a lesser degree than it affected those in Slovenia. Their number remained constant, in that there were still 130,000 Volksdeutschen in 1931 compared to 134,000 in 1910. The greatest concentration of Germans occurred in Srem, where 50,000 Germans represented nearly fifteen per cent of the total population of 320,000. Because of the Serb majority in Srem, the region had a Serbian character.[107] Important German communities were established in Ruma and Zemun (Semlin, Zimony), which lay directly opposite Belgrade at the confluence of the

---

[104] Report by Nussbaumer, 1941. T-81/Roll 306/2434001-2434012.

[105] Secret report from Südostdeutsches Institut, Graz, September 9, 1940. T-81/Roll 521/5287041.

[106] A. W., March 1, 1941, from Gottscheer Zeitung (Kočevje), January 23, 1941. T-81/Roll 544/5315792.

[107] Rüdiger, "Deutschtum in Slawonien und Syrmien," p. 198.

Danube and Sava rivers. Excluding Srem, the approximately 80,000 Germans in Croatia-Slavonia accounted for only three per cent of the total population, which included 2,731,000 people mainly of Croatian extraction. German settlements were concentrated in Slavonia. Important ones were Virovitica (Verőcze, Weretz, Wirowititz), Vinkovci (Vinocvici, Winkowzi) and Osijek.

Internal Yugoslav border adjustments, which resulted from the Serbian-Croatian controversy over Srem dating to Habsburg times, caused the political detachment of many Germans of Srem from their brothers in Croatia-Slavonia during the 1930's. Following the administrative reorganization under Alexander I, most of Croatia-Slavonia was incorporated into the Sava Province (Savska Banovina). (See Map 6). However, a large portion of Srem, heavily populated by Volksdeutschen, was awarded to the Danube Province (Dunavska Banovina), which surrounded Belgrade and included all of the Voivodina. Zemun was incorporated into Belgrade as a suburb. In 1939, Croatia was enlarged according to the terms of the Sporazum by merging the Sava Province with the Coastal Province (Primorska Banovina), which included Dalmatia and parts of Bosnia. (See Map 6). Other Bosnian additions were made as well. However, only two districts of Srem were restored to the new province of Croatia and five remained attached to the Danube Province. Within Croatia, the German minority now comprised about 90,000, or a little over four per cent of the total population numbering about 3,786,000, if the 1931 census figures are used. The Croats accounted for seventy-five per cent of the population and the Serbs nineteen

per cent.[108] The passing of Srem back and forth between Croatian and Serbian hands led to an ultimate decrease in the German minority in Croatia in the final months of peace.

In the interwar period, Croatian Volksdeutsche had no real complaints within Yugoslavia, except perhaps for deficient German instruction for German children in the schools.[109] Popp and Altgayer presented a memorandum on schools for the German minority to the governor (Ban) of Croatia, Dr. Ivan Subasich, in the early summer of 1940. They declared that the Croatian Volksdeutschen had the worst school conditions among all the German minorities in Europe. Of the 53 German-speaking school divisions within the province, eight were not open and sixteen were staffed with teachers whose proficiency in German was poor.[110] A month later, Subasich complied with their request for better German schooling by liberalizing conditions for the opening of minority classes.[111] Thus, steps were taken to resolve the major source of discontent among Croatian Volksdeutschen.

After the Sporazum, the Kulturbund flourished in Croatia. The implications of the political reorganization for the future of Yugoslavia did not escape the officials of the organization. The centrifugal forces released by the grant of autonomy to the Croatians could well lead to the eventual establishment of an independent Croatian

---

[108] Dr. Mladen Lorkovich, Narod i zemlija Hrvata (Zagreb, 1939). (German translation). T-81/Roll 136/173284-5.

[109] Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), pp. 122-123.

[110] Altgayer and Popp to Dr. Ivan Subasich, June 26, 1940. (German translation). T-81/Roll 521/5286737-9.

[111] Slawonische Volksbote (Osijek), July 27, 1940.

state. Accordingly, Altgayer was named a special representative to Zagreb on behalf of the head of the Kulturbund, Janko.[112] In January, 1941, 95 out of every 100 Volksdeutschen were reported to be members of the Kulturbund.[113] Nazi organizational activities were astoundingly successful among those Germans who had been quiescent for so long and who so strongly identified with Croatian soil.

In the Voivodina, the ethnic Germans continued in their historic role as a substantial but isolated minority in a multinational area. As of 1931, there were about 310,000 Germans (twenty-one per cent) in the area out of a million and a half population. The Serbs were the largest group with 461,864, and the Magyars next with 385,500. The three component parts of the Voivodina showed the following German strength:

Region	German Population	Total Population
Serbian Banat	120,450	585,549
Baranja triangle	15,751	52,846
Batschka	173,058	784,896
	309,259	1,423,291

The German minority had increased since the 1910 census; it was the only volksdeutsche group within Yugoslavia to do so. Other ethnic groups included Bunjevci, Sokci, Rumanians and Croats.

The Germans of the Voivodina lived in a number of communities. In Batschka, their largest settlement was in Apatin, which served as the center for Catholic life for the entire region. Other large German

---

[112] Slawonische Volksbote (Osijek), October 5, 1940.

[113] Südost-Pressebericht, January 11, 1941, from Morgenblatt (Zagreb), January 7, 1941. T-81/Roll 544/5315723.

groups were located in Prigrevica Sveti Ivan (Sentiwan), Novi Vrbas, Novi Sad and Subotica. In the Banat, important German settlements were found in Veliki Beckerek, Vrsac, Pancevo, and Velika Kikinda (Gross-Kikinda). In all of these, the Germans were substantial citizens.

In the years between 1918 and 1941, the Volksdeutschen in the Voivodina were content with Yugoslav rule, but they did not enjoy harmonious relationships with other ethnic groups in their midst. They were pleased to be free from Hungary ("Los von Ungarn") and its policies of Magyarization.[114] Recognizing the potential utility of their anti-Magyar sentiments, Belgrade deliberately fostered national feeling among the Swabians in the Voivodina. Their contempt for Budapest thus reached flamboyant proportions by 1940.[115] The ill-will was returned by the Hungarians, who were particularly incensed that, compared to the Germans and Serbians there, the Magyars formed the poorest element in Batschka.[116] Nor were the Germans on much better terms with their Serbian neighbors, despite Belgrade's grace. Serbs expressed extreme hostility toward the Swabians in the Banat in the 1930's.[117] It seemed as if the Germans were caught in a cauldron boiling over with Hungarian and Serbian chauvinism in the pursuit of their own national life. The Voivodina was no more a melting pot than it had ever been.

---

[114] Biber, Nacizem i nemci, pp. 23-41, 426.

[115] C. A. Macartney, October Fifteenth: A History of Modern Hungary, 1929-1945 (2 volumes, New York, 1956-1957), Vol. I, p. 478.

[116] Uj Magyarsag (Budapest), June 21, 1941. (German translation). T-81/Roll 553/5328216-9.

[117] Philip E. Mosely, "Hitler and Southeastern Europe," Yale Review, Vol. XXVIII (1938), p. 257.

In this hostile environment, the German movement in the Voivodina grew rapidly between the wars. Many celebrations to commemorate the foundation of German settlements were arranged as one indication of the heightened German consciousness. In 1936 alone, thirteen Batschka communities observed their 150th anniversaries.[118] In November, 1940, a great all-day rally for the Germans in the northern Banat was held, complete with speeches and a parade featuring a thousand youths in German dress.[119] This event was typical of many others, undoubtedly spurred by the well-organized Kulturbund. The Germans of the Voivodina looked increasingly to Berlin, as did the Germans of Slovenia.

In Bosnia, the Volksdeutschen as a whole continued the struggle to win the barest subsistence from the land and to retain their national heritage. In 1931, they numbered 15,500, only a fraction of one per cent of the total population (2,323,555). Their major settlements were at Nova Topola, Petrovapolje and Glogavoc, but in none were their numbers higher than 2,500. In a private report compiled by the Evangelical priest in Glogovac, Ferdinand Sommer, the plight of the Germans of Bosnia was made known in 1929. Sommer intimated that the need for help was desperate in many outlying communities where the struggle for national survival was critical. He cited one village where volksdeutsche children said their catechism in Serbo-Croat! He called for more German teachers, leaders and legal advisors, as well as buildings, to end this pernicious destruction of German life. Significantly, his

---

[118] Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), p. 121.

[119] A. W., December 5, 1940 from Deutsche Zeitung (Novi Sad), November 28, 1940.

plea was directed toward institutions within the German homeland.[120]

Within interwar Yugoslavia, then, the German minority enjoyed substantial rights. Their interests were actively espoused by Berlin, particularly after Hitler's rise to power. Their demands were increasingly satisfied as Berlin grew in strength. By 1940, the Kulturbund, recast along Nazi lines, was a vital organization. Strides made in the Kulturbund were mirrored in other enterprises. More German schooling was procured for German children, and the German press was expanded, as cases in point. Although restrictions were still confining to Slovenia, even there conditions were tolerable. The Yugoslav Volksdeutschen in the interwar years were quite successful, because of their tenacious hold on the land, experience in business and the professions, close-knit organizations, and strong national feeling.[121] Unfortunately, these Germans were well aware that their good fortune ultimately was secured in Berlin, not Belgrade.

Part III: The Volksdeutschen Within Interwar Hungary

When the Nazis partitioned Yugoslavia in April, 1941, the Baranja triangle, Batschka and the Upper Mur area were returned to Hungary. Since the fortunes of the Volksdeutschen there once again merged with those of the Hungarian Volksdeutschen as a whole, a brief sketch of the latter group between World War I and World War II is appropriate. As in Yugoslavia, this German minority received increasingly favored

---

[120] Ferdinand Sommer, "Das Deutschtum in Bosnien," 1929. T-81/Roll 444/5195467-76.

[121] Moseley, "Hitler and Southeastern Europe," pp. 256-257.

treatment in direct proportion to Germany's increasing prestige.

A period of confusion in Hungary immediately after World War I ended early in 1920 with the assumption of power by Admiral Nicholas Horthy as Regent. For a quarter of a century thereafter, Horthy remained at the head of the Hungarian state. The official policy of his era, which was forged by a long row of prime ministers, was based in irredentism, anti-Semitism and antibolshevism.[122] By the Treaty of Trianon, signed on June 4, 1920, Hungary lost seventy-one per cent of its territory (including Croatia-Slavonia) and sixty per cent of its population. No wonder that grievance for lost lands of the Crown of St. Stephen characterized so much of Hungarian history in the interwar years.

The Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia marked the entrance of the Magyar state into World War II on the Axis side. The Hungarians had adhered to the Tripartite Pact on November 20, 1940, but had nonetheless continued their struggle to remain neutral in the war. They even concluded a Treaty of Friendship with Yugoslavia during the next month. But the promise of coveted Yugoslav spoils was too much for Budapest. Berlin demanded Hungarian military aid in the Yugoslav invasion, and the Hungarians complied. Despairing over the abrogation of the Hungarian-Yugoslav Treaty of Friendship, Prime Minister Paul Telecki committed suicide on April 2. The next day, Horthy sanctimoniously explained to Hitler that "the conflict of conscience confronting us... compels us to request that the German Army Command assign to our troops

---

[122]George Barany, "The Dragon's Teeth: The Roots of Hungarian Fascism," in Peter F. Sugar, ed., Native Fascism in the Successor States, 1918-1945 (Santa Barbara, 1971), p. 73.

only such tasks as are reconcilable with our conscience."[123] Composure was quickly regained, however, and Horthy issued a manifesto on April 11 affirming his duty to reclaim former Hungarian territories in Yugoslavia in the interests of the Hungarians living there.[124] Between April 11 and 13, the manifesto was carried out.

In the interwar period, the German minority in Hungary was only a fraction of its former strength. Before 1914, about two million Germans resided in the Transleithanian half of the Dual Monarchy. The drastically reduced borders of Hungary in 1920 excluded many of them from the Magyar state. Their areas of residence were incorporated into Rumania, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Austria. The 1920 census showed 550,000 Volksdeutsche to be living within Hungary. In the 1930 census, this figure was reduced to 479,000. The loss was attributable to assimilation caused by the traditional Magyarization policies followed by Budapest.[125]

In general, the position of the Germans in Hungary was inferior to that of their counterparts in Yugoslavia until 1938. Although their rights were protected in the Trianon Treaty, those Volksdeutsche dedicated to their German heritage were dissatisfied with the treatment they received from the government. They felt that their cultural association was unfairly repressed and that the schools for German children were deficient. Only as Hitler became intimately involved

---

[123]Horthy to Hitler, April 3, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, p. 447.

[124]Report from Erdmannsdorff, April 11, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, p. 510.

[125]Macartney, October Fifteenth, Vol. I, p. 70.

with Hungarian Volksdeutschen did matters appreciably improve.

In the interwar years, the Hungarian Germans organized a society on the same lines as the Yugoslav Kulturbund. Called the Hungarian German Folk Educational Association (Ungarländisch-Deutscher Volksbildungverein, UDV), it was formed in 1920 to take the place of the UDVP. Its leader was the much respected Professor Jacob Bleyer of the University of Budapest, who felt that its members should engage only in non-political cultural activities on the local level. He believed that the unity of Hungary could thus be reconciled with an honest recognition of the German nationality within Hungarian borders. Even the modest objectives of Bleyer were frustrated by Budapest. Concessions made to the group were constantly whittled away.[126] One of Bleyer's critics angrily charged in 1932 that the UDV's policy of awaiting justice from the Hungarian government was hopeless. As far as he was concerned, there was a standstill in Hungary over minority rights.[127] Just before his death the next year. Bleyer admitted that his course of action had been fruitless.[128] The association lingered on until the late 1930's without noteworthy accomplishments.

Among the special concerns of the Hungarian Volksdeutschen was minority education. A law of 1923 provided that parents of minority children should be able to choose among three kinds of schools: 1) A-type, with instruction in the mother tongue and Magyar as a subject,

---

[126] Ibid., pp. 69-72.

[127] Guido Gündisch, Landpost (Pécs), May 29, 1932. (Typed copy). T-81/Roll 444/5195601-2.

[128] Steinacker, Austro-Hungarica, p. 301.

2) B-type, with mixed language instruction, and 3) C-type, with instruction in Magyar and the mother tongue as a subject. Charges were made that the Hungarian government did not respect the decisions of parents and dictated types of school. In 1928, of the 463 schools for German children, only 49 were of the A-type, 98 of the B-type and fully 316 of the C-type.[129]

Under these repressive conditions, the Volksdeutschen moved in a radical direction as the 1930's progressed. An illegal committee within the UDV led by Franz Basch split with the mother organization in 1935. Basch, a young man of Danube Swabian parentage, held a doctorate in political science from the University of Budapest. For several years, his group fluorished without official recognition. Finally in 1939, this Nazi organization, the German Ethnic League in Hungary (Volksbund der Deutschen in Ungarn, VDU) was accepted as the sole representative body of the German minority.[130] The Nazification of the Hungarian Germans was completed, and the stage set for the redress of grievances.

Concern for the Volksdeutschen in Hungary reached the highest quarters in Nazi circles. Hitler himself was aware of the policies practiced by Budapest toward them. He reminded Hungarian diplomats of his determination to protect Volksdeutsche from denationalization just as he had reminded their Yugoslav colleagues.[131] His protection did

---

[129]Guido Gündisch, Neues Politisches Volksblatt (Budapest), December 25, 1931. (Typed Copy). T-81/Roll 444/5195599-600.

[130]Macartney, October Fifteenth, Vol. I, pp. 170-179, 325-326.

[131]See for example: Minutes of conference between Hitler and the Hungarian Prime Minister, Kálmán Darányi, November 25, 1937. DGFP, Series D, Vol. V, p. 201.

not confine itself purely to legal channels, apparently, for Budapest bitterly complained in 1937 that Reich German agitators were causing unrest among the Volksdeutschen and that the minority was receiving funds from Germany.[132]

Between 1938 and 1940, events in Hungary took a course which resulted in the increase of the volksdeutsche population. On November 2, 1938, Hitler accorded to Hungary portions of southern Czechoslovakia. By this First Dictate of Vienna and its aftermath, 13,200 Germans were returned to Hungary. Nearly two years later, on August 30, 1940, the Second Dictate of Vienna was arranged by the Führer. Under its terms, Rumanian territory, chiefly in Northern Transylvania, was returned to Hungary along with 60,000 Germans.[133] These new citizens swelled the 1930 Volksdeutsch count in Hungary above 550,000.

The January 31, 1941 census not only confirmed this increase, but also the devitalization of ethnic German life under Magyar rule. As would be anticipated, 550,000 people identified themselves as German under the rubric in which they were asked to declare their nationality. However, the census also included a rubric in which respondents listed their mother tongue. Here 740,000 people, roughly five per cent out of the close to fifteen million in Hungary, were categorized as Germans. The 1941 figures thus measured the effectiveness of the Magyarization policies of Budapest under the Habsburgs and throughout the interwar years. The trend is even more pronounced, if one bears in mind that

---

[132]Report of Erdmannsdorf, October 5, 1937. DGFP, Series D, Vol. V, p. 192.

[133]Schechtman, "Elimination of German Minorities," pp. 155, 162.

nearly all those with German as mother tongue declared themselves as German in the re-annexed territories.[134] The losses to Germandom occurred in Hungary proper, not in Czechoslovakia nor Rumania.

As a compensation for his largesse in awarding territory to the Hungarians, Hitler demanded that the Hungarians grant far-reaching rights to the Hungarian Volksdeutschen. A German Hungarian Protocol on this matter was signed on the same day as the Second Dictate.[135] By its clauses, the German way of life was to be preserved and expanded in Hungary. A Volksdeutscher was defined as one who professed his German nationality and was recognized by the VDU. The minority was accorded the right to have schools, representation in government, newspapers, cooperatives and free cultural intercourse with Germany. In areas where Germans formed at least one-third of the population, Germans could be utilized as the language of official business. The Hungarian Germans had come a long way from Bleyer to Hitler.

---

[134] Macartney, October Fifteenth, Vol. II, p. 153.

[135] The text of this protocol can be found in: DGFP, Series D, Vol. X, pp. 584-586; and Margaret Carlyle, ed., Documents on International Affairs, 1939-1946. Vol. II, Hitler's Europe (London, 1954), pp. 322-324.

CHAPTER II

THE NAZIS AND THE YUGOSLAV VOLKSDEUTSCHEN: THE IDEOLOGY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION TO THE SUMMER OF 1941

Why did the growing connection between the Nazi leadership in Germany and the German minority in Yugoslavia pose a threat to the South Slav state in the interwar years? The party symbols and organizational plans adapted by volksdeutsch groups appeared innocuous enough at first. Even Berlin's intercession on behalf of the Volksdeutschen, which resulted in unusual concessions to them, could be tolerated by the state without undue damage to its integrity. The radical commitment to the German nationality inherent in Nazism did not necessarily preclude loyalty to the Yugoslav state. In point of fact, however, Nazi ideology harbored concepts which cast Volksdeutsche as sinister figures in their host countries. In shimmering visions, Nazi thinkers planned the construction of a Teutonic hegemony over the non-Germanic nations of the Continent. Southeastern Europe, composed of Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania and Yugoslavia, formed a particularly important part of this grandiose scheme. Wherever they lived, the Volksdeutschen would fulfill a pivotal role as agents of destiny. Never clearly formulated nor categorically expressed in the interwar years, these visions nonetheless had a profound impact upon Yugoslavia and its ethnic German citizens.

A succinct statement of Nazi ideology as it affected Southeastern Europe and the Volksdeutschen there can best be presented by first identifying the various strands which went into its making. Nothing that Hitler or his followers proposed in this regard sprang full-blown from their minds. They owed heavy debts to the past: the legacy of the Habsburg Empire, nineteenth century German thought, and speculation on the post-World War I era in Vienna and Berlin. Interwar historical scholarship in Germany and Austria as well as organizations on behalf of the minorities abroad also contribute to the formulation of the particular aspect of Nazi ideology under scrutiny here. Part One of this chapter will trace the design for German expansion in Southeastern Europe and the utilization of its German minorities to its roots. Typically, Nazi ideology was "a catch-all, a conglomeration, a hodge-podge of ideas."[1] For this reason, it is very nearly impossible to isolate at what point a vague reference became a stated goal in Berlin. Yet, despite the abundant ambiguities, it is possible to trace certain broad outlines of Nazi purpose and to assess those theories Hitler held on this subject until the time of the invasion of April, 1941.

Since the Nazi ideology which affected Yugoslavia and its German minority contained subversive components, the implementation of that ideology after Hitler's rise to power in 1933 was dualistic. On the one hand, Berlin followed accepted diplomatic practices for the benefit of the Germans in Yugoslavia, as has been discussed in Chapter One. On the other hand, strong evidence exists that the Nazis used these people

---

[1]Martin Broszat, German National Socialism, 1919-1945, tr. Kurt Rosenbaum and Inge Pauli Boehm (Santa Barbara, 1971), p. 32.

to undermine the status quo. As the reality of German military might drew closer and closer toward Yugoslavia, the Volksdeutschen were swept down as helpless pawns into the Nazi vortex. Various possibilities for their future were bandied about in Berlin without any concern for their wishes or those of Belgrade. Once Hitler decided to destroy Yugoslavia as a political entity after the Simovich coup d'état of March 27, 1941, they were no longer a people with a voice in their fortunes. This condition, however, does not gainsay the observation that on the whole they submitted willingly to the Führer and with great expectations for material rewards. The treason in which they engaged mushroomed from sporadic manifestations in the early years of Hitler's rule into total involvement with furtive Nazi aims by the late 1930's. His clandestine machinations succeeded in converting these people into outright, if often unconscious traitors to their state. How Hitler spun a web around the Germans who held Yugoslav citizenship will be discussed later in this chapter.

Part I: The Ideology

Because the Habsburg Empire had extended deeply into Southeastern Europe, it is not surprising that the earliest German preoccupation with this area emanated from Vienna rather than from Berlin. Certain Habsburg policies contributed to myths which could be readily developed to give historical precedent for German expansion there. In addition, the Germans of the Empire, who can be loosely called Austrian Germans, had already by the mid-nineteenth century, seized upon ideas which justified the attachment of non-German territory in the Southeast to the German heartland. As regards this part of Europe, the Nazi

heritage was more richly colored by the Austrian Germans than by the Germans of Germany proper, or Reich Germans.

The introduction of colonists to fortify frontiers against the Turkish danger had been a hallmark of Habsburg imperialism. The Grenzer of the military border in Croatia-Slavonia and Southern Hungary became legendary in European history. They projected a romantic image of peasant-soldiers (Wehrbauern) organized into regimental communities for the defense of the state. That they were non-Germans serving the interests of a Germany dynasty did not tarnish their image. In point of fact, however, the loyalty of the Grenzer to the Habsburgs was probably seriously damaged by the national movements of the nineteenth century, and the success of their institution was consequently much less than had been popularly supposed.[2]

The Schwabenzug of the eighteenth century also represented an ingenious use of human beings on the part of Vienna to extend control over a territory tenuously held. This enormous project to colonize Southern Hungary with German peasants was associated from its inception with the great Habsburg military leader, Prince Eugene of Savoy. That he was born a Frenchman of Italian parentage made his service to the Habsburgs no less heroic, and for most, no less German. His triumphs against the Turks at the Battle of Petrovaradin (Peterwardein) on August 5, 1716, and at the Battle of Belgrade on August 16, 1717 surrounded his name with luster. No wonder that his support of colonization projects was so widely heralded. Eugene was interested in the

---

[2]Gunther E. Rothenburg, "The Croatian Military Border and the Rise of Yugoslav Nationalism," Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. XLIII (1964), p. 34.

settlement of Germans in and around Belgrade, although he contributed only marginally to the plan for an Imperial Fortress at Belgrade, promulgated around 1720.[3] The proposed military garrison at the strategic Serbian capital to serve as a vanguard for the Empire never left the drawing-board stages. Nonetheless, it was among the many facets of the Habsburg legacy in the Danube, Sava and Drava valleys for which the prestigious ghost of Prince Eugene could be invoked in later centuries.

Since the large-scale resettlement policies of the Habsburgs were not conceived to forward the German race per se, they lacked the unmitigated German purpose found in a much smaller endeavor in Slovenia. The Grenzer were non-German, so the military border could hardly be characterized as German institution. The Swabians were only one of several ethnic groups invited to settle on Hungarian territory, so their history does not bespeak a single-minded German policy at the Hofburg. The need for settlers, regardless of what blood coursed through their veins, forced the administration of Vienna to follow the policies it did after the Turkish wars. But this was not true of a largely unknown settlement project of the Südmark organization in Lower Styria. Its leaders began planning in 1890 to strengthen systematically the German element in the vicinity of Maribor. Between 1906 and 1914, they succeeded in purchasing nearly 2,500 acres (1,000 hectares) from Slovenes to accommodate 430 members of 75 German families imported from Austria and Germany.[4] The project remained modest, despite the efforts

---

[3]Hans Ulrich Wehler, "'Reichsfestung Belgrad': Nationalsozialistische 'Raumordnung' in Südosteuropa," Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Vol. II (1963), p. 78 fn.

[4]Pock, Grenzwacht im Südosten, pp. 8-9, 32-33; Matras, "Leistungsschau deutscher Volkstumarbeit," T-81/Roll 559/5336040-45.

of its chief architect, Karl Fraiss. His goal of making Maribor a closed German settlement continguous to the main German settlements in Styria proper was thwarted by dissention among the members of the Südmark.[5] But a genuine precedent within the Habsburg Empire for population transfers in the interest of racial purity is contained in this venture, small though it was.

The Habsburg Empire bequeathed to its successors not only historical models for German expansion into the Southeast, but also important intellectual antecedents to the concept of German living space there. At the Frankfurt National Assembly of 1848-1849, the Austrian Germans opposed the Reich Germans on the problem of which territories should be included in a unified Germany. Many Reich Germans espoused the kleindeutsch (little German) view that any consolidated German state should exclude Austria, with its close ties to non-Germanic populations. The Austrian Germans, on the other hand, advocated the grossdeutsch (great German) view that a new Germany should include at least the German lands of the Habsburg Empire. Much sentiment in this school supported the inclusion of all lands within the confines of the former Holy Roman Empire, despite the Slavs found dwelling there. Of the Yugoslav territories, Slovenia would thus be attached to Germany proper. According to this scheme, the excluded Habsburg lands, mainly in Transleithania, would somehow be associated with the German state in a confederation. Under the influence of Prussia, the kleindeutsch view prevailed at Frankfurt. Although the grossdeutsch view was defeated, it served as the inspiration for innumerable plans for the creation of

---

[5] Pock, Grenzwacht im Südost, pp. 47-48.

a unified Central Europe brought forward in the next century.

How the grossdeutsch mentality was echoed in the Habsburg Empire after 1848-1849 is a topic too extensive for treatment here. The most renowned plans for the reorganization of the Empire and surrounding territories came from two influential statesmen of the post-revolutionary decade. Both Prince Felix zu Schwarzenberg and Baron Karl von Bruck expressed interest in a middle European economic union, for which the entire Habsburg Empire would provide the essential framework and which would include all German lands. The merger of non-German territory in Southeastern Europe with the German heartland received early sanction in yet another form from Austrian German figures.

As can be seen by their attitude at Frankfurt, most Reich Germans were in general disinterested in Southeastern Europe throughout the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, they evolved a pernicious ideology supporting German expansion to the East, which could easily be extended southward if political conditions so warranted. Further, two Reich German scholars, Friedrich List and Paul de Lagarde, towered over their Austrian German counterparts in anticipating the importance of the Danube basin to the German living space (Lebensraum), and their ideas did not fall on barren ground. The goals of the Pan-German League (All-deutscher Verband) attest to this judgment. Weighty contributions to Nazi ideology, which would in time touch the Volksdeutschen of Yugoslavia, were made within Germany in the pre-World War I era.

On the crest of the national movement after the Napoleonic wars, many Reich Germans adopted a völkische philosophy which emphasized not only their uniqueness but which fused it inextricably with a sense of historic mission in the East. Völkische ideas began with the romantic

notion that the union of a group of people was based upon an essence bound to man's nature.[6] All men of the same race and blood constituted an organic whole on the strength of their primeval origins. Once accepting the tenet that they formed a highly integrated and homogeneous ethnic community, some Germans proceeded to believe that they were superior to other ethnic elements, particularly the Slavs. Since they were paramount, they had a duty to carry culture to their less civilized neighbors, particularly those of Slavic Europe. The Drang nach Osten (Drive to the East) was thus clothed with an ethical imperative, and the term "East" came to connote Polish areas bordering upon Germany. Up to 1914, the notion of a distinct German character coupled with a uniquely German mission remained latent as a "harmless" bourgeois-patriotic conviction. But from isolated roots, it could sprout with abandon under proper circumstances.[7]

If most Reich Germans neglected Southeastern Europe in the discovery of their mission in the East, List and Lagarde did not. List, who published important works in the 1840's, was the oldest prophet of Mitteleuropa (Middle Europe), the vision of a political federation and economic union in the center of the European continent.[8] Including Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Balkans, it would be organized under German leadership. Lagarde, whose productive scholarship dates around the 1880's, was an advocate of extreme grossdeutsch views, but he

---

[6]George L. Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich (New York, 1964), p. 4.

[7]Broszat, German National-Socialism, pp. 33-34.

[8]Meyer, Mitteleuropa, pp. 11-16.

exceeded their limits by suggesting that Germans had a right to colonize and reorganize Central Europe because they were "better men" than the others there.[9] Both Lagarde and List embarked upon an aggressive policy of German colonization along the Danube river in order to protect German interests.

Among the few in pre-World War I Germany who heeded admonitions that the German future demanded a push toward the Southeast were members of the Pan-German League. Organized in 1890, the small but influential group was dedicated to völkische ideals and the enlargement of German territory. The thrust of the League seemed to have been overseas and toward Poland, with little interest in the Habsburg Empire and Mitteleuropa.[10] Nonetheless, the first president of the organization, Ernst Hasse, was inclined to include even Hungary within a Greater Germany.[11] By 1914, others within the League favored expansion in the Danubian region.[12] The ideas of List and Lagarde were gaining ground.

During World War I, the aims of Germany and Austria never crystallized as to the fate of Southeastern Europe in the event of their victory. A 1914 program of the German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg was representative of German goals on the European continent. It called for a Mitteleuropa under the domination of the German Empire, the basis for which would be a customs and economic union between

---

[9]Robert W. Lougee, Paul de Lagarde (1827-1891), A Study of Radical Conservatism (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 184-193.

[10]Meyer, Mitteleuropa, pp. 52-53, 109.

[11]Zwitter, Les problèmes nationaux, p. 139.

[12]William L. Langer, "When German Dreams Come True," Yale Review, Vol. XXVII (1937/1938), p. 686.

Germany and Austria-Hungary. Germany would add territories in the West (Belgium and Lorraine) and in the East (Lithuania, Courland and Central Poland). A residual Polish state and Rumania would be attached to this superstate as satellites. Berlin seriously considered population resettlements in annexed Polish regions. Slavs would be expelled and Auslandsdeutsche from isolated outposts in the East settled there to build a "protective wall" of Germandon at the new eastern frontier.[13] The government in Vienna also entertained proposals for expansion into Serbia and collided with Germany over the future of Poland. But its war aims remained basically defensive, since the very survival of the monarchy was threatened.[14] There was lively interest in Mitteleuropa in many circles of the Habsburg Empire, but the idea never achieved predominance in official policy.[15] By 1918 and especially after the victory over Russia, Germany became engrossed with her annexations in the East. Mitteleuropa with its projection of Reich German influence into the Habsburg area and beyond receded in importance. In the larger scheme, the future of Southeastern Europe formed only a minor facet in the postwar planning of the Central Powers.

Although nothing came of it under the duress of war, the flurry over Mitteleuropa had a lasting effect on German intellectual history. The most popular version of the idea was presented in a book by Friedrich Naumann, which appeared in 1915.[16] Since it represented the

---

[13]Fritz Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War (New York, 1967), possim.

[14]Ibid., pp. 310-311.

[15]Meyer, Mitteleuropa, pp. 150, 191.

[16]Friedrich Naumann, Central Europe, tr. C. M. Meredith (New York, 1917).

culmination of all prewar talk on the subject, it precepts took on unusual significance. Naumann envisioned a vaguely defined superstructure over existing states in Central Europe. His Middle Europe contained a German nucleus, but it guaranteed rights to non-Germans. His supposition that a political entity based upon German supremacy could be formed by free agreements among the various nationalities involved was naive in the extreme.[17] Naumann's ideas may have been the outpouring of a misguided liberal, but they were potent. In October, 1918, on the eve of his abdiction, Wilhelm II spoke of the inevitability of a Central Europe under German economic and political rule.[18] That the Emperor himself paid homage to the Mitteleuropa concept pointed clearly to the attraction which it would hold for many other Germans in the postwar decades.

In the interwar years, the views of the Austrian Germans and the Reich Germans on Southeastern expansion merged. Both stood amid the ruins of their empires in truncated and economically endangered states. Because the Habsburg Monarchy with all of its non-German inhabitants was destroyed, the old rivalry between the kleindeutsch and grossdeutsch positions had become irrelevant. What mattered now was that all Germans should band together in search of a common destiny. The restlessness which accompanied the Paris Peace Settlement gave the Drang nach Osten deeper meaning. The Germans of both Germany and Rump Austria needed to form new political and economic ties to rebuild their

---

[17] Kann, Multinational Empire, Vol. II, p. 248.

[18] Gregory F. Campbell, "The Kaiser and Mitteleuropa in October, 1918," Central European History. Vol. II (1969), p. 378.

shattered world.[19] The concept of survival was grafted onto that of supremacy in regard to German expansion eastward. The heritage of the defunct Habsburg Empire as well as the ideological strides made by the Reich German thinkers in the pre-war and wartime years mingled with the realities of defeat. It became axiomatic that the term Ost implied the "Southeast" as well as "East" in German political thought, and it became increasingly difficult to separate its Austrian and Reich German strains.

The eclipse of the German position in Europe was accentuated by an intensified interest in the German minorities abroad. The focus was toward Eastern and Southeastern Europe, since fully seven million Auslandsdeutsche lived there in close proximity to the Fatherland. In reconstituted Poland and the successor states of the Habsburg Empire, many Germans found themselves under non-German regimes for the first time. Feeling oppressed, they reciprocated the warm professions of brotherhood extended to them from the German homeland. Studies on the Auslandsdeutschen were published in prodigious quantities, and work on their behalf (Volkstumarbeit) was undertaken by numerous organizations. Whether the acceleration of ethnic concern was consciously directed toward a specifically political end or not, it served to tie regions inhabited by Germans outside Germany and Austria to dreams for the German future. The frenzied efforts to identify and heighten German consciousness among the Volksdeutschen of Southeastern Europe buttressed that ideology which had long justified German expansion into Danubia.

---

[19] Felix Gilbert, "Mitteleuropa - The Final Stage," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. VII (1947), pp. 60-61.

The sheer mass of publications and organizations involved precludes a definitive review. A cursory consideration of the major historiographical trends and of the principal agencies which engaged in Volkstumarbeit must suffice to indicate the German intellectual climate of the 1920's and 1930's.

In the interwar years, a school of history which emphasized that the subject of German history should not be confined to the German national state, but be expanded to include the German people wherever they lived gained prominence. At the very least, this approach required the recognition of a common national experience for Austrian and Reich Germans. Even kleindeutsch historians, who defended the Prussian solution to German unification, made this concession. Their concomitant approval of a union of Germany and Austria was generally seen as a move toward the grossdeutsch camp.[20] Since so many variations of the grossdeutsch view were then extant, considerable confusion over its meaning developed.[21] Recognizing that the terms Grossdeutsch and Kleindeutsch brought up old, useless arguments, Heinrich Ritter von Srbik proposed calling the new historical school gesamtdeutsch (whole German). Under its precepts, which were amplified by Srbik, the German minorities in Eastern and Southeastern Europe have a dynamic function in the development of German history. For gesamtdeutsch historians, studies on German settlements everywhere were their

---

[20]Stanley Suval, "Overcoming Kleindeutschland: The Politics of Historical Mythmaking in the Weimar Republic," Central European History, Vol. II (1969), pp. 326, 330.

[21]Paul Sweet, "Recent German Literature on Mitteleuropa," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. III (1943), p. 14.

proper concern.

In the wake of this elevation of the Volk over the state, historical studies on German minorities abroad multiplied. Even under the Weimar Republic, institutes and publishing houses dealing exclusively with these people were established.[22] By the beginning of the Nazi era, production surged into a veritable flood. One of the most impressive works in the new German scholarship on the Volk was the Concise Dictionary of Germans at the Border and Beyond (Handwörterbuch des Grenz-und Auslandsdeutschtums).[23] Research for the project, which was scheduled to appear in five volumes, began in 1926 and involved 800 employees.[24] Publication of the Handwörterbuch was terminated with the outbreak of World War II, and it was completed only through the third volume.

Another indication of the increasing preoccupation with Auslandsdeutschen can be gleaned from a perusal of the scholarly and highly respected journal, Historische Zeitschrift. Although little, if anything, appeared on its pages about German minorities prior to 1937, a sudden shift toward gesamtdeutsche historiography is noticeable in that year. Possibly, a deliberate change in editorial policy was operative, since Karl A. von Müller had succeeded Friedrich Meinecke as editor the year before. Srbik heralded the new direction with a defense of the gesamtdeutsch approach. It was followed with many contributions,

---

[22] O. J. Hammen, "German Historians and the Advent of the National Socialist State," Journal of Modern History, Vol. XIII (1941), p. 185.

[23] Carl Petersen et al., eds. Handwörterbuch des Grenz-und Auslanddeutschtums (3 vols., Breslau, 1933-1940).

[24] Kleo Pleyer, "Ein Standbild aller Deutschen," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLVIII (1938), pp. 541-549.

ranging from highly specialized articles on specific German communities abroad to theoretical surveys which touched on the role of the Auslandsdeutschen in expansion to the East.[25] Written with a strong nationalistic bias, most of these studies and the myriad others like them did not deserve the notice they received.[26]

A branch of the gesamtdeutsche school was devoted to the German minorities in Southeastern Europe. Austrian German historians, such as Srbik, R. F. Kaindl and Harold Steinacker, were the guiding spirits in the work undertaken in this direction. Especially after 1933, numerous research agencies and publications dedicated to Volkstum in the Danubian region were formed.[27] Among the notable organizations in support of such scholarship were the Southeast Institute (Südost-Institut) in Munich and the Southeast-German Institute (Südostdeutsch Institut) in Graz. An overview into the voluminous publication resulting from the inclusion of the Southeast in the gesamtdeutschen tradition can be found in a bibliography published by Anton Scherer on works appearing on the Danube Swabians between 1935 and 1955. The bibliography, which was abridged because of lack of space, lists fully 6770

---

[25] H. von Srbik, "Zur gesamtdeutschen Geschichtsbetrachtung," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLVI (1937), pp. 229-262; Pleyer, "Ein Standbild aller Deutschen," pp. 541-549; Valjavec, "Das Älteste Zeugnis," pp. 315-325; Hans Haussherr, "Verfassungstypen deutscher Volksgruppen im Auslande," Vol. CLX (1939), pp. 35-78; Pfitzner, "Die Grenz-und Auslandsdeutsche Bewegung," pp. 308-328; H. J. Beyer, "Hauptlinien einer Geschichte der ostdeutschen Volksgruppen in 19. Jahrhundert," Vol. CLXII (1940), pp. 509-539; G. Krueger, "Um den Reichsgedanken," Vol. CLXV (1942), pp. 457-471.

[26] Felix Gilbert, "German Historiography during the Second World War," American Historical Review, Vol. LIII (1947), p. 56.

[27] Schechtman, "The Elimination of German Minorities," pp. 153-154.

titles.[28] Most of the entries date to the earlier of the two decades covered.

A fascinating sidelight to the gesamtdeutschen saga in the Southeast was the veneration of Prince Eugene of Savoy. A spate of publication on the Habsburg figure rolled from academic presses and cast him in the role of pioneer for the German national cause along the Danube. Although Eugene's Savoyard background made him a dubious symbol for the ideal, this fact did not deter the historical myth-making.[29] This trend was reflected in the pages of Historische Zeitschrift, where Eugene's chief biographer, Max Braubach, hailed him as a German national hero in 1936. More space was allotted to him in 1937 and 1940.[30]

The gesamtdeutsche school of historiography also made an ingenious attempt to solve the very practical problems posed by the widely voiced claim that Slovenia, more than any other region in the Southeast, rightfully belonged within Greater Germany. Although admitting that Slovenes were technically non-German, the propagandists attempted to convert them into Volksdeutsche of sorts. Theorists speculated that many of them could be counted as part of the whole German ethnic body because they were indifferent to their slavic blood and had a "German outlook." These Slovenes formed a distinct race, called Wendish

---

[28] Scherer, Donauschwäbische Bibliography, pp. ix-x.

[29] Paul R. Sweet, "Prince Eugene and Central Europe," American Historical Review, Vol. LVII (1951), pp. 49-50, 52.

[30] Max Braubach, "Prinz Eugen von Savoyen," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLIV (1936), pp. 17-31; Theodore Schieder, "Prinz Eugen und Friedrich der Grosse im gegenseitigen Bilde," Vol. CLVI (1937), pp. 263-283; Max Braubach, "Der Lebensausgang des Prinzen Eugen," Vol. CLXI (1940), pp. 42-61.

(Windisch). The pro-German or half-germanized Wends might be viewed as members of a dying Slavic nation. Martin Wutte first brought the distinction among Germans, Wends and Slovenes to the attention of the world in 1929. Throughout the thirties, German nationalistic propaganda was filled with references to the Wends and their eligibility for inclusion in the German realm.[31] If it was difficult to separate Germans from Slovenes, as in the census of 1910, it was even more awkward to separate Wends from Slovenes, for both spoke the same tongue. Scholars subsequently repudiated the spurious Windisch race theory. As Fran Zwitter has written, "One cannot objectively talk about any so-called 'Wends'...for the Wends never existed as a definite ethnic group."[32] But despite the drawbacks, Slovenes were given thoughtful consideration in the relentless ideological German drive to the Southeast. If they were not totally acceptable as Germans, at least they were on the fringes of the gesamtdeutschen tradition.

The victory of the grossdeutschen and Mitteleuropa doctrines was implicit in the rage for gesamtdeutsche historiography. Beyond the union with Austria, many scholars of this school believed that the whole of eastern Europe was an area for possible German expansion on the foundation of the Auslandsdeutschen there. These authorities even accepted political responsibility for the preparation of future German annexations and argued that their studies would help to stimulate

---

[31] John A. Arnez, Slovenia in European Affairs (New York, 1958), p. 87; Thomas M. Barker, The Slovenes of Carinthia (Washington, 1958), pp. 2-3, 41, 173, 275.

[32] Zwitter, "The Slovenes and the Habsburg Monarchy," p. 171.

common national consciousness and delineate national objectives.[33] In their general scheme for the German future, they accorded a place for former Habsburg lands. The views of Srbik were both influential and representative on this score. Proclaiming that the Germans were the only people capable of uniting Middle Europe, Srbik assigned them a mission beyond the traditional German living space. While allowing the Germans a nation-state, he denied this to other ethnic groups in the area. How Germans scattered widely among Magyars, Rumanians and Slavs could be united with the mainstream of Germandom remained the realm of pure speculation.[34] Srbik and his followers were playing a variation on a theme long after its chords had first been struck by List, Schwarzenberg, Bruck, Lagarde and Naumann.

Direct connections cannot be drawn from all the organizations engaged in Volkstumarbeit to the formulation of Nazi ideology. However, if they did not contribute to the emerging new outlook per se, these groups served in its dissemination and acceptance, particularly through their publications. Note can be taken here of only the principal agencies for the propagation of German consciousness abroad which functioned under the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, and it must be remembered that these represent merely the tip of the iceberg.

Interest in the German minorities abroad was keen among Weimer leaders. Three of the most important organizations for Volkstumarbeit were inaugurated under their auspices. The German Foreign Institute

---

[33]Ronald J. Ross, "Heinrich Ritter von Srbik and 'Gesamtdeutsch' history," Review of Politics, Vol. XXXI (Jan. 1969), p. 100; Hammen, "German Historians," pp. 183, 185.

[34]Ibid., pp. 91-92, 105.

(Deutsches Ausland - Institut, DAI) had been formed in 1917 to counteract allied propaganda unfavorable to Germans and to promote trade. Excellently organized, this huge institute employed almost 700 people. The DAI's monthly journal, Der Auslandsdeutsche, later renamed Deutschtum im Ausland, carried scholarly articles on Germans abroad as well as news of contemporary affairs. The Association for Germandom Abroad (Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland, VDA), in addition to promoting unity between Germans in the Reich and abroad, was principally concerned with German schools in areas of mixed nationality. The Union of German National Groups in Europe (Verband der deutschen Volksgruppen in Europa) was formed secretly in 1922 with the approval of the German Foreign Ministry to agitate for cultural autonomy and legal equality for the German minorities. Its journal, Nation und Staat, came to be a sounding board for complaints about their treatment.[35]

When Hitler came to power, these organizations were rapidly Nazified. By 1934, the DAI had become a Nazi instrument under the leadership of President Karl Strölin, the Nazi burgomaster of Stuttgart, and Secretary General Richard Csaki. Thereafter, it was widely regarded as a major source of Nazi propaganda. No student can have a complete view of volksdeutsche patterns before and during World War II without bearing in mind the role and significance of this institution.[36] Its efficient interoffice communication can be seen in the mimeographed weekly newsletter, Aussendeutscher Wochenspiegel, which was edited

---

[35]MacAlister Brown, "The Third Reich's Mobilization of the German Fifth Column in Eastern Europe," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. XIX (1959), p. 130.

[36]Paikert, The Danube Swabians, pp. 109-110, 112-113.

under a "Confidential" stamp for its employees. The VDA, renamed the Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland, also moved in a Nazi direction after 1933, although there was controversy as to whether its new bearing was radical enough.[37] The organization began publication of a monthly journal for its office holders, Volksdeutscher Ruf, which pretentiously prohibited the reproduction of its articles. Under Nazi pressure, the Union of German National Groups in Europe adopted an extreme platform demanding full autonomy for the German minorities abroad. Significantly, those who had helped to found the Union ceased to participate in it.[38]

The conversion of existing agencies to Nazi ends did not satisfy Hitler's lieutenants in charge of the Auslandsdeutschen. New ones were opened on their initiative. Two, which became prominent, were the Liaison Office for Ethnic Germans (Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, VOMI) and the Foreign Organization of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Auslands-Organisation der National-Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter-Partei, AO der NSDAP). VOMI was a secret semi-party, semi-state structure for coordinating activities relating to German minorities. From 1938 to 1940, VOMI occupied a position on national minority questions superior to all government agencies, including the Foreign Office. Thereafter, it became an apparatus of the Elite Guard (Schutzstaffel, SS) of the NSDAP.[39] The AO specifically dealt with German citizens abroad and, after the Anschluss of 1938, Austrian

---

[37] Brown, "Third Reich's Mobilization," p. 130.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., pp. 130-131, 133, 135, 148.

citizens abroad, but had nothing to do with Volksdeutschen. Created to impose Nazi orthodoxy upon the Reichsdeutschen outside Germany and to utilize them for national ends, its efficacy was muted by its subordination to the Foreign Office, at least until 1941.[40]

The appeals to Germans everywhere in the post-World War I world to maintain their ethnic unity were reinforced by the activities and propaganda of the numerous auslandsdeutschen organizations. Although they were based chiefly in Germany, they embraced all members of the German minorities abroad, even those who had formerly owed allegiance to the Habsburgs and who might properly consider Austria as their Fatherland. In picking up the fallen Habsburg standard, these groups would of necessity absorb the prejudices of the Austrian Germans. The merger of the Austrian and Reich German opinions concerning the Danubian living space was given additional impetus for its final consummation, which occurred with the Anschluss.

Well before the invasion of Yugoslavia in April, 1941, the Nazi position on Southeastern Europe had crystallized. In the first instance, it was recognized that the Volksdeutschen there belonged to the German Volk. The gesamtdeutschen historians and the organizations for ethnic heritage made this maxim clear beyond a shadow of a doubt. In the second instance, it was understood that the area of their residence lay within the German living space. Here the Naxi obligation to the past became ponderous. Historical images such as Prince Eugene, the Schwabenzug and the Grenzer were invoked as symbols for the

---

[40]Ibid., pp. 129-132; Dietrich Orlow, The Nazis in the Balkans (Pittsburgh, 1968), pp. 131-133.

German future in the Southeast; while the grossdeutsche arguments at the Frankfurt National Assembly, the old watchword Drang nach Osten and the recent conceptions of Mitteleuropa were trotted out to give an aura of legitimacy to the Nazi aims. The assertion by the late Percy Ernst Schramm rings true for the entire Nazi perspective on the Southeast:

> Hitler's plans for the East reveal that he had no conception of the new realities which had been taking shape since the end of the First World War beyond the frontiers of the Reich, and that his dreams of territorial expansion were still completely dominated by nineteenth century conceptions.[41]

The dual loyalties of the Volksdeutschen to both the state in which they lived and to their Fatherland suspended them between two worlds. Harold Steinacker expressed their dilemma poignantly: "Such men have not only two languages, but also two souls..."[42] Nazi concepts tended to swing the balance of this delicate equilibrium toward the German side. They taught that citizenship in a non-German state was but a secondary affiliation for Germans living outside the Reich. All Germans living outside the Reich, regardless of what passports they carried, were to consider themselves as Germans first.[43] The extreme danger which this approach posed to the Volksdeutschen of Southeast Europe can be seen no more clearly than in the recruitment drives for the Waffen-SS. This fully militarized division of the SS was begun in 1939 and opened its ranks to Volksdeutschen, even though they were

---

[41]Percy Ernst Schramm, Hitler: The Man and the Military Leader, tr. Donald S. Detwiler (Chicago, 1971), p. 102.

[42]Steinacker, Austro-Hungarica, p. 302.

[43]F. Elwin Jones, The Attack from Within (London, 1939), p. 90.

citizens of other countries. As "Himmer's European Army," it was designed to forge one allegiance among all Germanic peoples.[44] The Nazis invited the Volksdeutschen to move in a direction which could easily be interpreted as traitorous to the state in which they lived.

Just exactly how the Germans of Southeastern Europe would be tied to the German state was never decided. The first step of the Nazi blueprint for a New Order in Europe, according to the First Article of the Nazi party platform of 1920, was an extension of the frontiers of Germany to include all Germans. In a conference with his generals on November 5, 1937, Hitler declared that the German people had a right to greater living space than other peoples. In outlining his plans for Central Europe in considerable detail, he explained, however, that Germany would not expand in territory beyond the numerical strength of the German people.[45] Isolated islands of Auslandsdeutschen, which would serve as outposts of the Reich, would be included in its organization. According to guidelines for a Nazi training course of early 1938:

> Greater Germany is a racial concept, not a section of state frontiers...It will embrace all areas of Central Europe which by language belongs to the German-speaking area, and beyond this the German cultural region and all areas formerly settled by Germans.[46]

Portions of land along the Danube from Belgrade to the Black sea fit into this category. Strategic-geographic considerations increased the

---

[44]Hans A. Schmitt, European Union: From Hitler to de Gaulle (New York, 1969), pp. 27-28.

[45]Hossbach Memorandum, November 10, 1937. DGFP, Series D, Vol. I, pp. 29-39.

[46]Quoted in Jones, Attack from Within, p. 63.

likelihood that they would be given the status of Reich territory. The rest of the Balkans would be delegated to satellite states which would be economically exploited and dominated by Berlin in cooperation with Rome.

Through a radical readjustment of the geographic and demographic map of Europe, German blood was to be consolidated. From within the limits of Greater Germany, all non-Germans would be expelled to build an ethnically homogeneous state. Although the Nazis would tolerate sites for German settlement which were non-contiguous with the Reich, they would so so selectively. In his Reichstag speech of October 6, 1939, Hitler said:

> The most important task (is) to establish a new order of ethnographic conditions, that is to say, resettlement of nationalities in such a manner that the process ultimately results in the obtaining of better dividing lines than is the case at present...The east and south of Europe are to a large extent filled with splinters of the German nationality, whose existence they cannot maintain.
>
> In their very existence lie the reason and cause for continual international disturbances. In this age of the principle of nationalities and of racial ideals, it is utopian to believe that members of a highly developed people can be assimilated without trouble.
>
> It is therefore essential for a far-signted ordering of the life of Europe that a resettlement should be undertaken.[47]

In other words, Hitler advocated moving widely scattered Germans into the Fatherland in the interest of peace. They would fill the places vacated by the expelled non-Germans. Resettlement plans made in Berlin during World War I were clearly revitalized.[48] Precisely which Germans would stay in the Southeast to fulfill the historic German mission and

---

[47] Hitler, My New Order, pp. 737-738.

[48] Hajo Holborn, "Origins and Political Character of Nazi Ideology," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXXIX (1964), p. 552.

which would return home to the Reich (Heim ins Reich) was not specified.

Part II: The Implementation of the Ideology

The aspects of Nazi ideology which involved the Volksdeutschen of Yugoslavia in a far-reaching realignment of the political and economic structure of Southeastern Europe did not remain in the realms of abstract thought between January, 1933 and April, 1941. Berlin's double-tracked policy provided for illegal, undercover elements working for the eventual dismemberment of the South Slav state. Although the pervasiveness of the Nazi doctrines among the Volksdeutschen was by no means complete, the ethnic Germans in Yugoslavia abetted this subversion, if only by silent acquiescence. They had no real power to oppose Berlin, and voices raised against the Nazis were few and far between even in the beginning. Although they were uncertain as to just what a German hegemony in the Balkans might bring them, the majority of the Volksdeutschen became docile accomplices to Nazi aggression at the moment of truth when German troops entered their country. They were amply rewarded for their loyalty to the Fatherland in Hitler's arrangements for Yugoslav territory. They were dealt with in a manner totally in accord with völkischen principles, and they were delighted by this solicitude in the spring of 1941. Berlin engineered the implementation of Nazi ideology in Yugoslavia, but the Volksdeutschen there were responsible in part for Nazi success.

Until the coup d'état in Belgrade on March 27, 1941, Hitler steadfastly maintained that he wanted to preserve the integrity of Yugoslavia. In a conference with Stoyadinovich in early 1938, the Führer

avered that his territorial aims ended at the Austro-Yugoslav border as established by the treaties of St. Germain and Trianon.[49] Hitler reaffirmed this resolve to the world on October 6, 1939, before the Reichstag:

> Immediately after the Anschluss became an accomplished fact I informed Yugoslavia that the frontier in common with that country would henceforth be regarded as unalterable by Germany and that we wished only to live in peace and friendship with that country.[50]

In a brief for the Hitler-Stoyadinovich interview, a Foreign Office official spoke of "efforts made by the German government since 1933 to develop systematically economic and thereby also political relations with countries of Southeastern Europe."[51] For the time being, Germany would be satisfied to include Yugoslavia in its sphere of influence on an economic basis.

Despite his pronouncements to leading statesmen and the world at large, Hitler had other plans for Yugoslavia. That Nazi agencies within the Reich intruded boldly into internal Yugoslav affairs can be seen in the complaints by von Heeren that this agitation was complicating his work. Between 1925 and 1937, he returned money and propaganda material received by diplomatic mail from the DAI and other agencies.[52] In April, 1939, the German minister indignantly objected to disturbances perpetrated by the Renovators, who hinted that they were acting

---

[49]Minutes by von Heeren, January 17, 1938. DGFP, Series D, Vol. V, pp. 228-229.

[50]Hitler, My New Order, p. 743.

[51]Brief for Hitler-Stojadinovich talks, January 7, 1938. DGFP Series D, Vol. V, pp. 217-218.

[52]Paikert, The Danube Swabians, p. 274.

on instructions from Berlin. Stirring up the Volksdeutschen was politically undesirable, he counselled.[53] Berlin's orchestration of volksdeutsch agitation is conclusively seen in a Foreign Office note issued two days after von Heeren's complaint. VOMI would heed orders to keep the German national groups in Yugoslavia quiet.[54] Von Herren could be judged as an honorable diplomat properly concerned with the integrity of his ministry, were it not for recommendations he made after the change of premiers in Belgrade in February, 1939. He advised the German Foreign Office to reassess its attitude toward the Croatian question. By replacing Stoyadinovich with Cvetkovich, von Heeren postulated, Prince Regent Paul had significantly weakened the Yugoslav government. Because of the instability in Belgrade, Berlin should watch out for its own interests and begin a press campaign in Croatia advocating self-determination of nations.[55] Hitler's words that he wished only to live in peace and friendship with Yugoslavia sound hollow in view of the intrigue which not only surrounded but enveloped the German diplomatic mission in Belgrade.

The culpability of the Volksdeutschen in these perfidious developments ultimately rests on the extent of their involvement with the Nazi movement. Since the Kulturbund was the foremost volksdeutsche organization, how it was received by the German population after Nazification in 1939 becomes a question of overriding importance. One

---

[53]Dispatch from von Heeren, April 13, 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 234-235.

[54]Note by Deputy Director of the Cultural Policy Department, April 15, 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI, p. 256.

[55]Political report by von Heeren, March 7, 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. V, pp. 411-412.

indication of its reception is the resistance to the pro-Nazi Renovators by the older generation of Kulturbund leaders. When the Nazi era opened, the rank and file members apparently supported their duly constituted officers. At the annual assembly of the Union held in December, 1934, the Renovators received only ten votes of the 75 cast in elections. Keks affirmed that if all 129 Ortsgruppen had been represented at the meeting, the vote would have been 119 to ten.[56] Recent German scholars of distinction have maintained that this diffidence toward radical Nazi infiltration was characteristic of the Kulturbund for the entire interwar period.[57] But such a position is untenable in view of the fact that its membership soared after Nazification. Possibly, as Wuescht argues, there was a substantive difference between the national socialism followed by the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen and the the Reichsdeutschen. The former were too religious to follow wholeheartedly the doctrines of the latter; they only paid lip-service to Nazi slogans.[58] Yet, in the two years immediately prior to the invasion, the vast majority of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen prostrated themselves before the Behemoth in Berlin. They accepted the essence of the Nazi movement, and for this they must be held accountable.

The Nazi infiltration of ethnic German life encountered little resistance in the German community. Only the Catholic weekly, Die Donau, engaged in open combat with the new ideas from the Teutonic North. An article in its August 24, 1940, issue, under the heading

---

[56]Letter of Keks, February 14, 1935. T-81/Roll 444/5196363-6.

[57]Schieder, Dokumentation der Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 38E-41E.

[58]Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, pp. 254, 257-259; Beitrag zur Geschichte, pp. 49-50.

"Catholics! Think this over Once Calmly," indicates the tenor of its position. Written in a simple style to appeal to peasants, it warns them against the neo-pagan wolves at their doors. The Renovators are specifically attacked, but the implications involve the whole Nazi world view.

> One certainly need not demonstrate to you further that the so-called Renovators aspire with all earthly means to undermine the prestige of the priests, to make the people mistrustful of their priests and to separate the people from their priests as far as possible. Must that be so? Yes. From the standpoint of the so-called Renovation Movement, which confesses to the so-called "new German world view", there is no other way. They will stamp Christianity root and branch out of the soul of the German people, for only on the ruins of the Christian world view can this movement build up the neo-pagan world view in our people.[59]

The article proceeds to denounce the imprisonment of the Protestant pastor, Martin Niemoller, for his political convictions. Had more German language newspapers in Yugoslavia followed such editorial policies, the evidence that the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen were insincere in their attachment to the Nazified Kulturbund would be much more conclusive.

The commitment to Nazi ideology increased "fifth column" activities among members of the German minority as World War II began. The incessant propaganda reminding the Volksdeutschen of their German heritage could hardly help but stir them to aid the embattled Fatherland. The Yugoslav government seemed incapable of combatting espionage, which was particularly prevalent in Slovenia. There Kulturbund members reported on the Yugoslav economy, the administration, the armaments industry, the army and the police to German intelligence headquarters

---

[59] Die Donau, August 24, 1940.

in Graz, Klagenfurt, Salzburg and Vienna.[60]

Charges of treason against the Volksdeutschen centered on their military affiliations. After the Waffen-SS was organized, many young men of ethnic German blood were reputed to have illegally crossed the Yugoslav border to join its ranks.[61] Further, the Volksdeutschen formed local para-military units known as German Companies (Deutsche Mannschaften, DM) well before April, 1941. This militia, modeled after the Storm Troops (Sturm Abteilung, SA) of the Nazi Party in Germany, was concerned not only with self-defense but with goals contrary to the interests of the Yugoslav state.[62] Men over 21 years of age and sometimes younger served in these alarm units in emergencies; otherwise, they fulfilled their usual civilian duties. Before April, 1941, these armed groups in the Banat were called Sports Teams (Sportmannschaften). Later they received the DM label.[63] After Hitler resolved to destroy the South Slav state on March 27, 1941, volksdeutsche males of draft age were placed in an exceedingly precarious position. The next day an order from Hitler instructed them to evade the Yugoslav draft, and the majority of them did so.[64] If volksdeutsche enlistments in the Waffen-SS and the DM do not clearly constitute treason to the Yugoslav

---

[60]Biber, Nacizem i Nemci, pp. 229-251, 434; Ferenc, "Le Système d'occupation des Nazis en Slovénie," pp. 52-53.

[61]Paikert, The Danube Swabians, p. 276.

[62]Schieder, Dokumentation der Vertreibung, Vol. V, p. 47E; Biber, Nacizem i Nemci, pp. 251-267, 434-435.

[63]Sandor Vegh, "Le Système du Pouvoir d'Occupation Allemand dans le Banat Yougoslave 1941-1944," tr. Madeleine Stevanov-Charlier, in Brajovich, Les Systèmes d'Occupation en Yougoslavie, pp. 547-548 fn.

[64]Schieder, Dokumentation der Vertreibung, Vol. V, p. 46E.

state, obedience to a foreign head of state in defiance of the draft in the last ten days before the German invasion does.

Before April 6, 1941, the future of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen in the Nazi New Order was uncertain. Hitler's speech of October 6, 1939, by which he introduced his program of mass transfers of population, sent the Yugoslav Germans into an uproar.[65] Baron von Weizsäcker, State Secretary in the Foreign Ministry, hastily sought to reassure the Yugoslav Germans that no immediate population exchanges were imminent. Only voluntary repatriates were wanted in Germany, he explained, and minority problems in Yugoslavia were not acute enough at the present time to warrant resettlement.[66] The German press in Yugoslavia moved energetically against speculation involving the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen. The Deutsches Volksblatt of Novi Sad differentiated between German minorities which were too small and scattered to survive on their own and those amenable to a solution of the national question. The Yugoslav Germans belonged to the latter type. The Weisskirchner Volksblatt of Bela-Crkva attributed rumors that the Yugoslav Germans would be resettled to anti-German troublemakers.[67] The Gottscheer Zeitung denied that the Kočevje Germans would be transferred from their homes.[68] It would be two more years before Hitler's program would directly affect the ethnic Germans of Yugoslavia.

---

[65]Report from von Heeren, October 22, 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, p. 332.

[66]Weizsäcker to von Heeren, October 28, 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, p. 352.

[67]Südost-Pressebericht, November 12, 1939. T-81/Roll 322/2453465.

[68]Südost-Pressebericht, November 20, 1939. T-81/Roll 322/2453506.

Despite the reassurances, rumors were reinforced by Hitler's progress in the realignment of Europe. The construction of Greater Germany had been carried to virtual completion by the summer of 1940. Additions to the German Lebensraum included: Austria, fully amalgamated in 1938; Bohemia and Moravia, associated as a Protectorate in 1939; the western section of Poland, incorporated in 1939; and Alsace, Lorraine and Luxembourg, occupied in 1940 and scheduled for incorporation. Further, by 1941, extensive resettlement had been undertaken in the annexed Polish areas. A wholesale clearing of the non-German population had been accomplished there, and confiscated property was being distributed to people of German blood brought into the Reich from the Baltic states, Italy, Russia and the Balkans. Moreover, Volksdeutsche from Southeastern Europe traveled through Yugoslavia toward sorting camps in Germany. There were Bessarabians and North Bukovinans resettled by the Soviet-German treaty of September 5, 1940 and South Bukovinans and residents of Northern Dobruja resettled by the Rumanian-German treaty of October 22, 1940. They were visible portents to the Yugoslav Germans of what Hitler might have in mind for them.

For this massive rearrangement of human material, an enormous administrative network was required. It was provided by the Reich Commission for the Consolidation of the German Ethnic Heritage (Reichs Kommissariat für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums, RKFDV). Created by decree on October 7, 1939, the day after Hitler's proclamation on resettlement, the Commission was entrusted to Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler. Himmler was charged with the triple responsibility for organizing the return to Germany of Reichsdeutschen and Volksdeutschen from various European countries, for eliminating harmful foreign national

splinter groups within the Reich, and for creating new German colonies by resettlement. His RKFDV system came to have unlimited authority in designating areas of resettlement and in screening populations to determine who might be German, who might be reeducated to Germandom, and who would be relegated to the status of "helots."[69]

The organizational lines of the RKFDV gradually emerged as SS officers were assigned by Himmler to carry out the provisions of the October 7 decree. On June 11, 1941, the Main Staff Office (Stabshauptamt) was formally constituted in Berlin under the leadership of SS-Obergruppenführer Ulrich Greifelt. Greifelt became in effect Himmler's executive officer for the whole proliferating RKFDV system. His office was divided into six main departments (Hauptabteilungen): (I) Allocation of Human Resources (Menscheneinsatz), (II) Administration of Resettler Installation, (III) Indemnity Payments, (IV) Finances, (V) Central Land Office and (VI) Colonization Activities.[70]

Many organizations cooperated with the RKFDV in resettlement work with the understanding that Himmler was the final authority on all Volkstum questions. VOMI was pressed into service on behalf of the colossal project. The Central Immigration Office (Einwandererzentralstelle, EWZ) was a multi-agency processing organization for incoming resettlers. Its special train was in effect a transportable office for carrying out the extensive paper work involved in mass population

---

[69]Robert L. Koehl, RKFDV, German Resettlement and Population Policy, 1939-1945 (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 31-33. The text of the decree appears on pp. 247-249. It is also found in Carlyle, Documents, 1939-1946, Vol. II, pp. 2-4.

[70]Joseph B. Schechtman, European Population Transfers, 1939-1945 (New York, 1946), p. 272.

transfers. Other branches of the SS played prominent roles in the resettlement program. Involved in the brutal work of deporting undesirable foreign elements were the Race and Settlement Main Office (Rasse-und Siedlungshauptamt, RuSHA); the Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst, SD) and the Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt, RSHA). The German Resettlement Trustee Company (Deutsche Umsiedlungs-Treuhandgesellschaft, DUT) was a bank formed by Himmler to provide resettlers coming into the Reich with property equivalent to that left behind. The multitudinous organizations under the RKFDV umbrella undoubtedly led to the complications which were the hallmark of the entire institution.[71]

Fears on the part of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen that they were not exempt from resettlement were partially justified. A memorandum dated June 27, 1940, written by the chief of VOMI and found in the Foreign Office files, slated certain of them for this eventuality.[72] It was envisioned that Slovene areas bordering on Styria and Carinthia would be incorporated into the Third Reich, should Yugoslavia disintegrate. These would be attached to Styria and Carinthia, both Reichsgaue since the Anschluss had dissolved Austria. Volksdeutsche to the South of the new Reich borders would probably fall into the Italian sphere of influence. These people, located in the Kočevje district, Croatia and Bosnia, could be resettled, according to the memorandum.

---

[71]Helmut Krausnick, et al., Anatomy of the SS State, tr. Richard Barry, Marion Jackson, Dorothy Long (New York, 1968), p. 278.

[72]Schieder, Dokumentation der Vertreibung, Vol. V, p. 4E; Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, p. 250. An extract of the memorandum appears in Wuescht, pp. 288-289.

For the numerous Yugoslav Germans in the Voivodina, Srem and Slavonia, another solution seemed possible. Rumors had run rife since the end of 1939 that their settlements qualified for elevation as Reich territory outside the Reich. They were to remain in the environs of Belgrade to form a state under German protection along with neighboring German minorities in Hungary and Rumania. This state was variously called the Prince Eugene Province (Prinz Eugene-Gau) and the Danube State (Donaustaat).[73] The Hungarians feared this utilization of Danubian land, which they claimed as their own. Before his suicide, Telecki wrote about his anxiety over a German state carved out of the Batschka, the Banat, portions of Transylvania and possibly Baranja.[74] Unquestionably, Nazi officials seriously considered a German protectorate around Belgrade. Plans along these lines were developed by the AO and VOMI.[75] The June 27, 1940 memorandum spoke of a "uniform arrangement" for the Volksdeutschen there, who were then divided among Yugoslavia, Hungary and Rumania.[76] The ideas of List and Lagarde for German colonization along the Danube were resurrected for the twentieth-century Volksdeutschen of the Voivodina, Srem and Slavonia.

As the future of the Yugoslav Germans was contemplated in Berlin with little concern for their wishes, so was the use made of them to justify the German invasion of Yugoslavia. In a rapid mobilization of journalistic talent between March 27 and April 6, the Germans filed

---

[73] Wehler, "Reichsfestung Belgrad," pp. 73-74.

[74] R. V. Burks, "Two Telecki Letters," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. VII (1947), p. 72.

[75] Wehler, "Reichsfestung Belgrad," pp. 73-74 fn.

[76] Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, p. 289.

innumerable news stories about "Serbian terror" against the Volksdeutschen. The tactic was an exact replica of the German campaign of vilification against the Poles in the final days of August, 1939.[77] In a March 31 issue, Völkischer Beobachter described outrages against the Volksdeutschen of Maribor and Novi Sad. The so-called excesses in Maribor seemed harmless enough, since they merely involved spitting on a rock marked "Germany" and trampling on Swastika bands.[78] According to Völkischer Beobachter four days later, anti-German manifestations in Slovenia deteriorated dramatically. Volksdeutsche settlements in Carniola were reported burned down and Volksdeutsche imprisoned in concentration camps.[79] The implications of the article was clear: Hitler would have to rescue the German minority in Yugoslavia.

The accuracy of these reports cannot be confirmed. The belief that the Volksdeutschen were endangered by the anti-German aspects of the March 27 coup d'état was probably justified, but only to a slight degree. An eye-witness reported that it was no longer possible for Volksdeutsche to speak German on the streets in the Banat and that Germans had been murdered by Serbian terrorists there.[80] As a consequence of such harassment, Weizsäcker ordered the Reich German colony

---

[77] Leigh White, The Long Balkan Night (New York, 1944), p. 216.

[78] Völkischer Beobachter (Berlin), March 31, 1941.

[79] Völkischer Beobachter (Berlin), April 4, 1941.

[80] Report of evacuee, who fled from Banat into Germany on March 31, 1941, no date (April, 1941?). T-81/Roll 544/5315585.

to depart from Yugoslavia on March 31.[81] However, Berlin's accusation of large-scale atrocities was fabricated. Even the German Counsul-General in Ljubljana objected to the maneuvers of his government. Dr. Hans Broch denied radio reports from Germany that the situation of the Germans in Slovenia was critical and expressed appreciation for the protection extended to them by the Slovene authorities.[82]

When the Germans attacked Yugoslavia on April 6, 1941, the German minority in Yugoslavia was disposed to support the invaders. They had given tacit approval to Nazi doctrines earlier by joining the Kulturbund and German military formations. If a few were apprehensive that they would be resettled in some distant corner of Europe, most believed that they would remain in their homes and prosper under Reich auspices. In the days immediately prior to the invasion, with the press campaign emphasizing the South Slavic hatred for them, the Volksdeutschen turned more resolutely toward Berlin than ever before. They were frankly overjoyed at the arrival of German troops in their communities.[83] In the Banat, the attackers were received as deliverers.[84]

Evidence exists that DM or other volksdeutsche formations gave aid to the advancing German army, even to the point of seizing control of certain districts before its arrival. The most famous volksdeutsche

---

[81]Order of Weizsäcker, March 31, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, p. 425.

[82]Der Bund (Bern), April 7, 1941. (Typed copy). T-81/Roll 544/5315789; White, The Long Balkan Night, p. 216.

[83]Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, p. 263.

[84]Report of Friedrich Becker, July/August, 1941. T-81/Roll 544/5316589-93.

action was the seizure of the military airport at Zemun outside Belgrade on April 12 by men from nearby Franztal. Those who believe that the DM was formed after the German-Yugoslav war was over explain this accomplishment as a holding operation by a few armed men organized spontaneously for self-defense who took custody of the airport after Yugoslav troops had evacuated.[85] This interpretation is inconsistent with a report made for the DAI shortly after the event.[86] Although no DM unit was mentioned, the Franztal Volksdeutschen were not organized spontaneously when the war broke out. For several months before, völkische renovation had made great strides in the community. A World War I veteran, Fritz Runitzky, had drilled the youth in an athletic corps. In order to secure the safety of Franztal so close to a major military target, Runitzky led the assult on the airport with between 200-300 men. Facing armed Serbians at the ratio of one to fifteen, these men seized the installation and took 4,500 captives. The German troops arrived sixteen hours after the fighting had begun and eight hours after it was completed. The Zemun airport incident and similar ones were not decisive in the unconditional surrender of Yugoslavia on April 17, but they placed the Volksdeutschen on the winning side for the time being.

On April 12, Hitler circulated a directive for splitting up Yugoslavia.[87] Although various clauses were adjusted in the next

---

[85]Wuescht, Betrag zur Geschichte, pp. 69-70, 83-86.

[86]Report of Karl Goetz delivered by Dr. Nollau, May 19, 1941. T-81/Roll 544/5316317-22.

[87]Carlyle, Documents, 1939-1946, Vol. II, pp. 329-331.

Map 7. The Partition of Yugoslavia, 1941

months, it was authoritative in establishing new territorial lines. (See Map 7). The most important feature of the political reorganization was the newly-established Independent State of Croatia. Further, Italy, Bulgaria, and Hungary were rewarded for their participation or cooperation in the war against Yugoslavia with grants of land which they had either ruled in the past or claimed. Germany itself extended its borders into Slovenia and assumed power in Rump Serbia.[88]

Although much of Slovenia was absorbed into the Third Reich, both Hungary and Italy received portions of it. (See Map 9). Lower Styria, increased to the south by a strip of about ninety kilometers in breadth and ten to fifteen kilometers in depth, was reincorporated into Reichsgau Styria. The addition comprised land in Lower Carniola (Unterkrain, Basse-Carniole). The parts of Carinthia lost in 1919 (the Meža Valley, Dravograd and the Commune of Jezersko) and Upper Carniola (Oberkrain, Haute-Carniole), were placed under the administrative control of Reichsgau Carinthia. Because the various Carinthian gains in 1941 were administered as a unit, for purposes of simplification the term Upper Carniola will henceforth include them, unless specified otherwise. The line delineating Upper Carniola from that part of Carniola awarded to Italy, called the Province of Ljubljana (Lubiana) by the Italians, ran to the south of the upper course of the Sava river, but north of Ljubljana. Hitler restored the Upper Mur area to the Hungarians.

The directive specified that Croatia would become an independent state "within its ethnographical boundaries." Much negotiation was

---

[88]Circular of the Foreign Ministry, May 17, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, pp. 842-844.

undertaken among the Croats, Italians, Germans and Hungarians to establish just what these would be. By mid-May, agreement seemed to have been reached, although Eastern Srem remained under Germany military occupation until October 10, 1941. To the disappointment of the Croats, a large portion of Dalmatia and some of the Croatian littoral went to the Italians, and the Lower Mur region reverted to Hungary. Nonetheless, Croatia-Slavonia, largely as it existed in Habsburg days, was augmented considerably by the addition of some of the Dalmatia and all of Bosnia. (See Map 8). The dreams of the most extreme Croatian nationalists were substantially fulfilled.

Not all of the Yugoslav territory which they had held under the Habsburgs was returned to the Hungarians. In addition to the Mur regions, they received the Baranja triangle and the Batschka, but not the Serbian Banat. Here complications posed by the Rumanians, who were also allied to Hitler, precluded Budapest's acquisition of this region. The Hungarians were furious because Hitler had reversed himself on the issue.[89] On April 3, he had directed that Hungary should occupy the Serbian Banat in preparation for its re-incorporation into the Magyar state.[90] Yet in the April 12 directive, he stipulated that the area east of the river Tisa would be placed under German protection. The next day, he admonished Horthy to keep Hungarian troops out of the

---

[89]German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop to Erdmannsdorf, April 14, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, p. 551.

[90]Hitler's Directive of April 3, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, p. 440.

Serbian Banat and ordered the German army into the area.[91] The Germans were forced into this action to keep peace, since a clash of Rumanian and Hungarian troops seemed imminent.[92]

The Foreign Office in Berlin was flooded with communications from Budapest and Bucharest over the Serbian Banat. The Rumanians demanded the area as a geographic, ethnic, historic and economic unit of their country.[93] The Germans had no intention of granting this request and felt that the claim that 130,000 Rumanians lived there was grossly exaggerated.[94] The persistence of the Hungarians in asserting their right to the Serbian Banat finally wore out the diplomats of the Third Reich. In September, Budapest was told to drop its suit for the time being.[95]

The Hungarian-Rumanian imbroglio caused the attachment of the Banat to what remained of Serbia or the so-called Old Serbia. Under a German military commander, this political unit would be governed by existing Yugoslav laws as a residual state. Other territorial awards made on April 12 in Southern Yugoslavia did not affect the Volksdeutschen, since few resided there.

---

[91] Hitler to Horthy, April 13, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, p. 538. Hitler's Directive of April 13, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, pp. 538-539.

[92] Report of Erdmannsdorf, April 14, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, p. 548.

[93] Foreign Office Memorandum, April 23, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, pp. 616-617.

[94] Foreign Office Memorandum, April 21, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, p. 592.

[95] Memorandum by Weizsäcker, September 18, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XIII, pp. 528-529.

At the time of the Yugoslav capitulation, the Nazis carefully considered the fate of the German minority in the Danube valley. Between April 16 and 19, talks were held in Vienna by representatives of the RKFDV, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Interior. Some of the ideas discussed were eventually recorded in a memorandum dated July 15 and sent from the Ministry of the Interior to the Foreign Office.[96] The construction of a Reichsfestung Belgrad, allegedly inspired by the 1720 plan attributed to Prince Eugene, was recommended. Although the limits of this German fortress were not specified, it was to be surrounded by German settlements. The Nazi planners further decided to strengthen the position and influence of the Danube Swabians as members of a master race. This would necessitate wide-ranging grants of autonomy to them by the states in which they lived.[97] Reichsfestung Belgrad encircled by a network of autonomous German settlements extending into Croatia, Hungary, Rumania and the Serbian Banat created in essence a Donaustaat.[98] Long-cherished dreams entered the realms of the possible in the spring of 1941 under the auspices of three important Reich agencies.

But illusions of a fortress at the Serbian capital were quickly dispelled, much to the disappointment of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen. In the Batschka, the appearance of Hungarian troops shattered expectations that the ethnic Germans there would be liberated by German

---

[96] Extracts of the July 15, 1941 memorandum are published in Wehler, "Reichsfestung Belgrad," pp. 81-83.

[97] Jovan Marjanovich, "The German Occupation System in Serbia in 1941," tr. Zvonimir Petnicki, in Brajovich, Les Systèmes d'Occupation, pp. 265-266.

[98] Wehler, "Reichsfestung Belgrad," p. 79.

soldiers and included in an "independent German province."[99] Kulturbund members in the Banat cherished similar hopes for the construction of a Danubian state at the time of the invasion. They were told that the project was aborted, because war developments and diplomatic relations with Germany's allies had become stumbling-blocks.[100] Popular interest in the Donaustaat lingered throughout the summer. In June, the Hungarians accused members of the German minority in the Banat of attempting to bring their area into the Reich in some form or the other.[101] A festive celebration of the 225th anniversary of Eugene's victory at Petrovaradin, held in August, was attended by three thousand Volksdeutschen from Srem and Batschka. Leaders of the Volksdeutschen now under Croatian and Hungarian rule spoke of the indestructible solidarity of the Germans in the region.[102] A demonstration of unity in the name of Prince Eugene had political overtones, but these were obscured by news now coming from the Russian front.

Indeed the entire concept of a German enclave along the Danube suffered a severe set-back in July. Apparently, sometime in that month Hitler had elected to transfer all the German national groups of

---

[99]Unsigned DAI memorandum, no date (June, 1941?). T-81/Roll 553/5328664-6.

[100]Vegh, "Le Système du Pouvoir d'occupation Allemand dans le Banat Yougoslave," p. 507.

[101]Memorandum by Weizsäcker, June 26, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XIII, p. 28. Editor's note, p. 28.

[102]A. W., September 4, 1941, from Christliche Volkszeitung (Osijek), August 21, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317139.

Southeastern Europe into the Reich.[103] Preparations had already been underway for several weeks on the resettlement of the Kočevje Germans from the Italian-held province of Ljubljana into German-occupied Slovenia.[104] On August 2, Hitler postponed the resettlements from the Southeast until the end of the war.[105] Himmler explained that the Southeast meant the Balkans, and indicated that the Kočevje action would proceed as scheduled.[106] Talks on the Donaustaat would continue in the next years, even by such a highly placed dignitary as Himmler. Hitler, who was not above impetuous behavior, apparently reversed his decision to remove the Danube Swabians. He determined in 1943 that the German ethnic groups in the Balkans should remain in their host countries.[107] But the fact remains that entrenchment of Volksdeutschen around Belgrade was in grave jeopardy at the highest level of the Third Reich at almost the same moment when it was given sanction at lower levels in the July 15, 1941 memorandum. The uncertainty hovering over the fate of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen was never dispelled.

Regardless of whether or not they would stay on their soil after the war, the Yugoslav Germans were cast in the role of superior Volk in the new political units in which they found themselves. In the

---

[103]Foreign Office Memorandum, July 24, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XIII, pp. 212-213.

[104]Memorandum by Benzler, May 6, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, p. 726.

[105]Foreign Office Memorandum, August 2, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XIII, p. 296

[106]Foreign Office Memorandum, August 7, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XIII, pp. 295-296.

[107]Orlow, Nazis in the Balkans, pp. 126-128.

Independent State of Croatia, in Hungary, in the Banat attached to Old Serbia, and in the Slovene areas annexed to the Reich, they were given citizenship status which elevated them over their neighbors of differing ethnic backgrounds. The following chapters will study in detail the history of each of the four segments of the former German minority from April, 1941, until the end of World War II. Already in 1938, an astute observer of the Balkan scene sensed the dangers inherent in the Nazi ideology for these people:

> The far-sighted may dread lest the racial doctrine, when brashly asserted by minorities remote from German territory and less prolific than the majority peoples around them, recoil upon its own zealots with tenfold violence.[108]

The way toward the ultimate destruction of the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen was cleared by the arrangements made for them in the war years.

---

[108]Moseley, "Hitler and Southeastern Europe," p. 257.

CHAPTER III

THE VOLKSDEUTSCHEN WITHIN THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA

Among the many questions generated by Hitler's hasty decision to dismember Yugoslavia on March 27, 1941, two were of particular significance: how would Croatian territory be organized and what would be the fate of the German minority living on Croatian soil? Regarding the former question, the Nazis made an attempt to recreate the Croatian kingdom of the Middle Ages under a puppet regime. In response to the latter question, the German population of Croatia was welded into a virtually autonomous unit within the new state. They enjoyed a legal position second to none outside the Third Reich through their organization, the German Ethnic Colony in Croatia (Deutsche Volksgruppe in Kroatien, DVK).[1] In the first year after the Nazi invasion, they made enormous progress in developing German cultural life. But Utopia cannot exist during wartime, let alone during a war which contained within it several civil wars. On top of the Axis-Allied conflict, which was never really stilled, Croatia was the scene of Croatian persecution of Serbian civilians and Partisan-Chetnick rivalry. Life became an unrelieved series of miseries for the Volksdeutschen in the Croatian

---

[1]Rudolph Emting, Kroatien im Spiegelbild der Landesgruppe der Auslands-Organisation der NSDAP, June 1941-June 1942, July 1942. T-81/Roll 136/172982-173059. (Hereinafter Emting Report, 1942).

state. They were implicated in the gross misrule of the government in Zagreb; they were so harrassed by dissident elements in the state that groups of them were resettled in the Reich, despite Hitler's staying order of August 2. They sacrificed their men on the front which drew ever closer to their own hearths. The brave new world which Altgayer and his followers conceived for them disintegrated amidst blood baths and horror. This inferno which engulfed the Croatian Volksdeutschen can be understood more clearly if one reflects upon the forces which molded the bizarre state in which they lived and the course of these forces in the next four years.

In the first place, autonomous Croatia was not so much a product of Croat desires as the results of Italo-German rivalry. Any German excursions into Croatian lands quickly ran head-on into Italian aspirations. Long before April 6, 1941, Rome had been desirous of splitting up the South Slav state for Italian gain and had blatantly encouraged Croatian revisionism. A series of communications over the Croatian question were exchanged between Italian and German dipolmats in March, 1939. Mussolini had become worried about rumors that Dr. Vladimir Maček, the most powerful voice of the Croatian people at that time, intended to set up an independent Croatia under German protection. Indeed, the liquidation of Czechoslovakia during the month had given the autonomy movement in Croatia great impetus.[2] The German Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, hastened to assure the Italians

---

[2]Report from Hans Georg von Mackensen, German Ambassador in Italy, March 17, 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 15-16.

that Hitler was completely disinterested in the Croat problem.[3] Capitulating to Mussolini, the Nazis circulated an order stating that "our attitude regarding all national community and minority problems in the Mediterranean countries must be adjusted to meet the wishes of the Italian government" and that all connections with Croat organizations must cease.[4]

Although Hitler had thus tried to assuage Mussolini's fears over German interests in Yugoslavia in 1939, the incontrovertible fact was that the Nazis were much more powerful than the Italians there two years later. When Hitler had to decide suddenly how Croatian territory would be organized, he could afford only token condescension toward the Duce. He entrusted the task of negotiating with Croatian leaders for the creation of an independent Croatian state to SS-Standartenführer Edmund Veesenmayer. Arriving in Zagreb at the beginning of April, Veesenmayer aided the German Counsul General, Alfred Freundt, in the hurried and delicate diplomatic maneuvers.

Recognizing the immense prestige of Maček, the Nazis desired at first to establish the state under his leadership. As head of the Croatian Peasant Party, he represented the vast majority of the Croatians. Further, he was not insensitive to the power of Germany. Immediately after the Simovich coup d'état, Maček sent out feelers to Berlin as to what attitude he should take toward the new regime. He was instructed not to cooperate with Belgrade, because the Nazis were

---

[3]Ribbentrop to Galeazzo Ciano, Italian Foreign Minister, March 20, 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 63-64.

[4]Memorandum by Ribbentrop, March 25, 1939. DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 113-114.

contemplating an "independent Croatia within the framework of the new order for Europe."[5] To the Nazis' chagrin, Maček showed interest in the continued existence of Yugoslavia.[6] By April 4, he categorically rejected any discussion of an independent state.[7]

Unable to procure the cooperation of Maček, the Nazis turned to radical Croat nationalists in the Ustashi. This small, but sinister political movement had demanded the outright dissolution of Yugoslavia during the interwar years. Its leader (Poglavinck), Dr. Ante Pavelich, lived in exile in Italy as a protege of Mussolini, and members of this disreputable group had been incriminated in the assassination of Alexander I. By April 5, Vessenmayer had obtained the necessary signatures of these extremists on a manifesto proclaiming the independence of Croatia.[8] The bargaining was concluded at the last possible moment.

Under German direction, the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, NDH; Unabhängige Staat Kroatien) was proclaimed on April 10 by a follower of Pavelich, Colonel Slavko Kvaternik.[9] On

---

[5]Ribbentrop to Freundt, March 31, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, pp. 424-425.

[6]Report by Freundt, April 2, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, p. 430.

[7]Report by Freundt, April 4, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, pp. 448-449.

[8]Report by Freundt, April 5, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, pp. 461-462.

[9]For works on the Independent State of Croatia, see: Tudman, "The Independent State of Croatia. Ladislaw Hory and Martin Broszat, Der kroatische Ustascha-Staat 1941-1945. No. VIII Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, (Stuttgart, 1964). Gert Fricke, Kroatien 1941-1944. Der "Unabhängige Staat" in der Sicht des deutschen Bevollmächtigten Generals in Agram, Glaise von Horstenau. (Freiburg, 1972).

the same day, German troops marched into Zagreb. The Croats gave them no resistance and in some cases even assisted in the takeover. One Croatian brigade surrendered to a German bicycle company without so much as a token struggle.[10] On April 16, Pavelich made a triumphant entry into the Croatian capital and proceeded to organize the new state within the boundaries delineated in the previous chapter. A series of totalitarian decrees were issued to regulate the Ustashi-dominated regime.[11] The country was divided into twenty-two Great Districts (Veliki Zupama, Grossgespanschaften) in addition to the capital.

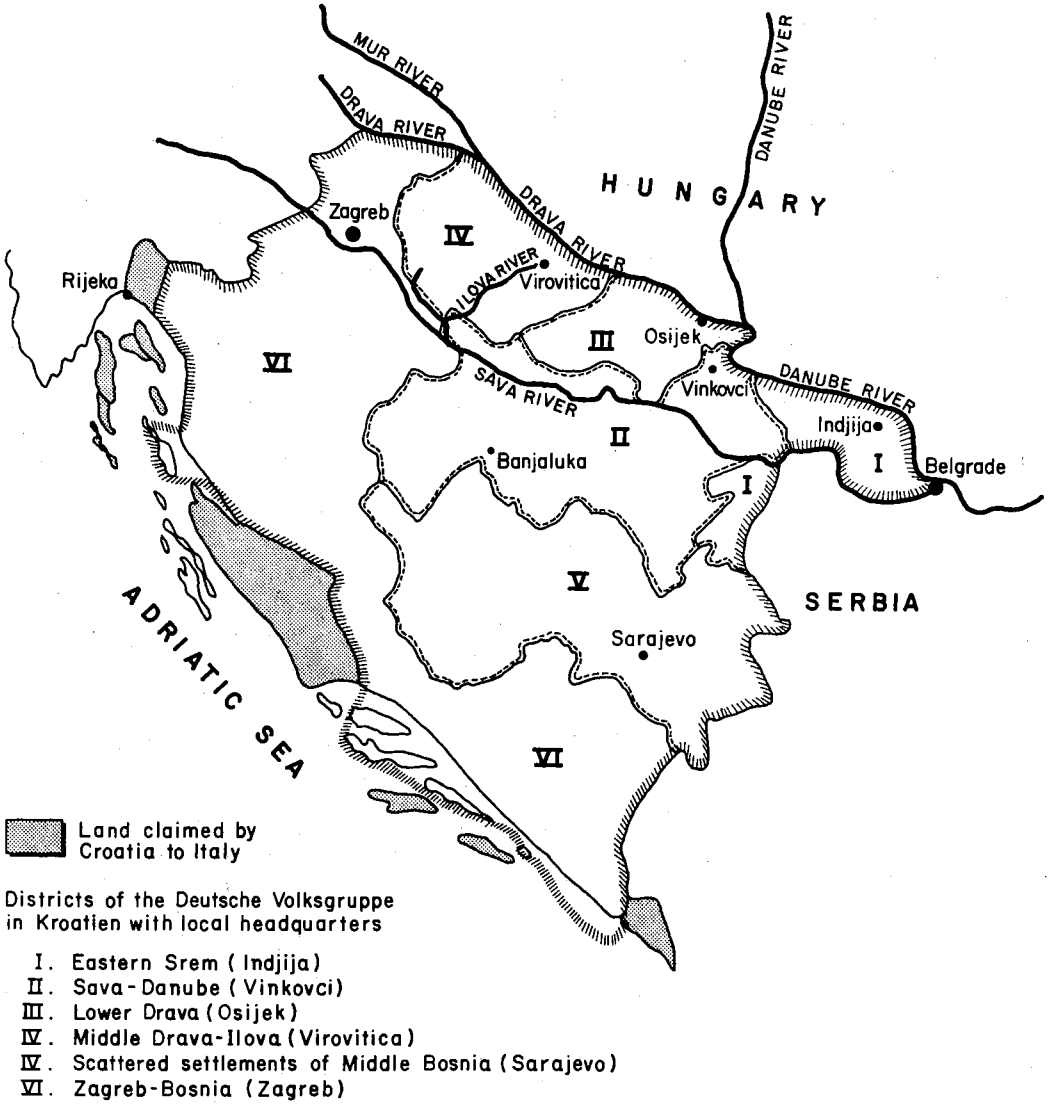
Despite all the fanfare about an independent Croatia, the state was nothing more than a vassal of Germany and Italy. Axis troops were present on Croatian soil during the entire war. Since the Italians were extremely jealous of German influence in Zagreb, they were allowed to occupy nearly half the state. The line which separated the Italian zone of interest on the Adriatic from the German zone in the rest of Croatia ran roughly from Zagreb through Banja Luka and Sarajevo.[12] (See Map 8). Once the work of forming the state was completed, Hitler determined to give the Italians a preponderant position in its political development. Mutual hostility between Croatians and Italians, however, precluded the success of this arrangement. After a year, the Italian troops withdrew from most of their zone of interest. By the time

---

[10] Jacob B. Hoptner, Yugoslavia in Crisis, 1934-1941 (New York, 1962), p. 288.

[11] Many of these laws may be found in Rafal Lemkin, Axis Rule in Occupied Europe (Washington, 1944), pp. 606-627.

[12] Foreign Office Memorandum, April 23, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, pp. 618-619.



Map 8. The Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945

Mussolini fell in July, 1943, the Italians were but a negligible factor in Croatia. The Poglavnik remained in power until 1945 solely on the sufferance of Berlin.

Among the many problems which the Ustashi state confronted was its ethnographic composition. Of the more than six million people within its confines, only a bare majority of Croats, according to 1931 census figures. About thirty per cent were Serbs and twelve per cent Mohammedans. The 150,000 Volksdeutschen represented less than one per cent of the total population. In a reckless attempt to forge a homogenous citizenship, Ustashi military units began a ruthless program of forced conversion of the Serbs. A pravoslavnik (Pravoslawe), that is, a member of the Orthodox church within the Croatian state, had to accept Catholicism or risk death. If he converted, a Serb officially became a Croat. In this manner, the age-old ethnic problems of Bosnia and Srem would be resolved in favor of Croatian hegemony. Jews and gypsies were also attacked in the interests of consolidating Croatian blood. The Poglavnik obviously understood radical approaches to racial problems as well as did his Nazi patrons.

The Ustashi policy, along with those of the Partisans and Chetniks, resulted in wholesale blood-letting on Croatian soil during the war. A Yugoslav historian of note described the Ustashi formations as "a wild horde fanatically wielding the cudgel and the knife, incited by most primitive chauvinist or religious ideas or merely for the sake of brutality and plunder."[13] One estimate concludes that 750,000 Orthodox Serbs, 60,000 Jews and 26,000 gypsies were exterminated in the

---

[13]Tudman, "Independent State of Croatia," p. 177.

carnage.[14] It is important to note, however, that the Partisans and Chetniks also committed unspeakable crimes against innocent people. In the hell which Croatia became between 1941-1945, it is impossible to tell who bears the ultimate guilt for the atrocities.[15]

In such an atmosphere of terror, the government in Zagreb could never win popular support. Although the Croatians had been passive enough at the arrival of German troops, they gave very little support to Pavelich. As Edmund Glaise von Horstenau, German Plenipotentiary General in Croatia (Deutscher Bevollmächtiger General in Kroatien), observed: "The Croatian revolution is to a great extent a revolution of old men and former Habsburg officers."[16] The communist Partisans made tremendous inroads into the country, despite initial rivalry with the Serbian Chetniks. By late 1943, they had liberated most of Bosnia and Srem.[17] The Germans tenaciously held on to the Sava valley until the end in the spring of 1945, since it was the most important center of their communications in Yugoslavia.[18] Outside Zagreb and the Sava valley, the Croatian state no longer existed after 1943, because most of its territory by then was in enemy hands.

If the Croatian state was a cauldron of discord, unity did not

---

[14]Edmond Paris, Genocide in Satellite Croatia 1941-1945. A Record of Racial and Religious Persecutions and Massacres, tr. Lois Perkins (Chicago, 1961), p. 211.

[15]Rudolf Kiszling, Die Kroaten; Der Schicksalsweg eines Südslawenvolkes (Graz-Cologne, 1956), p. 205.

[16]Quoted in Fricke, Kroatien 1941-1945, p. 28.

[17]Donlagić, Yugoslavia in the Second World War, pp. 132-133.

[18]Ibid., pp. 95, 187, 192.

prevail among representatives of the Third Reich stationed there either. General Glaise and SA-Obergruppenführer Siegfried Kasche, the German Minister, both of whom arrived in Zagreb immediately after the invasion, viewed the Ustachi government from fundamentally different positions. As a protégé of Ribbentrop, Kasche was appointed to bolster the Foreign Office in its battle with the SS for control over foreign policy.[19] He possessed none of the qualifications for the diplomatic post he held. On the other hand, Glaise was an army officer with considerable political experience in Habsburg and Republican Austria. While Kasche innocently saw the Pavelich regime as the best of all possible worlds, Glaise feared that its corruption would besmirch the reputation of the German army and urged its reform.[20] Another jarring note was added with the appearance of SS-Brigadeführer Konstantin Kammerhofer on the scene in the spring of 1943. As Himmler's deputy, he attempted in a high-handed way to create an SS-dominated police force in the beleaguered land. With the army, the Foreign Office and the SS at loggerheads, a rational German policy for Croatian affairs was impossible. The counsels of Glaise were ignored, and the incompetent Pavelich kept in office.

Within the puppet state, the Nazis procured extensive special privileges for the German minority. In the first months after the German invasion, Altgayer proceeded to organize the DVK with dispatch and to regularize its legal status. Initially, arrangements for the

---

[19]Heinz Höhne, The Order of the Death's Head, The Story of Hitler's SS, tr. Richard Barry (New York, 1970), pp. 291-292.

[20]Fricke, Kroatien 1941-1944, pp. 69-70, 117-120.

Croatian Volksdeutschen were hampered by confusion over their future. Whether they were to be resettled or maintained in their present locations had consequence for practical questions such as labor recruitment.[21] Nonetheless, planning seemed to be animated from the very beginning by the assumption that the Germans of Croatia would remain in their homesteads and fulfill their historic mission as a bastion of Germandom in southeastern Europe. On August 2, as has been seen, this supposition was confirmed for the duration of the war.

Altgayer as the ranking Kulturbund leader in the state consolidated his forces within the German community with consummate skill. He immediately took precautions to quench any "typical revolutionary phenomenon" which the chaotic conditions might generate among the Volksdeutschen.[22] Possibly, his concern extended to Josef Meier, a Kulturbund official, who proclaimed his leadership of the minority in the new Croatian state on April 13.[23] Pavelich acknowledged Altgayer on April 19 as the representative of the ethnic Germans within the Croatian borders. The provisional organization of the DVK was formed on May 8 and announced in the first issue of its Official Gazette (Verordnungsblatt), which was published in Osijek on May 14. Throughout June rallies were held to instill a spirit of unity among the Volksdeutschen. The German Day (Deutscher Tag) in Osijek, when 15,000

---

[21] Foreign Office Memorandum, July 24, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XIII, pp. 212-213.

[22] Hans Karl Andras, Weltwacht der Deutschen (?), no date. T-81/Roll 545/5317006.

[23] A. W. May 19, 1941. Eine Plakatbekanntmachung aus Kroatien, April 13, 1941. T-81/Roll 544/5316416.

men paraded in formation, was typical of these events. The Germans were molded into an organic whole with apparent ease.

Following Nazi lines, the Deutsche Volksgruppe in Kroatien was based on the leadership principle (Führergrundsatz). As Führer, Altgayer was accorded supreme power.[24] The seat of the organization was established in Osijek. Its functions were carried out through six main offices: for staff affairs, for financial affairs, for political affairs, for culture, for health, and for economic affairs. In addition, an office was opened in Zagreb to enable Altgayer to maintain contact with Croatian officials.[25]

The DVK was divided into districts (Kreise). (See Map 8). Since an attempt was made to apportion the German population equally among them, the districts covered areas of vastly different size. District I, Eastern Srem (Ost-Syrmien), was the smallest, but it contained the greatest number of Volksdeutschen. According to the 1931 census, 46,124 lived there. This administrative unit included not only the eastern portion of Srem, but a Bosnian strip to the south of the Sava as well. Its headquarters were located in Indjija. District II, Sava-Danube (Save-Donau), sprawled through a corridor of Slavonia flanking the northern bank of the Sava and into northern Bosnia. With its officials stationed in Vinkovci, District II incorporated 30,818 ethnic Germans. The environs of Osijek to the south of the confluence of the Drava and

---

[24] Verordnungsblatt der Volksgruppenführung der deutschen Volksgruppe im Unabhängigen Staate Kroatien (Osijek), May 14, 1941. T-81/Roll 544/5316398-406. (Herein after Verordnungsblatt DVK).

[25] Volksdeutscher Ruf, November, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317113-5.

Danube formed District III, Lower Drava (Unterdrau). With 37,072 constituents, this section had its offices in Osijek. The area south of the Drava encompassing the basin of the Ilova (Ilowa) river comprised District IV, the Middle Drava-Illova (Mitteldrau-Ilowa). Within its borders were 13,790 Volksdeutsche, and its seat was at Virovitica. The rest of the German population, totalling 23,363 people, was scattered throughout most of Croatia and Bosnia.[26] Districts V and VI, Middle Bosnia (Mittel-Bosnien) at Sarajevo and Zagreb-Bosnia (Agram-Bosnien) at Zagreb respectively, cared for their concerns.

The minority flourished in the first year after the destruction of Yugoslavia. Volksdeutsche would be guaranteed treatment as honored citizens with minority rights, Altgayer declared in the May 14 Verordnungsblatt.[27] Accordingly, opportunists who had assimilated with Slavs in the past returned to the German fold in vast numbers. For example, there were 400 members of the Petrovaradin Kulturbund in March, 1941. By August, 1,500 men in the community called themselves German.[28] A twenty-nine per cent increase in the German population of the Croatian state occurred between 1931 and 1941. The total rose from 151,167 in the former years to 196,042 in the latter.[29] Because Volksdeutscher status within the Croatian state could only be attained through the DVK, its ranks must also have swelled.

Between June, 1941 and January, 1942, the privileged position of

---

[26]Report of VOMI, May 26, 1942. T-81/Roll 307/2434886.

[27]Verordnungsblatt DVK, May 14, 1941. T-81/Roll 544/5316398-406.

[28]A. W., August 8, 1941, DAI Report. T-81/Roll 545/5317120.

[29]Report of VOMI, May 26, 1942. T-81/Roll 307/2434886.

the Volksgruppe was clarified in Croatian law. The provisional legal position of the minority was outlined by Pavelich on June 21, 1941.[30] In a decree, he stipulated that all Germans under the DVK Führer possessed the right to cary out political, cultural, economic and administrative work. Further, he recognized the DVK as a juridical person with rights. Until a final edict was published, representatives of Altgayer would supervise all communities with Volksdeutschen residents. The Nazi outlook was permitted, as well as unhindered contacts with Germany. A commission was appointed to work out a permanent arrangement for the status of the minority. Consisting of three Volksdeutschen and three Croatian members, it was under the chairmanship of a Reich German.[31]

Four months later, on October 30, the status of the Volksgruppe was finalized by three decrees.[32] In the first, the leader of the Volksgruppe was named a state director. In six Great Districts, where the German population was concentrated, special advisors for volksdeutsche affairs would be appointed as state officials. These would answer to the Volksgruppe Führer. The second decree authorized use of the German language, flag, and symbols. In communities with more than twenty per cent Volksdeutschen, both Croatian and German would be official languages and place names rendered in their German forms. In

---

[30]The text of the decree may be found in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 135-137E.

[31]A. W., August 11, 1941, from Völkischer Beobachter (Vienna), August 6, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317107.

[32]The text of the decrees may be found in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 135-137E.

communities with more than ten per cent Volksdeutschen, Germans were permitted to use the German language to conduct government business. Members of the minority were allowed to display symbols of their own choosing. These would be protected by the state against descration. Finally, rules convering volksdeutsche employees of the Croatian government were spelled out in the third decree. In communities with a German majority, it was specified that the mayor must be German. The importance which the Ustashi regime accorded the minority was underscored by the composition of the Croatian Council of State, which Pavelich formed on January 24, 1942. All members of the Council were Croats, with the sole exception of volksdeutschen representatives.[33] In sum total, the Volksgruppe of Croatia was accorded wide-ranging cultural autonomy and substantial influence in government on both the local and national levels.

In Srem, the ascendancy of the Volksdeutschen was elevated to unusual heights for reasons of diplomacy. Since the district contained a Serb majority and portions of it had been governed within a Serbian province from 1929, the Croats feared that it might be awarded to Old Serbia. Indeed, German army officers in Belgrade considered the region strategic and retained occupation troops in its sections adjacent to the Serbian capital after the invasion. To strengthen their claims in German circles, the Croatians established Dr. Jacob Elicker, a local volksdeutschen lawyer, as governor (Zupan, Grossgespan) of the Great District Vuka, which coincided with historic Srem. The appointment of

---

[33]Text of the decree establishing the Council may be found in Carlyle, Documents 1939-1946, Vol. II, pp. 331-332, and in Rafal Lemkin, Axis Rule in Occupied Europe (Washington, 1944), pp. 608-609.

this former member of the Erneuerungsbewegung was announced on May 14. Kasche fought on behalf of Zagreb for Croatian annexation of Eastern Srem.[34] On October 10, 1941, his intervention was crowned with success. Although the Volksdeutschen accounted for only fifteen per cent of the total population of Srem, one of their numbers was given the highest office in the district. For this, they could thank the complexities of the boundary dispute.

The privileged position of the Volksdeutschen within Croatia led to friction with Berlin. A visit by Himmler in June, 1941, publicized Reich German concern for the minority in Croatia. The Reichsführer-SS received volksdeutsche leaders in Zemun at that time and heard their reports.[35] Nonetheless, these leaders subsequently ignored the National Socialist German Fellowship in Croatia (National-Sozialistische Deutsche Gefolgschaft in Kroatien, NSDGK) formed by VOMI for them.[36] The head of the Auslands-Organisation in the Croatian state, Rudolf Emting, noted this independence in a 1942 report. He explained that under Yugoslav rule the Volksdeutschen had been severely repressed. The sudden change to preferential treatment in Croatia transformed their inferiority complex into an unwarranted arrogance.[37] Enjoying the confidence of Zagreb, the volksdeutschen leaders were unwilling to

---

[34]Marjanović, "German Occupation System in Serbia," pp. 269-270; Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, p. 267.

[35]A. W., July 11, 1941 from Südostdeutsche Tageszeitung (Timisoara), June 18, 1941. T-81/Roll 544/5316387.

[36]Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, pp. 268-269; Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 50-54E.

[37]Emting Report, 1942.

follow directives from SS-officers, whom they probably scorned as inexperienced in Croatian affairs.

Even before legislation on the minority's status was completed, the Volksgruppe chiefs proceeded to construct a German paradise in Croatia. In so doing, they penetrated into every facet of ethnic German life. One of the first orders of business was the orderly dissemination of information. In May, Slawonischer Volksbote was designated as the official organ of the colony. All Germans in Croatia were obliged to subscribe to this weekly, in order to keep up with the latest news and regulations.[38] The Verordnungsblatt also continued to appear, but on an irregular basis.

The Volksgruppe worked strenuously to consolidate its strength on the local level. Each DVK district was broken down into smaller units (Ortsleitungen), formed around the smaller towns. Already in June, orders were circulated that mayors of communities with a German majority had to give priority to the interests of the German citizens. If he were not actually leader of the local branck of the DVK (Ortsleiter), the mayor would have to work in harmony with this individual. In towns with a Slavic majority, the Ortsleiter was instructed to keep in close touch with the local branch of the Ustashi.[39] The introduction of additional Slavic elements in German communities was hindered through the Croatian Ministry of Interior. An order of July 23 forbade Slovenes, who were forced out of German-annexed Slovenia into Croatia, to settle

---

[38]Rundschreiben Folge 1, DVK, Propaganda und Presseamt, June 20, 1941, T-81/Roll 306/2434425-6.

[39]Dienstanweisung, No. 3, DVK, Kreisleitung Save-Donau, June 11, 1941, T-81/Roll 306/2434408.

in German houses and villages.[40] Where German majorities existed they would be protected.

Attention was also immediately directed toward the development of the volksdeutschen school system. The DVK Office for Educational Affairs (Amt für Schulwesen) established the following goals for 1941; two secondary schools with eight classes, a teacher's training institute, a trade school with four classes and more elementary schools.[41] The Croatian government cooperated in this planning by promulgating a decree on September 20, 1941. By its liberal provisions, the Germans were accorded autonomy for their schools. Within the Croatian Ministry of Education, an office for volksdeutsche schools was opened. If a lack of German teachers developed, Germans without Croatian citizenship could be admitted into the country to teach for five years. Further, the Croatian government agreed to pay just as much for the education of a German child as for a Croatian one. Volksdeutsche children were required to study for eight years, two years more than other children in the state.[42] As a consequence of the September decree, eight new schools began to serve German children in the fall of 1941. Secondary schools were established in Ruma and Osijek, as well as a teacher's training institute in Osijek. Five elementary schools also commenced operation. In none of these were non-German teachers permitted, even

---

[40] A. W., October 1, 1941, from Verordnungsblatt DVK, August 25, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317133.

[41] Rundschreiben, Folge 5, DVK, Amt für Schulwesen, no date. T-81/Roll 306/2434443-4.

[42] The text of the decree may be found in Volksdeutscher Ruf, November, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317113-5.

in the face of a staff shortage.[43] As the volksdeutschen schools on Croatian territory were previously only on the elementary level, this progress was truly remarkable.

The Office for Educational Affairs worked to build the student body and to encourage teachers. Planners were anxious that volksdeutsche parents realize that their children could go to German schools, even if they couldn't speak German. In addition, they wished to assure parents that non-German speaking children would be advanced despite any language barrier.[44] Recruitment for the new schools would thereby be eased. On September 14, a conference was held in Osijek to form a teacher's association (Volksdeutscher Lehrersbund in Kroatien).[45] An esprit de corps among the German teachers would benefit German instruction in the Ustashi state.

The enormous strides in education made in 1941 continued in the next year. German language instruction was given during the summer of 1942, in order to correct language deficiencies among both students and teachers. For example, a two-week course in German language and literature, paid for in part by the Croatian government, was conducted for middle school teachers.[46] Also, fifty boys and girls who knew little or no German were given a month-long course in the language. This was

---

[43] Rundschreiben, DVK, Amt für Schulwesen, October 3, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317485-6.

[44] Rundschreiben, Folge 5, DVK, Amt für Schulwesen, no date. T-81/Roll 306/2434443-4.

[45] Announcement, DVK, Amt für Schulwesen, no date. T-81/Roll 306/2434442.

[46] Deutsche Zeitung in Kroatien (Zagreb), July 31, 1942. (Typed copy). T-81/Roll 559/5335456.

intended to compensate for the lack of a volksdeutschen school in their isolated community.[47] The school year began in the fall with evidence of expansion and improvement. Eight new volksdeutsche schools opened their doors.[48] The teacher's training institute in Osijek, which entered its second year, had 600 more books for instructional purposes, the gift of the Central Pedagogic Library in Vienna.[49] Special arrangements were made to defer candidates for teaching certificates from war service. Provision was made that these young men could perform military duties in installments during summer holidays.[50] Planning for an agricultural school for peasant boys between the ages of 17 and 18 seemed to be well underway. Property was acquired for its construction near Osijek.[51] Although the shadow of war fell over the volksdeutschen schools in the second half of 1942, they still enjoyed a high priority.

Not only volksdeutsche education, but volksdeutsche economic affairs were also well organized under DVK auspices. A central union of German agricultural and industrial cooperative societies was formed on July 14, 1941, by the main office for economic affairs.[52] While it

---

[47] Deutsches Volksblatt (Novi Sad), August 25, 1942. (Typed copy). T-81/Roll 559/5335443.

[48] Grenzwacht (Osijek), October 9, 1942. (Typed Copy). T-81/Roll 559/5335429.

[49] Deutsche Ukraine-Zeitung, November 14, 1942. (Typed copy). T-81/Roll 559/5335368.

[50] Verordnungsblatt DVK, August 10, 1942. (Typed copy). T-81/Roll 559/5335450.

[51] Krakauer Zeitung (Cracow), July 28, 1942. (Typed copy). T-81/Roll 559/5335457.

[52] VDA Informationdienst, September 22, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317355-6.

undoubtedly assumed the role of the defunct Agraria for the volksdeutsch peasant within the Croatian state, the union also gave increased protection to the urban laborers. The National Office for the Industrial Economy (Landesamt für gewerbliche Wirtschaft) exemplifies well how the DVK guarded the interests of German industrial workers. All were registered through this agency and indoctrinated in "the spirit of the new time." If an employee had a grievance against an employer who lacked a Nazi outlook, the office would support the employee. At all costs, provisions were made to give the German workers the best possible treatment.[53]

Groups were formed by the DVK for all members of the minority. A Deutsche Mannschaft was organized in May, 1941, for men between the ages of 18 to 45 to protect volksdeutsche settlements. The favor extended to the militia went so far as to enable members to travel on state railways with a fifty per cent discount, if they were going to special events.[54] It soon became obvious, however, that the chaotic conditions within the state required more than part-time military preparedness. In July Pavelich granted approval for the creation of a Standing Guard (Einsatzstaffel, ES) of the DM. For men between the ages of 18 and 28, it was administered within the framework of the Ustashi. In addition, there was a women's division (Frauenschaft). Among its concerns was aid for mothers-to-be. In 1942, for example, lying-in rooms were planned in cities and larger villages for German

---

[53]Report of DVK, Landesamt für gewerblich Wirtschaft, July 2, 1941. T-81/Roll 306/2434399.

[54]Dienstansweisung No. 3, DVK, Kreisleitung Save-Donau, June 11, 1941. T-81/Roll 306/2434407.

women from surrounding communities without access to mid-wives or doctors.[55] A youth group (Deutsche Jugend, DJ) was also organized for boys between 10 and 18 and girls between 10 and 21.

The DVK leadership used all resources at its command to mold the German minority into a reliable vanguard for the Nazi movement in the Balkans. The Propaganda and Press Office (Propaganda-und Presseamt) offered a wall plaque to the populace which shows perhaps better than anything else its indoctrination program. Formed in the shape of a swastika, the plaque bore the command:

Trittst Du hier als Deutscher ein,
Soll Dein Gruss 'Heil Hitler' sein.[56]

Anti-semitism was also encouraged. The Propaganda and Press Office obligingly distributed posters bearing the legend: "Fight against Jews."[57] Complete allegiance to Nazi doctrines was encouraged among the Germans in Pavelich's state.

The DVK launched upon an elaborate program to appraise its members of their cultural heritage. German centers were opened in important cities. The first German House (Deutsches Haus) in Croatia was established in the fall of 1941 in Banja Luka for Bosnian Volksdeutsche and German soldiers stationed in the area.[58] At the same time, construction

---

[55]Report of DVK, Deutsche Volkshilfe Landesleitung, August 20, 1942. T-81/Roll 559/5335472.

[56]The poem is translated: "If you enter here in German style, Your greeting should be "Heil Hitler"". DVK, Kreisleitung Mitteldrau-Ilowa, August 13, 1941. T-81/Roll 306/2434419.

[57]Rundschreiben, Folge 2, DVK, Propaganda und Presseamt, July 12, 1941. T-81/Roll 306/2434460.

[58]A. W., November 11, 1941 from Donauzeitung (Belgrade), November 1, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317236.

work was undertaken for a Deutsches Haus in Osijek. Since the edifice would hold 4,000 people, it was to be the largest hall in the new nation.[59] Built with voluntary labor, this showplace was dedicated a year later.[60] Osijek was also the site of a German Museum, which opened in a converted patrician house during the summer of 1942. Artifacts of Danube Swabian life in Croatia were to be preserved here.[61] In Zagreb, the local DVK chapter established a German theatre in late 1941. A high cultural plane can be detected in the choice for its first production: Lessing's Minna von Barnhelm.[62] In view of the grave political situation in Croatia, the effort and expense placed upon German culture had an unreal quality.

Along with the Volksdeutschen, there was a Reichsdeutsch colony in Croatia. In 1942, it numbered 3,300, of whom 418 were members of the Croatian division of the AO under Emting.[63] One scholar has suggested that the AO expanded to impressive proportions in Croatia although the evidence seems confined to Empting's 1942 report already cited.[64]

The picture of a beautiful volksdeutsches life in Croatia created by the many DVK endeavors in 1941 and 1942 was not altogether

---

[59]A. W., November 1, 1941 from Chistliche Volkszeitung (Osijek), October 16, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317237.

[60]Grenzwacht (Osijek), September 18, 1942.

[61]Grossdeutscher Pressedienst Wochenbrief August, 1942. T-81/Roll 559/5335395.

[62]A. W., November 19, 1941 from Kulturbericht Südosteuropa, October 27, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317231.

[63]Emting Report, 1942.

[64]Orlow, Nazis in Balkans, p. 132 fn.

representative. Members of the German minority were not immune to the unrest which surrounded them in several ways. In the first place, their involvement in military actions outside their immediate surroundings gradually increased. The DM and its ES formations were originally conceived for self-defense purposes. But on September 16, 1941, a German-Croatian agreement was signed establishing volksdeutsche units within the Croatian army. On February 19, 1942, Zagreb authorized use of these units within Reich German divisions engaged in the pacification of Bosnia.[65] Still, military participation on the part of the Volksdeutschen remained modest during their first year in the Ustashi state.

The Croatians of German ethnic background were also confronted with the atrocities committed by the Ustashi on the Orthodox Serbs in their midst. Many Volksdeutsche attempted to aid their sorely pressed neighbors. In the summer of 1941, the DVK command admitted that it was receiving many requests to intervene in non-German affairs in the state and that some office holders had done so without authorization. Any efforts on behalf of non-Germans were strictly forbidden. If a non-German had served the Volksgruppe, a written plea could be addressed to the leader for help in his case. However, feelings of friendship or sympathy could not be involved. The interests of the Volksgruppe as a whole would not benefit thereby.[66] The Croatian government denied Serbs the right to join a Protestant church, presumably a means of

---

[65]The text of these agreements may be found in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 159-166E.

[66]A. W., September 23, 1941 from Verordunungsblatt DVK, August 25, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317118.

circumventing forced conversion to Catholicism. Bishop Popp, who remained in Croatia during the war as head of the Lutheran Evangelical Church, protested this legislation in the fall of 1941. Kasche advised against such dissent.[67] The good will of the Volksdeutschen for the Serbs was frustrated at the highest levels of their leadership.

In Srem, where a volksdeutscher governor was installed, the Volksdeutschen were in a particularly sensitive position regarding Ustashi misrule. Elicker was credited with the relative peace which reigned in his province in the fall of 1941. He would not tolerate the wanton killing of Serbs, which was the order of the day in other parts of the country.[68] Elicker's insistence upon legal formalities prevented the practice of outright genocide. The Ustashi was forced to open emergency courts under the direction of Victor Tomić in order to justify execution of Serbs.[69] Simulation of judicial process could not cover up the terrible blood bath, the so-called Tomić Action, which took place in Srem throughout the summer of 1942. For this catastrophe, which cost thousands of Serbian lives, the local Volksdeutschen shared the blame. Perhaps only a few of them were directly involved. However, the official "hands off" attitude here, as in other situations through Croatia, was tantamount to condonation.

Although surrounded by bloodshed, the Volksdeutschen were by and large exempt from it until the summer of 1942. This general truth did not hold in Bosnia. Already by the fall of 1941, the volksdeutschen

---

[67]Paris, Genocide in Satellite Croatia, pp. 186-187.

[68]A. W., October 8, 1941 from Wso (Wehrmacht Südost?) Report, September 25, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5317079.

[69]Paris, Genocide in Satellite Croatia, pp. 180-191.

peasants of Glogovac were no longer able to work in their fields. The danger of guerrilla attack in the Banja Luka area was too great.[70] In Petrovapolje, two Volksdeutsche were murdered in November. Because of deprivation and fear for their lives, many German citizens fled from this village by the Drina. The younger generation went to Germany, while the older crossed the Sava into Srem.[71] Apparently, the villagers had renamed their settlement Schönborn too precipitously in the flush of the German victory over Yugoslavia. When they were delivered from Serbian rule by Count von Schönborn and his squadron, they had expected peace and prosperity. Only a few months later, they were disgusted with the Croatian regime and felt that the Serbian government had been one hundred per cent better than the current one in Zagreb.[72] By the summer of 1942, conditions for the Germans of Bosnia were desperate. A letter from one of their number in August spoke of a severe lack of both food and wood for the coming winter. There was hardly enough milk and bread and no sugar with which to cook fruit.[73] The residents of Glogovac, who were experiencing hunger, demanded to be evacuated.[74]

---

[70]Report of Pastor Ferdinand Sommer in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 37-63.

[71]Report to DAI by Josef Schössler, November, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5316950.

[72]Report to DAI by Jack Merkle, December, 1941. T-81/Roll 545/5316952.

[73]Auszug aus einem Brief aus Bosnien, August 26, 1942. T-81/Roll 559/5335167.

[74]Report of Pastor Ferdinand Sommer in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 37-63.

Berlin came to the rescue of the distraught Bosnian Germans in late 1942. On September 30, an agreement was reached between Germany and Croatia providing for the resettlement in Germany of Volksdeutschen from specified areas of the Croatian state, generally to the south and west of the Sava river.[75] This would include all of Bosnia and the western half of Croatia. Only Bosnian Germans of four villages were excluded from the resettlement action: Nova Topola, Alexandrovac (Rudolfstal, renamed Adolfstal during World War II), Trošelje and Brčko. These volksdeutschen communities just south of the Sava were kept intact, because they formed a closed group with Slavonia and Srem and because they could still provide agricultural produce for the German army.[76] On October 2, Altgayer issued a call for the resettlement. He challenged the departing Volksdeutschen to recognize their German bonds within the Reich.[77]

The Reich German agencies for massive population transfers, backed by two years of experience, completed the move out of the Croatian state with dispatch. Registration by the EWZ was carried out between November 2, 1942 and January 10, 1943. After examinations, SS administrators judged the racial worth of the prospective resettlers. In the EWZ registration report, two final figures and racial assessments appear. Out of a total of 17,367 Volksdeutschen, about seventy-five per cent were rated as good Germans. These received an Ost (Kärnten)

---

[75] The text of the agreement may be found in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 153-158E.

[76] SS-Obersturmführer Gradmann of EWZ to Lutz of DAI, May 15, 1944. T-81/Roll 307/2435191.

[77] Grenzwacht (Osijek), October 9, 1942.

or O(K) rating, which meant that they were deemed reliable enough to settle in Upper Carniola, which had become a frontier area of the Third Reich after its annexation to Carinthia. As shall be seen in Chapter 6, Carinthian officials did not view these Bosnian Germans in the same favorable light. About twenty-five per cent of those registered were given the Altreich (A) rating, for eventual relocation in Germany. These were deemed less dependable as Wehrbauern at the border charged with fending off foreign influences. Another report gives a total of 18,211 persons, about sixty-three percent of whom were classed as pure volksdeutsche. This apparently meant that they were free of foreign features or influences. Despite irregularities in the tabulation, it can be concluded that around 18,000 people were registered and that about two-thirds of these were acceptable Germans. Most were from Bosnia, with only a few scattered in the vicinity of Zagreb.[78]

The collection point for the resettlers was at Bosanski Brod (Bosnisch-Brod) on the Sava river. The SS officers in charge of the operation experienced great difficulty in transporting the Volksdeutschen to the trains headed for Germany. Partisan and Chetnik raids harrassed the caravans. Because of the dangerous conditions, speed was of the essence.[79] A few resettlers were killed, but this did not

---

[78]Abschlussbericht über die Erfassung der Deutschen aus Bosnien durch die Einwandererzentralstelle, no date. T-81/Roll 306/234624-781 and T-81/Roll 307/2434782-877.

[79]SS-Hauptsturmführer Lachmann, Abschlussbericht über die Umsiedlung der Deutschen aus Bosnien, December 10, 1942. T-81/Roll 307/2435161-8.

discourage most during the ordeal.[80] By early December, between 16,000 and 17,000 of these Germans were placed in relocation camps near Lodz (Litzmannstadt) in the newly incorporated Polish territory.[81] The expertise of the SS agencies was clearly evident in the Bosnian resettlement. In three months, the registration and removal of 18,000 people was accomplished under the most trying circumstances.

By the time the situation of the Bosnian Germans had become untenable, other Volksdeutsche within Croatia began to feel the war. The terrorizing of peasants in Eastern Srem by the Partisans was reported in the summer of 1942. Many Volksdeutsche were murdered and crops burned. One stunned observer on the scene plaintively asked, "When will there be peace?"[82] But peace was not to come for nearly three years, and not before most of the Volksdeutschen of Croatia had been wrenched from their homes and transported into Germany in the wake of the retreating German army.

The name change of Slawonischer Volksbote to Grenzwacht (Border Watch) in August, 1942 heralded the coming crisis. The editor-in-chief of the paper struck a new note in the August 25 issue:

> We must now wear in spirit the field gray jacket of the front soldier and fulfil in the same degree our duty.[83]

Thoughts could no longer linger on correct German usage in schools or

---

[80] Ferdinand Sakar, Volksdeutscher Ruf, Folge 1, 1943. T-81/Roll 322/2453382.

[81] Report of SS-Untersturmführer Poll, December 9, 1942. T-81/Roll 307/2434885.

[82] Report of F. Renz to DAI, October 1942. T-81/Roll 559/5335239-10.

[83] Grenzwacht (Osijek), August 25, 1942.

classical German dramas, but must turn to war. The great dream of the DVK had come to an end.

Volksdeutsche men were called to military duty in earnest in the fall of 1942. As Partisan pressure gained in strength, evasion of war service by able-bodied men could no longer be tolerated. On September 21, 1942, a verbal note between Germany and Croatia was exchanged permitting the recruitment of Volksdeutschen between the ages of 17 and 35 in the Waffen-SS.[84] On October 2, Altgayer issued a call for volksdeutsche enlistment in this force. Since the military capabilities of the Croatian Volksdeutschen had not been tapped to the fullest, he urged eligible men to join their Reich German comrades at the front. The home guard would be manned by men between the ages of 35 and 50. The Volksgruppe leader pledged all efforts for a German victory and admonished the minority in Croatia to prove itself a worthy branch of the great German family.[85] The age limit for military service, according to the standards set by the DVK in 1941, had been revised downward from 18 to 17 and upward from 45 to 50. By late 1943, 17,538 Volksdeutsche from Croatia were enlisted in the Waffen-SS and another 7,510 in milita units within the Croatian state.[86] Many of these soldiers were attached to the 7th SS Prince Eugene Division, formed in the Banat. By 1944, Volksdeutsche were conscripted directly into the Waffen-SS.[87]

---

[84]The text of the verbal note may be found in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 159-166E.

[85]Grenzwacht (Osijek), October 9, 1942.

[86]Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 72-75E; George H. Stein, The Waffen-SS (Ithaca, 1966), p. 173.

[87]Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, p. 273.

Undoubtedly, many raw recruits from the German minority of Croatia were pressed into the ugly fighting which dragged on until May 15, 1945 on Croatian soil, even after Germany had signed the terms of unconditional surrender on May 9.

The decisions which Hitler made on Croatia culminated in complete tragedy. By creating an indefensible state under the leadership of a lunatic fringe, he unleashed a destructive fury throughout Croatia. In the process, Hitler destroyed forever Germandom in Croatia. Members of the Croatian minority were too strongly identified with the Nazi movement and its corrupt puppet regime to survive the wrath of the persecuted. More than that, they deluded themselves in believing Nazi ideology which maintained that a German master race could exist in self-contained outposts along the Danube. The imagination and resolve of Altgayer and his associates in building a German Utopia perhaps was unmatched in Eastern Europe. For a brief span between April, 1941 and August, 1942, they brought the concept of Mitteleuropa very close to reality in their area. But their failure also proved in part that nineteenth century ideas could never work in the twentieth century. They laid the ghost of Prince Eugene to rest throughout the Danube, Sava and Drava valleys.

CHAPTER IV

THE VOLKSDEUTSCHEN OF YUGOSLAVIA WITHIN HUNGARY

Compared to the German minority in the Independent State of Croatia, those Germans in the Yugoslav territories reincorporated into Hungary saw little to rejoice about in their new status. On the whole, these Volksdeutschen were unhappy about their renewed connection with Budapest. They felt repressed, although the privileges granted to them through the Volksbund der Deutschen in Ungarn were substantial. The Hungarian government refused to grant them the complete autonomy which Nazi propaganda had led them to expect. Worse yet, there was so much internal dissention within the volksdeutschen ranks that it weakened their demands vis-à-vis the Magyar state. From the beginning, they were denied the visions of glory which for a short while inspired their fellow Volksdeutschen in Croatia. And, in the end, the Germans of the Baranja triangle, the Batschka and the Upper Mur Region shared the same disasterous fate of their brothers within Croatia. They were implicated in the abuse of their Serbian neighbors, they sacrificed their sons to the Waffen-SS, and they were forced to flee their homes at the conclusion of the war and suffer terrible privation and persecution.

For all that, the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen were comparatively well off for most of the war years, because Hungary had a relatively stable government until 1944. After having been dragged into World War II on April 11, 1941, through their part in the invasion of Yugoslavia, the

Hungarians subsequently attempted to maintain a certain distance from Berlin. As their value to the Axis was based not so much on military support but on their industrial and agricultural potential, they succeeded in this policy for nearly three years. Growing alienation within Hungary toward Nazi Germany forced the Germans to occupy the Magyar state on March 19, 1944. Under a collaborationist regime, a vicious anti-Semitic program was begun. On October 15, Horthy made an ill-fated effort to conclude a separate peace with the Allies. The Nazis deposed him and placed the fascist Arrow Cross party in power under the leadership of Ferenc Szálasi, who was in accord with Berlin in the final months of Hungary's wartime ordeal, which ended in April, 1945. But not only was the country devastated by the advancing Russian army but also by the retreating Germans and fascist Hungarians.

But in April, 1941, Hungary was satiated with territorial gains made at the expense of Yugoslavia, which increased its volksdeutsche population by 190,300.[1] (See Map 7). To the 740,000 inhabitants of Hungary who acknowledged German as their mother tongue in the January, 1941 census were added the 173,058 ethnic Germans from the Batschka, the 15,751 from the Baranja triangle and the 1,500 from the Upper Mur Region. The grand total of Hungarian Volksdeutschen now came to around 930,000 out of a total of less than sixteen million. With their usual penchant for exaggeration, Nazi propaganda agencies boasted that the German minority in Hungary included 1,200,000 members and that it was

---

[1]For a brief history of the Hungarian Volksdeutschen in the inter-war period, see pp. 58-64 supra.

the largest in Europe.

Hungarian rule in the Batschka, the Baranja triangle and the Mur regions, collectively labeled the Southern Territories (Délvidék) by Budapest, was regularized in three stages between April 11 and December 27, 1941. The guidelines for the military occupation of these areas, which commenced with the arrival of Hungarian troops, were established in the Secret Directive Number One. Its precepts can be said to form the basis of the occupation policy for the entire war.[2] Two categories of citizens were outlined: 1)"old residents" or those settled in the Southern Territories as of October 31, 1918, and 2) "immigrants or colonists" who had arrived since that date, most of whom were Dobrovolzen of Serbian origin. The colonists were to be expelled from their homes forthwith. Harsh restrictions were placed upon any remaining Serbs, but a benign attitude was adopted toward the Croats pending an evaluation of their behavior toward the Magyar regime. Counted among the Croatian population were the Sokci and Bunyevci. The Volksdeutschen were to enjoy the same rights granted to their German brothers throughout the rest of Hungary in accordance with the Protocol of August 30, 1940.

Under the military authorities, work to cleanse the Southern Territories of undesirable non-Magyar elements proceeded throughout the spring and summer of 1941. The Serbs who had settled in Batshcka or the Baranja triangle after October 31, 1918, fled into Serbia in vast numbers or were placed in internment camps. Their vacated properties

---

[2] Iosip Mirnich, "Vengerskii Rezhim okkupatsii v Iugoslavii," tr. Valentiy Romanovoi-Devich, in Brajovich, Les Systèmes d'Occupation en Yougoslavie, p. 430.

were divided among Magyar peasants, many of whom were brought into the area from Bukovina, Bosnia and Moldavia.[3] In June, 14,000 of these re-settlers arrived from Bukovina to strengthen the Magyar element in Batshka.[4] In the environs of Subotica, where seventy per cent of the fields were in non-Magyar hands before April, 1941, some 2,300 Magyar families were settled on the land within three months.[5] The Hungarians borrowed techniques from Hitler in building a homogenous ethnic wall along their new southern frontier.

In August, 1941, civilian government replaced that of the military in the Southern Territories. The Yugoslav regions were reincorporated into the governmental units to which they had formerly belonged under the Habsburgs. The Baranja triangle returned to the County of Baranja, and Batschka became once again part of Bács-Bodrog. The Upper Mur Region was divided between the counties of Vas and Zala, as it had been before 1920, and the Lower Mur Region was attached to Zala.

This faithful reconstitution of the lands of the Crown of St. Stephen was formally completed on December 27, 1941 with the passage of Law 20.[6] By its articles, parliamentary government and citizenship requirements were established for the Southern Territories. Until elections could be held, representatives to the Hungarian Parliament

---

[3]Ibid., pp. 433-436.

[4]Uj Magyarság (Budapest), June 18, 1941. (German synopsis). T-81/Roll 553/5328215.

[5]Uj Magyarság (Budapest), August 24, 1941. (German translation). T-81/Roll 554/5329672.

[6]The text of the law may be found in Lemkin, Axis Rule in Europe, pp. 631-633.

for these new areas would be chosen by officials in Budapest. A maximum of 26 delegates, selected by the Prime Minister and approved by both houses of the Parliament, could be sent to its Lower House. Further, four delegates would be sent to the Upper House upon proposal by the cabinet and appointment by the Regent. Hungarian citizenship was conferred upon those who had been Hungarian subjects before the Treaty of Trianon had assigned them to Yugoslavia in 1920.

Since they were considered a part of the entire Volksgruppe in Hungary, the Protocol of August 30, 1940 became operative for the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen once Hungarian troops crossed the Yugoslav border. Accordingly, they were organized within the UDV, which was recognized as the only representative organ of the minority. Basch appointed local officers for the new Batschka-Baranja district, made up of the additions from the Yugoslav Voivodina, in May, 1941.[7] Leader for the district with headquarters in Zombor (Sombor) was Josef "Sepp" Spreitzer.

The former Yugoslavian Volksdeutschen, whose political experience in the interwar period had made them more aggressive than the Hungarian Volksdeutschen, radicalized the VDU. Basch, who was not a convinced Nazi and who was unpopular with leading officials in the Reich, was pushed into an extreme position by the newcomers.[8] Indeed, they constituted a formidable force within the organization already in the fall of 1941. Batschka was ahead of all other areas in membership, with fully

---

[7]Paikert, Danube Swabians, p. 176.

[8]Ibid., pp. 200-202; Macartney, October Fifteenth, Vol. II, p. 41.

ninety-seven per cent of its Germans enrolled.[9] At the annual meeting of the association held in Budapest on October 19, 1941, these Volksdeutschen were conspicuous for their solidarity. Since they had enjoyed such superior achievements in the field of ethnic advancement, it was predicted by observers at the time that they would serve as a model for all Germandom in the Magyar state.[10] Under pressure from these new members, the VDU expanded in grand style until it reached its peak in the middle of the war.[11] It supported not only a plush Deutsches Haus in Budapest but three newspapers as well. In addition to the Deutscher Volksbote, which appeared every week in Budapest, the VDU published the daily Deutsche Zeitung there. It also took over publication of the daily Deutsches Volksblatt of Novi Sad in October, 1941.[12]

Besides enjoying effective representation through the VDU, the former Yugoslav Volksdeutschen received unusual privileges under the 1940 protocol. They were exempt from the general policy of denationalization to which other minorities in their area, principally Serbs, were subjected. They were permitted their own flags, organizations, newspapers and schools on an equal basis with the Magyars.[13] Indeed, the German school system in Batschka was actively expanded during the war years. A secondary school and a teachers' training institute were

---

[9]A. W., November 1, 1941, from Deutsche Zeitung (Budapest), October 21, 1941. T-81/Roll 553/5329230-1.

[10]DAI Report, A. W., November 19, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329642-5.

[11]Paikert, Danube Swabians, pp. 122-128.

[12]A. W., October 16, 1941, from Berliner Börsenzeitung (Berlin), October 1, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329617.

[13]Mirnich, "Vengerskii Rezhim okkupatsii," pp. 430-431, 459.

reported in Novi Vrbas, a secondary school in Apatin, and three elementary schools throughout Batsckha.[14] This represented at least an increase of two elementary schools over those existing in April, 1941.[15]

Within the Lutheran Evangelical Church, the Yugoslavian Volksdeutschen in Hungary were freed from Hungarian control. In the summer of 1941, Bishop Popp, who had led the church in Yugoslavia and was now its chief representative in Croatia, and Bishop Alexander Raffay, head of the church in Hungary, came to an impasse over the organization of the church in Batschka and the Baranja triangle. Popp named Heinrich Meder, a pastor in Novi Vrbas, provisional leader of the church there. Indignant at this invasion of his authority, Raffay rejected the appointment.[16] He argued that Meder and his associates were following political, not religious goals.[17] In August, for mysterious reasons, Raffay withdrew his objections to Meder.[18] Subsequently, Meder was elected president of the independent German Evangelical State Church of South Hungary (Deutsch-Evangelische Landeskirche Südungarns).[19] It seems reasonable to assume that Berlin intervened on behalf of Popp, whose loyalty to the German cause was well known. Raffay, as a

---

[14] Ibid., p. 463.

[15] DAI Report, A. W., November 19, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329642-5.

[16] Das Evangelische Deutschland, June 15, 1941. T-81/Roll 533/5328416-7.

[17] A. W., July 11, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329663.

[18] A. W, August 8, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329662.

[19] Report of Steyer, December 15, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329659.

Hungarian patriot of note, would not have been sympathetic to the development of German consciousness within his church.[20]

The favor shown to the German minority in former Yugoslav territory extended also to governmental appointments. When the civil administration was organized, the VDU presented lists of German candidates for various offices with the categorical demand that these be accepted.[21] In this connection, the Volksgruppe leadership in Batschka won the concession that notaries had to be German in communities with a volksdeutsche majority.[22] Of the 26 members of the Lower House of Parliament appointed in 1942 to represent the Southern Territories, three were volksdeutsch.[23] The Germans were acknowledged as a ruling class, along with the Hungarians.

Despite the benefits they enjoyed, many Germans of the Southern Territories were dissatisfied with Hungarian rule. They received Hungarian troops without enthusiasm, as has been seen. The antipathy of the Magyars for the Volksdeutschen, noted in the Voivodina in the interwar period, continued in Batschka and the Baranja triangle throughout the war. Serious trouble had errupted during the invasion of Yugoslavia itself. Excesses committed by Hungarian troops against Volksdeutsche in Novi Vrbas infuriated Hitler.[24] Throughout 1941,

---

[20]Macartney, October Fifteenth, Vol. I, p. 32.

[21]Mirnich, "Vengerskii Rezhim okkupatsii," pp. 462, 467.

[22]Völkischer Beobachter (Vienna), September 27, 1941.

[23]Macartney, October Fifteenth, Vol. II, p. 78.

[24]Memorandum on conversation between Hitler and the Hungarian Minister in Berlin, April 19, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, pp. 581-586; Ribbentrop to Erdmannsdorf, April 23, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XIII, pp. 621-623.

embittered Volksdeutsche reported that they were constantly harrassed. The Hungarians warned them to speak Magyar, not German, since they ate Hungarian bread.[25] The mayor of Apatin actually had his ears boxed be cause he could not speak Hungarian.[26] Further, the Magyars made it clear that they intended to keep Batschka forever and had no use for followers of Hitler in their holy land.[27] Even Szálasi, the Arrow Cross leader who would collaborate with the Nazis in 1944-1945, excoriated the Volksdeutschen of South Hungary in the summer of 1941. He claimed in a fiery speech that their activities were disastrous for the unity of the Magyar state.[28] Things came to such a pass that Horthy informed Hitler in 1943 that the Swabians were completely detested because of their behavior and suggested their repatriation within Germany at the end of the war.[29]

In this atmosphere of mutual hatred, Budapest discriminated against Germans in various ways. The German minority in Batschka and the Baranja triangle struggled against alleged infringements of their rights. Some Volksdeutschen dedicated to their German heritage lost their jobs as teachers and government office-holders to Magyars or assimilated Germans.[30] A meeting of the VDU in Novi Sad was forbidden

---

[25]Report of Johann Abel from Batschka, May, 1941. T-81/Roll 553/5328651.

[26]Report of Steyer, June 17, 1941. T-81/Roll 553/5328401.

[27]Letter of Barbara Beiler from Batschka, November 26, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329534-7.

[28]A. W., September 4, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329709.

[29]Macartney, October Fifteenth, Vol. II, pp. 150-151.

[30]DAI Report, A. W., October 24, 1941. T-81/Roll 553/5328963-7.

shortly after the invasion because of an inflammatory speech made by Spreitzer.[31] German names were erased and rendered in their Magyar forms in register books of many communities.[32] In an important speech made in late 1942 before the Hungarian Parliament, a volksdeutscher deputy from Batschka, Josef Trischler, evaluated the situation of his constituents. He spoke of the acute danger that Germans might be dispossessed in the current land reforms within his province.[33] Wuescht, who was employed by VOMI in Budapest during the war, was active in focusing attention in Berlin on the numerous deficiencies of the Hungarian occupation in Batschka as far as the Volksdeutschen were concerned.[34]

Not all members of the minority, however, shared in the opinion that the Hungarian rule was oppressive. A Fidelity Movement (Hüseg Mozgalon) was begun in 1941 by the Hungarians for those Volksdeutschen whose loyalty to the state superceded their loyalty to the Volk. Fear of reprisal kept membership low.[35] Apparently attempts were made to entice the Volksdeutschen of former Yugoslavia into its ranks. Reich officials were aware of the presence of George Steuer in Batschka in the summer of 1941. An opponent of Bleyer in the interwar years, Steuer was suspected of trying to infiltrate the German minority on

---

[31] Report of Volksdeutsch women from Batschka, September, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329540-1.

[32] A. W., July 21, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329584.

[33] Die Zeit (Reichenberg), December 3, 1942.

[34] Paikert, Danube Swabians, p. 175.

[35] Ibid., pp. 128-129.

behalf of Budapest.[36] Die Donau, while continuing to blast Nazi ideology, urged the Volksdeutschen to support the Hungarian government. It warned them not to exaggerate problems with Budapest, as this course of action would only weaken their position.[37] The newspaper roundly criticized the VDU policies in Batschka, which antagonized Magyar authorities. Spreitzer and his company only brought discredit on the German word, the editors charged.[38] In 1942, Die Donau was reportedly organizing the Volksdeutschen to succeed from the Volksbund.[39] After the Germans occupied Hungary on March 19, 1944, the weekly was suppressed.

The tug of war between Berlin and Budapest over their allegiance was not the only dilemma facing the Volksdeutschen. They were also accused of persecuting the Serbs in Batschka and the Baranja triangle. While wholesale slaughter in the province did not match that in Croatia, a blood bath of ugly proportions occurred early in 1942. The Hungarian army was responsible for this massacre in which several thousand Serbs and Jews were killed, principally in Novi Sad. Volksdeutsche were said to have taken part, but direct proof of these allegations was never uncovered.[40] Leopold Rohrbacher, who served on the editorial staff of Die Donau during the war years, testified that native Germans

---

[36]Report of Steyer, June 6, 1941. T-81/Roll 553/5328213-4.

[37]DAI Report, August 8, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329580.

[38]Report of Steyer, September 5, 1941. T-81/Roll 554/5329578.

[39]Paikert, Danube Swabians, p. 176.

[40]Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, p. 267.

of Batschka often interceded for the terror-stricken Serbs.[41] Nevertheless, their uneasy alliance with the Magyars worked to the disadvantage of the Volksdeutschen when it came to settling accounts with the Serbs later.

Like their ethnic brothers in other parts of the splintered Yugoslav state, volksdeutsche men of the Southern Territories were soon called to arms. On February 24, 1942, an agreement was reached between Germany and Hungary over the recruitment of volksdeutschen men between the ages of 18 and 30 into the Waffen-SS.[42] By its terms, able-bodied men of the minority could choose between serving in the Hungarian army or the Waffen-SS. If they chose the latter, they forfeited their Hungarian citizenship and became Reich Germans. The recruitment campaign was carried out under "fire and sword." Since recruiters distinguished between Germans and non-Germans among the enlistees, Volksdeutsche who felt themselves to be German with conviction were forced to choose the Waffen-SS under restraint of conscience.[43] Of the 27,000 so-called volunteers, mostly from Batschka-Baranja, 18,000 were accepted into SS units.[44] More Volksdeutsche were made available to the German war machine by two additional German-Hungarian agreements. On May 22, 1943, Budapest freed Germans between the ages of 18 and 35, even those enrolled in the Hungarian army, for the Waffen-SS. Again,

---

[41] Rohrbacher, Ein Volk ausgeloscht, p. 119.

[42] The text of the agreement may be found in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 169-176E.

[43] Report of J. H. in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 74-78.

[44] Mirnich, "Vengerskii Rezhim okkupatsii," p. 468.

on April 14, 1944, the Hungarian government gave up all right to mobilize Hungarian Volksdeutsche over 17 years of age. These were to be recruited solely by the Germans. The inductees would acquire German citizenship but not lose their Hungarian citizenship as before.[45]

Under these agreements, an untold number of Volksdeutschen from the Southern Territories served in German military formations during the war. Many of them were enrolled in the 8th SS Cavalry Division, known as the Florian Geyer Division. SS-officers who wished to appeal to peasant recruits in Hungary were apparently inspired by Gerhart Hauptmann's famous play, Florian Geyer, in choosing this name. Geyer had led the Peasant Rebellion in the sixteenth century, and the 8th SS Cavalry Division was presumably acting in the great tradition under Nazi guidance. Formed in the fall of 1942, the Division was neither élite nor well-trained. It was used as an occupation force in Batschka after March 19, 1944,[46] and destroyed before Budapest in the winter of 1944-1945.

The Yugoslav Volksdeutschen reincorporated into Hungary between 1941 and 1945 expected to be treated as a superior people. From the Hungarian viewpoint, the 1940 protocol accorded them no less than extra-territorial rights. From the Reich German viewpoint, however, the concessions were inadequate. Because Hungary enjoyed an unusual measure of independence for an Axis partner, Berlin could not dictate to Budapest on internal matters with as much force as elsewhere. The

---

[45]The text of the agreements may be found in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 169-176E.

[46]Macartney, October Fifteenth, Vol. II, p. 258.

VDU leadership would have done well to heed the editorial advice of Die Donau and accept Magyar administration, however flawed, with grace. Instead, continued Volksgruppe agitation ensured that the Volksdeutschen of the Southern Territories would remain one of those untenable "splinters of the German nationality" of which Hitler had despaired in 1939.

CHAPTER V

THE VOLKSDEUTSCHEN OF YUGOSLAVIA WITHIN BANAT/OLD SERBIA

In the summer of 1941, a volksdeutscher informant complained to the DAI that the Serbian Banat was really a no-man's land, in which the German authorities were too preoccupied to pay much attention to the members of his ethnic group.[1] This assessment summarizes well the position of the German minority in the eastern half of the Yugoslav Voivodina during 1941-1945. (See Map 7). Despite repeated assertion that the Volksdeutschen of the Banat ruled the region as their own autonomous province, in actual fact they enjoyed power for less than a year and even then under tight supervision. These Germans native to the soil could not cope with the chaotic conditions nor live up to the high expectations which Nazi ideology held for them. After all the paper of an unbelievably complex series of legal actions is cleared away, it becomes obvious that the Banat was governed during the war chiefly by the German military and police apparatus stationed in Old Serbia. For their complicity in this oppressive police state, the Banat Volksdeutschen would pay the same ruinous price exacted from their counterparts in the Independent State of Croatia and the Yugoslav

---

[1] Report of Friedrich Becker of Banat, July-August, 1941. T-81/ Roll 544/5316589-93.

regions reincorporated into Hungary.

Throughout the entire occupation, the Volksdeutschen were acknowledged, if only nominally, as the ruling class in the Serbian Banat. They represented about twenty per cent of the 585,549 inhabitants of the province recorded in the 1931 census. Among the 120,000 Germans there lived about 274,000 Serbo-Croatians, 96,000 Magyars, 62,000 Rumanians and splinters of various other ethnic groups. The 1941 census showed an increase in the total population since 1931, but the nationality distribution remained proportionately the same. The occupation may be divided into two periods according to the degree of volksdeutscher participation in the actual governing of the Banat: 1) from April 9, 1941 to January 31, 1942, when the Volksdeutschen were in control of the civilian administration within the framework of the German military occupation of Old Serbia, and 2) from February 1, 1942 to October 2, 1944, when the Volksdeutschen became mere figureheads in an SS-dominated state.[2]

When the German troops entered the province on April 9, the local volksdeutschen leaders under Janko were caught off guard. They had expected that the Germans would occupy all of the Voivodina and had prepared to receive them at the seat of the Kulturbund in Novi Sad.[3] But the diplomatic problems posed by Hungarian and Rumanian claims to the area necessitated the partition of the Voivodina between Hungarian and German forces and the aborting of plans for a Donaustaat under Berlin's

---

[2]These two periods are based on four identified by Vegh, "Le Système du Pouvoir d'Occupation Allemand dans le Banat Yougoslave," pp. 496-545.

[3]Ibid., p. 498.

protection.[4] Consequently, the Volksdeutschen seized power without uniform direction in the joyous days immediately after the invasion. Anti-Semitism was strongly in evidence as they proceeded to take over key posts in all eleven districts and five municipalities of the Banat.[5] In Vršac, for example, all Jewish businesses were marked with a red star of David and a sign reading "Jewish business," and Jews were put to work cleaning the streets.[6]

Janko and his associates met the urgent need for organization among the minority members in the Banat by forming the German Ethnic Colony in Banat and Serbia (Deutsche Volksgruppe in Banat und Serbien). All former Kulturbund members of the Banat and Serbia were included in this group, which extended its authority also into Eastern Srem until that area was awarded to Croatia late in 1941. Its pattern was identical to the Deutsche Volksgruppe in Kroatien: six main offices at the seat of the organization in Petrovgrad (Veliki Bečkerek, Gross-Betschkerek, Zrenjanin), six districts, and Official Gazette (Verordnungsblatt), and auxiliary branches for men, women, and youth (Deutsche Mannschaft, Frauenschaft and Deutsche Jugend).[7] The German minority of Serbia, numbering about 12,000 members and chiefly found in Belgrade,

---

[4]For a review of factors involved in the partition of the Voivodina and of expectations for a Donaustaat, see pages 105-108 supra.

[5]Vegh, "Le Système du Pouvoir d'Occupation Allemand dans le Banat Yougoslave," pp. 498, 548.

[6]Südostdeutsche Tageszeitung (Timisoara), April 26, 1941.

[7]Vegh, "Le Système du Pouvoir d'Occupation Allemand dans le Banat Yougoslave," p. 508.

formed the Prince Eugene District (Prinz Eugen Kreis) of the Volksgruppe.

The volksdeutsche assumption of power in the Banat was consummated within the authority of the German occupation forces. Shortly after the Yugoslav capitulation, the Commander in Chief of the Army issued a series of proclamations and ordinances to the residents of the Old Serbia and the Banat.[8] They established draconian guidelines for the German rule. On April 20, a Commanding General in Serbia (Militärbefehlshaber in Serbien) was named. With his headquarters in Belgrade, this officer was entrusted with complete responsibility for the occupied Yugoslav territories. His headquarters were divided into two executive offices: one for military affairs to insure safety and order and another for civil administration to govern the country.[9] The following month, Hitler gave the Commanding General all necessary power to carry out his mission independently.[10] Incumbents of this high office included General Helmuth von Förster, General von Schröder, General Heinrich Danckelmann and General Felber. The German military command communicated to the citizenry through its Verordunungsblatt.

The Banat was officially incorporated into this occupation system with elaborate bureaucratic machinery. Of the four military commands in occupied Yugoslav territories, it was placed within Field Command

---

[8]The text of these proclamations and ordinances may be found in Lemkin, Axis Rule in Europe, pp. 591-602.

[9]Marjanović, "German Occupation System in Serbia in 1941," pp. 277-279.

[10]Hitler's Directive of May 17, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, pp. 846-847.

610, which encompassed Banat and a district directly to the south on the other side of the Danube. Within this Field Command, the Banat formed Command District 823 with headquarters in Petrovgrad. The office there took charge of both police and civil administration on the local level.[11]

Alongside this occupation structure was imposed a Serbian puppet regime on May 1. A Council of Commissars was established under Milan Aimović, and the organs of the provinces (banovinas), which had been in use in Yugoslavia before the war, were restored. With certain boundary changes necessitated by the partition of the South Slav state, three provinces were thus reactivated: the Danube (Dunavska), the Drina (Drinska) and the Monrava (Moravska). (See Map 6). The Banat fell within the Danube Province. Under the Council of Commissars, the Minister of the Interior performed the most essential business of the state, but the whole government was subordinated to the administrative headquarters of the Commanding General in Serbia.[12] On August 29, 1941, General Milan Nedić assumed the position of head of the Council of Commissars.

In this maze of red tape, the Volksdeutschen succeeded in regularizing their de facto rule of the Banat on June 14, 1941. An ordinance by the Ministry of the Interior stipulated that the Banat, without Pančevo, would form a district administrative region within the Danube

---

[11]Vegh, "Le Système du Pouvoir d'Occupation Allemand dans le Banat Yugoslave," pp. 506-507.

[12]Marjanović, "German Occupation System in Serbia in 1941," pp. 282-283.

Province.[13] It would be administered by a Vice-Governor (Vize-Banus) with a seat at Petrovgrad. This official had to be a German nominated by the Minister of the Interior after consultation with the leader of the Volksgruppe. Office-holders in the Banat were to be appointed by the Minister of the Interior upon recommendation of the Vice-Governor. The Volksdeutschen were thus assured domination of the governmental agencies in the Banat. German and Serbian were designated as official languages. On December 18, the three provinces of former Yugoslavia were dissolved and replaced by fourteen regions. One of these comprised the Banat, in which the Vice-Governor was renamed the Chief of the Region. Otherwise the June 14 ordinance was unchanged.[14] Following the chain of command outlined above, the volksdeutschen authorities in the Banat were responsible to the following organs in ascending order of importance: the Serbian Council of Commissars, Command District 823, Field Command 610 and the headquarters for civil administration of the Commanding General in Servia. But this intricate governmental network was a house of cards; it remained operative for only a half a year.

On January 31, 1942, the period of volksdeutscher control of the civilian administration in the Banat came to an abrupt end. Widespread unrest in the province required the application of massive police power. Measures used in the fall of 1941 to protect a single railroad line illustrate the kind of punitive action the Germans took to keep

---

[13]The text of the ordinance may be found in Lemkin, Axis Rule in Europe, pp. 602-606.

[14]Vegh, "Le Système du Pouvoir d'Occupation Allemand dans le Banat Yugoslave," p. 532.

the peace. Because an attempt had been made to sabotage the railroad, twelve Serbians were executed forthwith. Then the German Army ordered a night watch to protect the line, which required the participation of all residents in the area. Further, the Wehrmacht warned that 38 people already in jail would be killed upon the next attempt at sabotage.[15] In the winter of 1941-1942, a large number of Partisan forces were destroyed, but they still resisted.[16] Clearly, the Volksdeutschen did not possess the military capability to suppress insurrection on such a scale.

In view of the growing emergency, a police state was created in the Banat on February 1, 1942. The province, as well as Old Serbia, was placed under a Superior SS-and Police Leader (Höherer SS-und Polizeiführer) stationed in Belgrade, who superceded all the governmental trappings constructed earlier. Within his competence was created a Banat State Guard (Banater Staatswache), manned chiefly by Volksdeutschen. Since members of the Watch wore black uniforms, they were called the Black Police (Schwarze Polizei).[17] Terror methods were used by this formation to intimidate not only non-German opponents of the occupation but recalcitrant Volksdeutschen as well.[18] SS rule dominated in the Banat until the region was liberated by the Russian Army and the Partisans on October 2, 1944.

---

[15] Neue Zürcher Zeitung (Zurich), October 2, 1941.

[16] Donlagić, Yugoslavia in the Second World War, p. 82.

[17] Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, p. 266; Beitrag zur Geschichte, p. 93.

[18] Report of M. R. in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 65-68.

Questions of security were undoubtedly the major cause for the downfall of the volksdeutschen regime in the Banat. However, their incompatibility with Reich Germans may possibly also have played a role. They did not make a good impression in German Army headquarters in Belgrade, where officers judged them as too "Balkanized."[19] On their part, many Volksdeutsche became disgruntled with their situation soon after the occupation, and opposition to the Volksgruppe leadership developed.[20] In turn, the Volksgruppe moved increasingly into positions antagonistic to Berlin.[21]

Throughout the three and a half years of German occupation the Volksdeutschen were granted advantages denied to other ethnic groups in that Banat in addition to the supposed control of local government. On July 19, 1941, and again on August 6, 1943, orders issued by the Council of Commissars clarified the legal position of the Volksgruppe in Banat and Old Serbia.[22] The terminology was reminiscent of Pavelich's decrees on the Croatian Volksgruppe. All ethnic Germans recognized by the Volksgruppe leadership were permitted to engage in political, cultural, economic and social work. The Volksgruppe was ranked as a juridicial person, and the Nazi outlook was encouraged. The privileged position of the Volksdeutschen was also seen in economic transactions

---

[19]Letter of Daniel Stolz from Belgrade, August 31, 1941. T-81/Roll 544/5316596-8.

[20]Report of Friedrich Becker of Banat, July/August, 1941. T-81/Roll 544/5316589-93.

[21]Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, p. 265.

[22]The text of the August 6, 1943 order may be found in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 138-140E.

in the Banat. After the invasion, they were permitted to purchase property confiscated from Jews and Dobrovolzen at bargain prices.[23]

Under these circumstances, the German minority found itself roundly hated by other residents of the province. Hungarian antagonism toward the group mirrored that found in the Batschka. Hungarian diplomats openly admitted that no good relations existed between the Magyars and the Volksdeutschen in the Banat.[24] Since the Serbs were the target of most of the reprisals, their attitude toward Nazi collaborators need not be belabored. Between April 9, 1941 and October 2, 1944, nearly 3,000 people lost their lives in punitive actions in the Banat.[25] Yet in German circles, the Banat was known as an "oasis of peace" at the time.[26] Such a judgment can only be made relative to greater terrors elsewhere on Yugoslav land, because it was a peace bought at the price of blood and repression.

The volksdeutsche reputation was further seriously comprised by the 7th SS Volunteer Mountain Division, the famous Prince Eugene Division, which was manned largely by Germans from the Banat. Formed in the spring of 1942, it was the first of many foreign units soon to flood the Waffen-SS. The division, to be composed solely of volksdeutschen volunteers from former Yugoslavia was designed to counter

---

[23] Nemzet Ujsag (Budapest), July 24, 1941. (German review) T-81/Roll 544/5316215.

[24] Memorandum by Weizsäcker, May 28, 1941. DGFP, Series D, Vol. XII, pp. 909-910.

[25] Vegh, "Le Système du Pouvoir d'Occupation Allemand dans le Banat Yougoslave," p. 544.

[26] Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, p. 266.

guerrilla operations on Yugoslav terrain.[27] On March 1, Janko issued a call in the Banat for all native German men between the ages of 17 and 50 for war service.[28] But the recruiting campaign subsequent to Janko's appeal failed to produce enough soldiers. Since coercion and conscription were then utilized to fill its ranks, the Prince Eugene Division was in reality never a voluntary unit.[29] Obstinent refusal on the part of many Volksdeutschen to cooperate with recruiters led to friction between Janko and Himmler in the summer of 1942. Janko refused to acknowledge that the Volksdeutschen had any legal duty to serve in the German army or the Waffen-SS. Exasperated at this position, Himmler retorted that Volksdeutsche all over the world must perform war service and that it was impossible to allow European Volksdeutschen to go around as pacifists while Reich Germans protected them.[30] By late 1943 and early 1944, 15,000 members of the German minority of Banat were enlisted in the Prince Eugene Division.[31]

Despite their reluctance to serve in this formation of the Waffen-SS, its volksdeutschen members shared in its notoriety. As one of the strongest and best equipped German divisions in Yugoslavia, its actions

---

[27]Stein, Waffen-SS, p. 170.

[28]The text of the appeal may be found in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 167-168E.

[29]Stein, Waffen-SS, pp. 170-172.

[30]The text of a communication on Janko's position by Himmler, dated August 10, 1942, may be found in Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, p. 317.

[31]Paikert, Danube Swabians, p. 280; Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 64-67E.

in battle were conspicuous.[32] Unfortunately, the Prince Eugene Division became infamous for outrages on innocent people. Even at the Nuremberg trials, Nazi witnesses did not deny its criminal activities, but argued instead that warfare in Yugoslavia was traditionally brutal.[33] The main body of the force was destroyed in Serbia in late 1944, and its remnants annihilated in Slovenia in May, 1945. Because the Prince Eugene Division was all-Swabian in composition, its record was just another piece of evidence to buttress the theory of collective guilt of all Volksdeutschen in the reign of terror.

If the volksdeutsche position was precarious in the Banat, it was dangerous in the extreme in Old Serbia. It was determined early in the war to resettle the several thousand Volksdeutschen scattered throughout Old Serbia, excluding the compact settlement in Belgrade. The Deutsche Volksgruppe in Banat und Serbien began their evacuation under emergency conditions shortly after the invasion quite independent of the RKFDV. In the first months of the make-shift operation directed by Dr. Anton Volk, only three people carried it out as best they could. By March, 1942, the Volksgruppe had rescued more than 2,000 Volksdeutsche from isolated settlements in Serbia. Of these, about 1,400 were relocated in Germany; 370 in Lower Styria; 200 in Croatia; 160 in Banat; and 30 in Belgrade.[34] In May, 300 more Volksdeutsche were on their way into the Reich. At that time, VOMI officials took over the

---

[32]Donlagić, Yugoslavia in the Second World War, p. 113.

[33]Stein, Waffen-SS, p. 273.

[34]Report by Anton Volk, March 7, 1942. T-81/Roll 307/2435341-4.

resettlement and planned to remove about 2,000 more Volksdeutschen from Old Serbia.[35] A year later, during August, 1943, 954 people were transported into the Reich. Most of them were approved by EWZ examiners for German citizenship.[36] In all, more than 3,000 Volksdeutsche were thus removed from Old Serbia during the German occupation.

In addition to clearing Old Serbia of German splinters, an effort was also made by the Volksgruppe leadership to sift out undesirable Germans living in Belgrade. Janko wired Himmler in July, 1943 that only superior, racially reliable Germans should remain in the Serbian capital, because it would be unthinkable to allow Germans to be servants or office-workers for Serbs! Accordingly, he requested permission to send about 2,500 unreliable Germans who had Serbian-speaking children or other Serbian tendencies into Germany for racial reinforcement.[37] It is doubtful that this request was heeded.

The Volksdeutschen of the Banat were anything but servants for Serbs during the war years. There was a substantive difference between their status and that of the Volksdeutschen in Croatia and the Southern Territories of Hungary. They were not only accorded privileges but were given control of the entire province within the occupation structure of Serbia. Whereas an Elicker as governor of Srem was considered

---

[35] Vermerk über die Besprechung der Umsiedlung Restserbien beim Reichskommissar, May 8, 1942. T-81/Roll 307/2435338-9.

[36] Abschlussbericht über die Erfassung von Volksdeutschen aus Restserbien durch die Einwandererzentralstelle, September 30, 1943. T-81/Roll 307/2435288-95.

[37] The text of Janko's telegram, dated July 3, 1943, may be found in Kark Hnilicka, Das Ende auf dem Balkan, 1944-1945. Die militärische Räumung Jugoslaviens durch die deutsche Wehrmacht (Göttingen, 1970), pp. 271-273.

unusual in Croatia and German notaries in German communities were seen as positive triumphs in Batschka, the placement of Germans in all the highest offices was the order of the day in the Banat. The volksdeutsche rule may have been a sham, but Volksdeutsche were all too willing to cooperate in its establishemnt and therein lay their undoing. It was a great tragedy that the evacuation of the Volksdeutschen in the Banat was forbidden by the Volksgruppe leadership even as the Russian Army approached. Only a few escaped; most were left to the mercies of enraged Partisans bent on retribution.

CHAPTER VI

THE VOLKSDEUTSCHEN OF THE SLOVENE AREAS ANNEXED TO THE THIRD REICH[1]

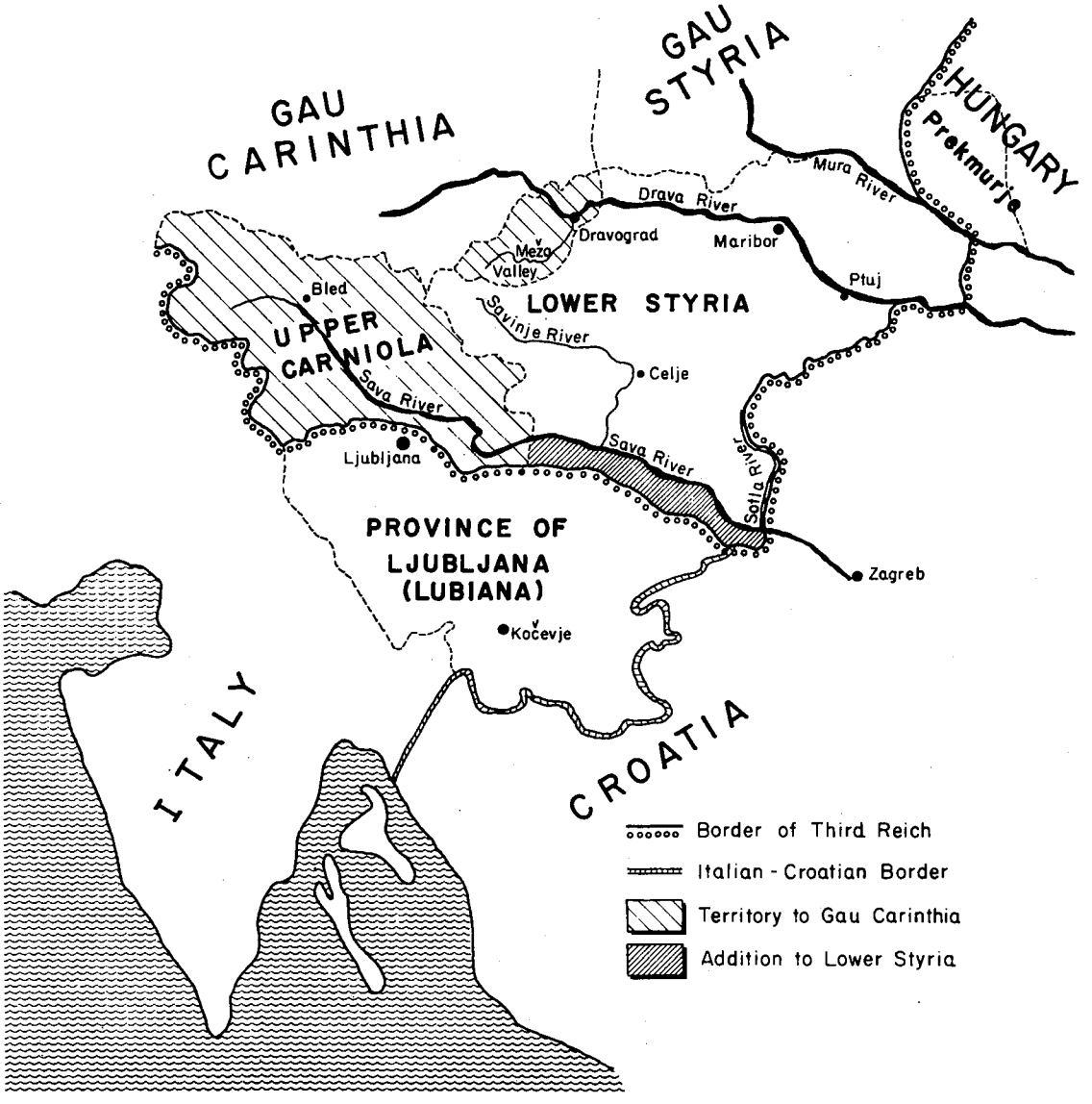
The Slovene territory occupied by Germany in April, 1941, was scheduled to be included legally in the Greater German Reich. It was the last of the several additions to the German Lebensraum made under Hitler. As the Grossdeutsch views on Slovenia finally attained reality, Upper Carniola within Gau Carinthia and Lower Styria within Gau Styria became frontier zones at the southernmost extension of Greater Germany. (See Map 9). After the invasion, Hitler ordered one of his lieutenants in Slovenia to "make this land German again for me."[2] When the reconstruction work was complete, the Slovenian outpost of the Third Reich was to form a living wall against the encroachments of the racially unsuitable hordes beyond the border.

Since the population was overwhelmingly Slovene, the task of carrying out the Führer's directive would be formidable. Shortly after the occupation, a five-man commission toured Lower Styria and Upper Carniola to take an inventory on the new German acquisitions. The

---

[1]Portions of this chapter have appeared in Helga H. Harriman, "Slovenia as an Outpost of the Third Reich," Eastern European Quarterly, Vol. V (1971), pp. 222-231.

[2]Quoted in Ferenc, "Le Système d'Occupation des Nazis en Slovénie," pp. 50, 121-122.



Map 9. The Partition of Slovenia, 1941

commission reported 615,000 people in Lower Styria and in the Carinthian additions to Yugoslavia, which included the Meža Valley, Dravgrad and the Commune of Jezersko. The proportion of the Slovene population ranged from seventy-eight to one-hundred per cent in these various areas, and the only appreciable minority was the German. In Upper Carniola, the population of 209,500 people was classed as one-hundred per cent Slovene.[3] In all, there were probably less than 13,000 Volksdeutsche in the Slovene areas annexed to the Reich at the time of the inventory.

Since the thrust of the German occupation of Slovenia centered on preparing it for incorporation in the Reich, the influence of the Volksdeutschen was rather negligible in the war years. Those in the Kočevje district which was annexed to the Italian Province of Ljubljana became mere pawns in the hands of the RKFDV, as they were resettled along the border of Lower Styria. These resettlers and other Volksdeutsche in the Slovene areas annexed to the Reich were given a privileged position, to be sure, but they could not make much of an impact. Not only were they sternly controlled by Reich officials, but Slovene uprisings disrupted normal life in the province already from the earliest days of the occupation.

Although Upper Carniola was attached to Carintha, and Lower Styria to Styria, the Slovene provinces were to be administered as separate units until they were actually incorporated into the Reich. The supreme command in each territory was exercised by the Chief of Civil

---

[3] Zusammenfassender Bericht der Kommission die mit der Bestandsaufnahme in den Gebieten der Untersteiermark und Südkärnten beauftragt war, September 13, 1941. T-81/Roll 284/2407072-95.

Administration (Chef der Zivilverwaltung). Only in matters pertaining to the post, telegraph, railways and customs was there central direction from competent ministries in Berlin. For all else, each Chief of Civil Administration was responsible directly to Hitler through Hans Lammers, Chief of the Reich Chancellory. He was given an independent budget with the widest scope of power in order to carry out the task of preparing the land for reattachment to the Fatherland.[4]

The Chief of Civil Administration in both Lower Styria and Upper Carniola was also Gauleiter and Reichstatthalter (provincial leader of the NSDAP and governor; only the first title was generally used) of Styria and Carinthia respectively. The Gauleiter of Styria, Dr. Siegfried Ueberreither, entered into his duties as Chief of the Civil Administration for Lower Styria on April 14, 1941. Franz Kutschera, acting Gauleiter of Carinthia at the time, took over as Chief of the Civil Administration for Upper Carniola between April 15 and 30 of the same year. On November 30, 1941, he was succeeded by the incoming Gauleiter of Carinthia, Dr. Friedrich Rainer, who had previously been Gauleiter of Salzburg.

In order to facilitate the germanization of Slovenia, the Nazis accepted the Wendish racial theory developed in the interwar years on the Germanic nature of the Slovenes. They operated throughout their occupation on the assumption that some Slovenes were acceptable in the Reich and others were not. They referred often to "germanizable"

---

[4]Clifton J. Child, "Political Structure of Hitler's Europe," in Arnold and Veronica M. Toynbee, eds., Survey of International Affairs 1939-1945: Hitler's Europe (London: Oxford University Press, 1954) pp. 99-100.

(eindeutschungsfähig) and "non-germanizable" (nichteindeutschungsfähig) Slovenes. The criteria for identifying the non-germanizable people seem to have degenerated into a process of excluding those who guarded their Slovene national consciousness, who didn't "look German", or who exhibited hostility toward the German occupation forces.

Those who were deemed germanizable were subjected to a series of measures designed to assimilate them into the German folk group. These included prohibition of the Slovene language and imposition of German in its place and German infiltration of the school system. Further, organizations were established which enrolled these Slovenes in the same ranks as the Volksdeutschen. After the occupation began, the Styrian Homeland Union (Steierischer Heimatbund) and the Carinthian Folk Union (Kärntner Volksbund) were formed for Lower Styria and Upper Carniola respectively. All 10,818 members of the Kulturbund in Lower Styria were inducted into the Heimatbund en masse. Command posts in both organizations went to former Kulturbund members.[5] In contrast to the Volksgruppen in Croatia, Hungary and Banat/Old Serbia, these groups were not devoted exclusively to volksdeutschen concerns.

Belonging to the Heimatbund or Volksbund was considered a prerequisite for German citizenship. Permanent members were automatically granted full citizenship (deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit), while temporary members were given a revokable citizenship status (deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit auf Widerruf). The distinction between these two categories was based on the degree of German nationality exhibited by various members. With the bestowal of some form of citizenship, members were

---

[5]Ferenc, "Le Système d'Occupation des Nazis en Slovéne," pp. 67-69.

liable for service in the German Army. Military conscription was introduced in Lower Styria in March, 1942, and in Upper Carniola the following July.[6]

The organization in Lower Styria was much more successful than that in Upper Carniola. A comparison of the effectiveness of the local militia (Wehrmannschaft) associated with each confirms this assessment. The Wehrmannschaft in Upper Carniola had disintegrated by early 1942, while the same group in Lower Styria was operative until the spring of 1944.[7] This difference can be attributed to the resistance in the two regions. Guerrilla forces in Upper Carniola, already in operation in the summer of 1941, gained real strength after the spring of 1942. In Lower Styria, the first general resistance materialized only in the spring of 1943. The Germans were more effective here also because they coveted the territory more, they were better organized, and they had a more unified and larger German minority upon which to base their occupation.[8] Patently, the difference in the intensity of the nationality struggle in Lower Styria and Carniola, which had been evident in the Habsburg days was still operative in more recent times.

Recognizing that undesirable foreign elements were present in German-occupied Slovenia to disrupt the germanization process, the Nazis planned their removal. They decided in May to deport between 260,000-280,000 non-germanizable Slovenes, nearly one third of the population, to Old Serbia and Croatia. The Slavic evacuees would be

---

[6]Ibid., pp. 72-84.

[7]Ibid., pp. 90-91, 93.

[8]Ibid., pp. 76-77, 79-80, 89.

replaced by members of former German minority groups abroad who were available in resettlement camps in Germany. Enormous problems attendent to the unstable conditions throughout the Yugoslav territories caused a sharp curtailment of this program. Less than 20,000 Slovenes were actually expelled from Slovenia into Old Serbia and Croatia between June and September, 1941. Since there was no place to send the large number of unwanted Slovenes, they simply had to remain in Lower Styria and Upper Carniola. The Nazis were then confronted with the urgent problem of how to make room for the Kočevje Germans, who were scheduled to arrive in the annexed Slovene areas from the Province of Ljubljana. As mentioned previously, these Volksdeutschen were exempted from Hitler's decision of August 2, which postponed volksdeutsche resettlement from Southeastern Europe. On Himler's orders, 35,000 Slovenes of the new frontier zone along the Sava and Sotla (Sattelbach) rivers in Lower Styria were sent into Germany between October, 1941 and June, 1942. (See Map 9). The Germans systematically cleared only about 55,000 Slovenes from their area of occupation.

On August 12, 1942, Gauleiter Ueberreither made a public announcement that the resettlement activities in the border zone of Lower Styria, were ended.[9] This date can be taken as a termination of the entire resettlement program for Slovenia, because the Sava-Sotla strip was the major site of the program in the first place and no others were developed. Quite prematurely, the Nazis had to abandon the most crucial step toward the conversion of Slovenia into an impregnable frontier

---

[9]Kundmachung über die Beendigung der Um-und-Aussiedlung in der Untersteiermark, Štajerski Gospodar, August 15, 1942. T-81/Roll 306/2434211.

zone for the German race. After fifteen months of German rule, it was clear that Slovenia would not become the outpost of the Third Reich that Nazi planners had envisioned.

As the Slovene expulsions commenced in the spring of 1941, so did the preparations for the transfer of the Germans in the Italian-held portion of Slovenia to the Reich. In May, the Volksgruppe leaders of the Kočevje Germans issued the call for the coming resettlement. They admonished the Volksdeutschen to await Hitler's orders with iron discipline.[10] On August 31, an Italian-German treaty was signed for the relocation of the Volksdeutschen from the Province of Ljubljana.[11] The German population in the province included 12,400 people in the Kočevje district, 1,500 in Ljubljana and its environs and about 500 more in other scattered communities.[12]

In the fall, the Italians permitted the EWZ to enter their territory for registration of these prospective resettlers.[13] Of the 11,756 Kočevje residents recorded as opting for resettlement within the Reich, 11,113 were given a "ST" (Steiermark) classification, indicating that they were to move into the frontier zone of Lower Styria. Less reliable settlers, who numbered 562, were classified "A" for transport into the Altreich. They were to be given employment and Reich bonds

---

[10] Gottscheer Zeitung (Kočevje), May 22, 1941.

[11] The text of the treaty may be found in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 141-152E.

[12] Einteilung des Gebietes Gottschee Ortsbezirke, October 20, 1941. T-81/Roll 306/2433960.

[13] Abschlussbericht über die Erfassung der Deutschen in der Gottschee und im Gebiet der Stadt Laibach durch die Einwandererzentralstelle, December, 1941. T-81/Roll 306/2433592-680.

for any lost possessions. Only 81 Germans of Kočevje received the "S" classification for "special case" (Sonderfall), which meant that there were doubts about their loyalty, race or nationality, and that they were unacceptable to the Reich.

The EWZ registered a total of 1,280 German resettlers in the Ljubljana area and other scattered communities. Of these individuals, 819 were given a "K" (Kärnten) classification for settlement primarily in Upper Carniola. Another 395 were classified "A", while only 41 were given the "S" rating.

Volksdeutsche migration from the Kočevje district into the cleared homesteads of the Sava-Sotla strip, which the Nazi bureaucracy called "Settlement Area A", followed hard on the heels of the deportations. Between November, 1941 and July, 1942, nearly 13,000 Kočevje settlers were moved into the region in the twenty-five Stürme formed during the Nazification of the group before the war. Since they were spared a waiting period in resettlement camps, their first assignments were temporary. Necessary adjustments would be forthcoming later. The thousand immigrants from the industrial sector of the town of Kočevje were established as tradesmen in urban areas. The rest of the repatriates, all peasants, were given agricultural property.[14] Three former Slovene homesteads were combined to make one new German farm in an effort to correct the uneconomical fragmentation of the land.[15]

---

[14]Ferenc, "Le Système d'Occupation en Slovénie," p. 66. SS-Sturmbannfuhrer Laforce, Besiedlungsplan des Siedlungsgebietes A in der Untersteiermark. May 10, 1942. T-81/Roll 284/2406856-944.

[15]Schechtman, European Population Transfers, 1939-1945, p. 244.

Among the new residents were established small enclaves of ethnic Germans from South Bukovina, Bessarabia, the Dobruja and South Tyrol. The Bessarabian Volksdeutschen, made up of wine growing families from the region of the Black Sea and numbering 507 people, were deemed suitable as protectors of a border zone because of long experience against a French majority in their former home. Unfortunately, their heavy accents made their German incomprehensible in Lower Styria. The Volksdeutschen from the Dobruja, comprising 410 members of wine growing families, were given land as were about 80 South Tyrolean families, experienced as fruit and wine growers. Finally, a few expert artisans from South Bukovina were also included in the new German community.[16] All told, over a thousand additional ethnic Germans joined the Kočevje group in Settlement Area A.

The Nazis were quite solicitous of the volksdeutschen settlers in many ways. When the first trainload of resettlers pulled into the Sava Valley, they were greeted by an official reception.[17] Women welfare workers met Kočevje immigrants as they arrived and helped them adjust to their new environment. The RKFDV Main Staff Office in Berlin tried to protect the German residents of Settlement Area A from unpleasant contacts with former owners of the property they now occupied. A rule was issued that members of the uprooted Styrian border population were absolutely forbidden to return to the area.[18] Further, special

---

[16] Besiedlungsplan des Siedlungsgebietes A. T-81/Roll 284/2406856-944.

[17] Völkischer Beobachter (Munich), November 25, 1941.

[18] Stier to See, February 3, 1942, T-81/Roll 279/2400529-31. Stier to Ueberreither, June 1, 1942. T-81/Roll 279/2400544-6.

courses in maternal and child care were provided for the Kočevje women.[19] In April, 1942, Gauleiter Ueberreither visited the new residents of Lower Styria and bestowed German citizenship upon them. He callenged them to fulfil their duty as Wehrbauern and guardians of the Southeastern frontier of the Great German Fatherland.[20] The health and happiness of the German vanguards on the border received great attention from Hitler's lieutenants.

The RKFDV in Lower Styria, with headquarters in Maribor, worked diligently to create a model border settlement along the Sava-Sotla strip. With ludicrous detail, SS-Sturmbannführer Laforce submitted a plan for the reorganization of Settlement Area A in May, 1942.[21] Analyzing the Kočevje settlers with many maps and charts, Laforce tried to perfect the simulation of conditions in their new homes to those they had left behind. For the peasant population, he took into consideration such factors as general landscape features, fertility of the soil, crops raised, home industrial skills, location of neighboring communities, and transportation facilities to towns or cities. For the small urban group, he correlated vocational ability with job opportunities in the Reich. Laforce recommended that sixty per cent of the Kočevje settlers stay where they were and that the remainder be transferred to new locations more comparable to their previous homes.

---

[19]Marga Sessner, Tätigkeitsberichte über die Mütterschulungsarbeit von Ende Juli bis Ende September 1942 im Ansiedlungsgebiet der Untersteiermark, September 20, 1942. T-81/Roll 284/2406841-2.

[20]Neues Wiener Tagblatt (Vienna), April 10, 1942.

[21]Besiedlungsplan des Siedlungsgebietes A. T-81/Roll 284/2406856-944.

The building of an ideal frontier community in Lower Styria collapsed by the fall of 1943. From March, 1942 to November, 1943, twenty-one meetings of the RKFDV settlement office in Maribor were held, usually under the chairmanship of Ueberreither, to carry into effect many of Laforce's recommendations.[22] Reallocation of property was made at these conferences. By the time of the last meeting, however, reports were heard of Partisan raids on the volksdeutschen settlers. Over a hundred of them had been ejected from their homes and two had been killed. By this time, the greater part of Slovenia had fallen into the hands of the National Liberation Front.[23] Continuation of the RKFDV project was impossible.

For their part, the Kočevje Germans did not exhibit the least enthusiasm over the arrangements which had been made for them. As they arrived in the Sava-Sotla strip in the winter of 1941-1942, some of the resettlers were appalled at how bleak and spartan their new homesteads were.[24] One resettler commented that it was difficult to sleep at night in houses of expelled Slovenes.[25] Further, the structures were much inferior to the ones left behind. Because the Sava-Sotla strip had a denser population than the home territory in Lower Carniola, the Kočevje Germans were spread among many more Slovenes than before.

---

[22] Berichte I-XXI über die Sitzung des Ansiedlungsstabes, March 19, 1942-November 17, 1943. T-81/Roll 285/2407726-882.

[23] Donlagić, Yugoslavia in the Second World War, p. 128.

[24] Martha Weizenhöfer, Bericht über die Betreuungsarbeit bei der Umsiedlung der Gottscheer Volksgruppe, No date. T-81/Roll 284/2406851-2.

[25] Report of K. R. in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 31-37.

They no longer formed a coherent group. No one had a clear, over-all picture of the resettlement program, so that gross inequities seemed apparent. Hardly half of the Volksdeutsch immigrants had been awarded property by the end of the war. As the Partisan danger increased, the resettlers were inadequately defended.[26] The discontent naturally associated with a transfer of population was heightened by wartime conditions.

Since the evacuation operation in Upper Carniola had been halted prematurely, the RKFDV officers stationed in Bled (Veldes) were hampered in carrying out a resettlement program. They felt frustrated because they had been allotted such a small scope for action. One wrote a strongly worded memorandum to the effect that the germanization of Upper Carniola could not be accomplished in terms of importing a hundred German families but in terms of a thousand such families. He recognized that much blood would be shed in the process, but deemed that one should get on with the task regardless. Proposing that 500 families should be settled in Upper Carniola by the end of 1942, he counseled that the tempo of resettlement be quickened in the next year.[27]

Recognizing that ethnic Germans immigrating into former Yugoslav territory in South Carinthia would be put under great strain, RKFDV officers carefully scrutinized populations to find appropriate material for the area. The Bled office reported to Ranier in July, 1942, that

---

[26]Report of Alois Krisch in Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 9-31.

[27]Nimpfer, Grundsätzliche Gedanken und Vorschläge für die Durchfhrung der Aufgabe des RKF. August 1, 1942, T-81/Roll 279/2400519-22.

the following settlers were available: about 5,000 Volksdeutschen from Bukovina; 20,000 Bosnian Germans who were not at all reliable politically; between 10,000-20,000 settlers from Lorraine, of whom only a few would be suitable; about 1,000 Kočevje Germans, for whom there was no room in Lower Styria; and 670 South Tyroleans. Berlin acknowledged that these groups would not provide enough political leadership for Upper Carniola and that the ideal solution would be the importation of trustworthy Germans from Carinthia proper.[28] After perusing the list of prospective settlers, Ranier approved the Bukovinans, Kočevje Germans and South Tyroleans, expressed skepticism about the Bosnians, and showed interest only in the industrial workers from Lorraine.[29]

The RKFDV bureaucrats in Carinthia, as their counterparts in Lower Styria, engaged in methodical population planning. During the summer of 1942, they were preparing a master plan to reorganize Upper Carniola, so that the land would become German again in the best way possible. Rural and industrial areas were being identified as key points of accelerated germanization.[30] Many statistical studies on the order of that by Laforce were undertaken. For example, an attempt was made to indicate where South Bukovinan Volksdeutsche should be placed so that their new surroundings would be similar to those in their homeland.[31]

---

[28] Friedl to Gauleiter Rainer, July 20, 1941. T-81/Roll 279/2400534-5.

[29] Friedl to Stier, July 23, 1942. T-81/Roll 279/2400536-7.

[30] SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutenant der Polizei to SS-Gruppenführer Ulrich Greifelt, August 7, 1942. T-81/Roll 279/2400538.

[31] Erklärungen zu den Ortsbereichen der Südbuchenländer, August 20, 1942. T-81/Roll 279/2400476-7.

All told, very few ethnic Germans were established on Slovene soil attached to Carinthia. By June, 1942, 592 Volksdeutsche from the province of Ljubljana were reported in both Carinthia and Upper Carniola. The rest of the 1,280 Germans registered by the EWZ were scattered in Styria and other parts of the Reich.[32] Upon arrival in Upper Carniola, many of the Ljubljana immigrants were located in "resettler homes" such as resort hotels, where they were very uneasy.[33] In addition, 412 South Tyrolean artisans were reported settled in "liberated" Slovene homesteads in Upper Carniola.[34]

Without the introduction of large numbers of reliable Germans, the germanization effort depended largely upon the temper of the Slovene populace. Neither in Upper Carniola nor in Lower Styria were the Nazis satisfied with their efforts to convert Slovenes into Germans. Neither region was ever incorporated into the Reich. Orders to incorporate in October and November, 1941, were cancelled "for technical reasons of legislation," which was probably an euphemistic reference to the disturbances then current among the Slovenes.[35] Officials in Bled and Maribor were fully aware early in the occupation that the major part of the Slovene population had been thoroughly alienated against German rule. Their conclusions are corroborated by the reprisal actions taken

---

[32] "Übersichtlicher Bericht über die Umsiedlung aus der Provinz Laibach, June 30, 1942, T-81/Roll 306/2433892-3.

[33] Lage in den Oberkrainer Umsiedlerheimen der Laibacher Umsiedler, April 8, 1942, T-81/Roll 279/2400281-2.

[34] Schechtmann, European Population Transfers, 1939-1945, p. 64.

[35] Ferenc, "Le Système d'Occupation des Nazis en Slovenie," pp. 81-83.

by the Germans during the occupation. In Lower Styria, where the Nazis had their greatest strength, the German data is sobering: 14,216 civilians shot; 27,208 people tortured; 27,408 people arrested; and 21,069 people interned.[36] This was not an atmosphere for building pro-German sentiment.

The German attempt to convert Slovenia into an ethnically homogeneous extension of Greater Germany failed. Had the Nazis been able to deport 280,000 Slovenes as they had originally planned, rather than only 55,000, they may well have succeeded in their attempt to germanize Lower Styria and Upper Carniola. But this course of action was closed to them, and they could not win over the Slovenes to their point of view.

In this unhappy situation, the Volksdeutschen of Slovenia had little chance to enjoy the long-awaited realization of the dream of incorporation into the Reich. They were still a small minority in a sea of Slavs, since their numbers were not appreciably increased despite all the reshuffling of people. They seemed to be insignificant in the larger scheme for their province, conceived by SS officers and doomed to disaster. When they fled for their lives before the Partisan onslaught in the spring of 1945, they carried away with them all German aspirations in a land where their forefathers had lived for so many centuries.

---

[36] "Information on the People's Liberation War in Yugoslavia," in Brajović, Les Systèmes d'Occupation en Yougoslavie, 1941-1945, pp. 31-32.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

How responsible were the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen for their fate at the end of the war? Fairly and judiciously, Paikert has assessed the Volksdeutsche reception of the German invaders in Hungary in the following terms:

> ...the plain rank and file, the ordinary conformists were not derelicts but, in a sense, rather victims: victims of alluring promises, bombastic slogans and merciless intimidations of an ugly and unscrupulus ideology. However, they were equally victims of their own discrimination, ambition and in many cases plain greed.[1]

This comment applies equally well to the German minority in the Independent State of Croatia, the Southern Territories of Hungary, the Banat with Old Serbia, and the Slovene areas annexed to the Third Reich. In all these component parts of the former South Slav state, the Volksdeutschen accepted treatment as a superior people. Through the Deutsche Volksgruppe in Kroatien, 150,000 of them were accorded unusual rights in intimate association with the Ustashi. Through the Deutsche Volksbund in Ungarn, 190,300 of their number were elevated into positions of special privilege. In the Banat, 120,000 Germans became the outright ruling class through the Deutsche Volksgruppe in Banat und Serbien. In the Slovene areas annexed to the Third Reich,

---

[1]Paikert, Danube Swabians, p. 131-132.

about 30,000 Volksdeutschen were acknowledged as leaders among the germanizable Slovenes in the Steierische Heimatbund and the Kärntner Volksbund. To be sure, the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen found their preeminence to be a hollow fraud as the systems of occupation developed in Yugoslavia during the war. But when they accepted advantages at the expense of their neighbors in April, 1941, they made themselves accountable for the consequences of such privileges.

If they were disillusioned, the German minority of Yugoslavia remained closely associated with Axis rule throughout the war nonetheless. They may have been horrified at the atrocities committed by the Croatian Ustashi and the Hungarian army or the harsh SS methods in the Banat and Slovenia, but they did not organize a strong resistance to these acts of terror. Instead, they seemed to acquiesce in silence. As before the war, the voice of Die Donau in Apatin remained a lone anti-Nazi cry. Few Germans aided the Partisans, even after the tide of war had turned. The Ernst Thälmann Company, named in honor of the former chairman of the German Communist Party, was formed by the Partisians in 1943 to dissuade the German minority from collaboration with fascists, but very few Volksdeutsche joined the company.[2]

Not only the arrangements made for them in splintered Yugoslavia but the plans drafted for them but never carried out were deeply rooted in the history of German nationalists ideology. According to völkische doctrines, the German minority in Yugoslavia had a mission to fulfill in building Mitteleuropa. In Germanic islands along the Danube, they were to perpetuate the German idea outside the borders of the Reich.

---

[2]Stojković, National Minorities in Yugoslavia, p. 54.

As a regional élite, they would provide the cement for incorporating the Southeast into the European heartland dominated by Germany. The plan for Reichsfestung Belgrad circulating in the spring and summer of 1941 may have come to naught, but German agencies continued to consider autonomous volksdeutsche settlements on conquered Yugoslav territory until the Battle of Stalingrad in January, 1943 estinguished the hopes of planners. Only in the face of defeat were the "slender threads" leading deeply into the past finally severed. The Nazi design for Southeastern Europe which had been built upon the legacy of the Habsburg Empire, nineteenth century nationalism, Austro-German war aims between 1914-1918, Gesamtdeutsch historiography, and Volkstum organizations in the interwar years, then crumbled into oblivion.

After the summer of 1941, postwar planning for the German minorities based on völkische principles was sporadic and disjointed. In 1942 Himmler had toyed with the prospect of resettling all the Volksdeutschen out of Croatia, with the possible exception of Srem, in order to strengthen German outposts elsewhere. At one point, he wanted to move the Germans of West Slavonia into Srem to reinforce the German settlements there.[3] An officer in the SS resettlement projects argued against this course of action at the time, since he felt that the rich and contiguous German communities in Slavonia and Srem should not be given up lightly.[4] The Foreign Office also opposed Himmler's suggestion by invoking the traditions of the Military Border and Prince Eugene

---

[3]Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 79-80E.

[4]SS-Oberstrumführer Gradmann of EWZ to Lutz of DAI, May 15, 1944. T-81/Roll 307/2435191.

in protecting German interests along the Danube.[5] Throughout the war, the theme of Wehrbauern on a revived Military Border on Yugoslava soil permeated SS thinking. A proposal in this vein was forwarded to SS offices in October, 1941.[6] As late as March, 1944, the SS apparatus approved the construction of a Military Border in Bosnia to guard approaches to the Reich.[7] Unquestionably, much of this futile planning was confused and at cross purposes. Since Hitler never could make up his mind as to the fate of the Volksdeutschen in the Balkans, it is not surprising that Nazi agencies lacked a clear-sighted approach to the problem of the Danube Swabians in Yugoslavia.

Wuescht maintains that resettlement was the ultimate solution which Berlin espoused for the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen.[8] Although a total of only approximately 36,000 were resettled from Serbia, the Province of Ljubljana and the Ustashi state during the war, all 500,000 were destined for new homes in Greater Germany. Certainly, as the German position on the battlefield deteriorated, a new outlook on German policies in occupied Yugoslavia arose. Hermann Neubacher, plenipotentiary and extraordinary envoy to the Southeast in the fall of 1943, proposed that the Ustashi regime be replaced by one more amenable to the Croatian people and that the Serbian royalists be given enlarged powers in Old Serbia, Hitler never approved of Neubacher's proposals,

---

[5]Wehler, "Reichsfestung Belgrad," pp. 79-80. An extract of a Foreign Office Memorandum, dated November 5, 1942, on Himmler's proposal appears on p. 84.

[6]Rothenburg, "Croatian Military Border," p. 34 fn.

[7]Orlow, Nazis in the Balkans, p. 126.

[8]Wuescht, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich, p. 251.

but they were in line with a growing feeling in German circles that the South Slavs must be given a greater voice in their affairs. Even in Slovenia, after the Nazis took over the Province of Ljubljana in the fall of 1943, they entertained suggestions to create a Slovene province within the Reich.[9] The presence of Volksdeutschen under such conditions would be untenable. Clearly, then, resettlement became the ultimate solution of the Third Reich for the Yugoslav Volksdeutschen, but only when all else had failed.

As the observer of 1938 had predicted, the racial doctrine, carried to its logical extremes in the Independent State of Croatia, the Southern Territories of Hungary, the Banat within Old Serbia and the Slovene areas annexed to the Reich during the war, recoiled upon its own zealots with tenfold violence. Minorities remote from German territory and less prolific than the majority peoples around them succumbed to a terrible destiny. Of the 500,000 Volksdeutschen in Yugoslavia as of 1931, only 55,000 remained there in 1948. About 50,000 members of the German minority died in combat against the Allies or the Partisians.[10] The bulk of the Volksdeutschen population, numbering some 320,000 people, escaped into Austria and Germany at the end of the war. The treatment of those remaining took on the character of mass liquidation. Many of the ethnic Germans were executed or placed in concentration or forced labor camps. About 30,000 from the Batschka and Banat became captive workers in the Soviet Union, and German

---

[9] Ferenc, "Le Système d'Occupation des Nazis en Slovénie," pp. 112, 117.

[10] Stojković, National Minorities in Yugoslavia, pp. 21-22.

property was confiscated by the Yugoslav government.[11] The history of the German minority in Yugoslavia had come to its inevitable close. The tragic absurdity of German dreams of dominance in Southeastern Europe was revealed a century too late.

---

[11]Rohrbacher, Ein Volk Ausgelöscht, p. 33; Schieder, Vertreibung, Vol. V, pp. 90-118E.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Primary Sources

Carlyle, Margaret, ed. Documents on International Affairs, 1939-1946. Vol. II, Hitler's Europe. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1954.

Hitler, Adolph. My New Order, ed. by Raoul de Roussy de Sales. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1941.

Lemkin, Rafal. Axis Rule in Occupied Europe. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944.

Schieder, Theodor, et al. Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa. 5 volumes in 11 parts, Bonn: Bundesministerium für Vertriebene, Fluchtlinge und Kriegsgeschädigte, 1954-1961. Volume V, Das Schicksal der Deutschen in Yugoslavien (1961).

United States Department of State. Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945. 18 volumes to date, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949-

United States National Archives Microfilm Publication. Microcopy T-71, Records of the Reich Ministry of Economics, Rolls 61, 78.

_____. Microcopy T-74, Records of the Reich Commissar for the Strengthening of Germandom, Roll 17.

_____. Microcopy T-81, Records of the National Socialist German Labor Party (NSDAP), Rolls 136, 150, 270, 279, 284, 285, 306, 307, 322, 428, 444, 521, 522, 544, 545, 553, 554, 559, 564.

II. Secondary Sources

Arnez, John A. Slovenia in European Affairs. New York: League of CSA, 1958.

Barker, Thomas M. The Slovenes of Carinthia. Washington: League of CSA, 1960.

Bernbaum, John A. "The Captured German Records: A Bibliographical Survey," The Historian, Vol. XXXII (1970), 564-575.

Beyer, H. J. "Hauptlinien einer Geschichte der ostdeutschen Volksgruppen im 19. Jahrhundert," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLXII (1940), 509-539.

Biber, Dušan. Nacizem i nemci v Yugoslavijie, 1933-1941. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1966.

Brajovich, Petar, Jovan Marjanovich, and Franjo Tudman, eds. Les Systèmes d'Occupation en Yougoslavie, 1941-1945. Belgrade: L'Institut pour l'Étude de Mouvement Ouvrier, 1963.

Braubach, Max. "Prinz Eugen von Savoyen," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLIV (1936), 17-31.

_____. "Der Lebensausgang des Prinzen Eugen," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLXI (1940), 42-61.

Broszat, Martin. German National Socialism, 1919-1945, tr. Kurt Rosenbaum and Inge Pauli Boehm. Santa Barbara: Clio Press, 1971.

Brown, MacAlister. "The Third Reich's Mobilization of the German Fifth Column in Eastern Europe." Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. XIX (1959), 128-148.

Burks, R. V. "Two Telecki Letters," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. VII (1947), 68-73.

Campbell, Gregory F. "The Kaiser and Mitteleuropa in October 1918," Central European History, Vol. II (1969), 376-386.

Clissold, Steven, ed. A Short History of Yugoslavia from Early Times to 1966. Cambridge: University Press, 1966.

Djordjević, Dimitrije. "Contemporary Yugoslav Historiography," East European Quarterly, Vol. I (1967), 75-86.

Donlagić, Ahmet, Žarko Atanacković and Dušan Plenča. Yugoslavia in the Second World War, tr. Lovett F. Edwards. Belgrade: Medunarodna Stampa Interpress, 1967.

Dorotich, D. "Yugoslavian Historiography on Yugoslavia's Foreign Relations Between the Two World Wars," Canadian Slavonic Papers, Vol. X (1968), 166-179.

Fischer, Fritz. Germany's Aims in the First World War. New York: W. W. Norton, 1967.

Fricke, Gert. Kroatien 1941-1944. Der "Unabhängige Staat" in der Sicht des deutschen Bevollmächtigten Generals in Agram, Glaise von Horstenau. Freiburg: Verlag Rombach, 1972.

Gilbert, Felix. "Mitteleuropa--The Final Stage," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. VII (1947), 58-67.

_____. "German Historiography During the Second World War," American Historical Review, Vol. LIII (1947), 50-58.

Gradmann, Wilhelm. "Die deutschsprachigen Zeitungen im Ausland," Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XIX (1936), 14-15.

Grentrup, Theodor. Das Deutschtum an der mittleren Donau in Rumänien und Jugoslawien. Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1930.

Grothusen, Klaus-Detlev. "Literaturbericht über die Geschichte Jugoslawiens: Veröffentlichungen 1945-1966," Historische Zeitschrift, Sonderheft III (1969), 355-430.

Haller, Hermann. "Die Entstehung der deutschen Tochtersiedlungen in Syrmien," Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), 232-246.

Hammen, O. J. "German Historians and the Advent of the National Socialist State," Journal of Modern History, Vol. XIII (1941), 161-188.

Harriman, Helga H. "Slovenia as an Outpost of the Third Reich," East European Quarterly, Vol. V (1971), 222-231.

_____. "Slovenia as an Outpost of the Third Reich." (Unpub. M.A. thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1969).

Haussherr, Hans. "Verfassungstypen deutscher Volksgruppen im Auslande," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLX (1939), 35-78.

Hillgruber, Andreas. Südost-Europa im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Literatur-Bericht und Bibliographie. Frankfurt: Bernard u. Graefe, 1962.

Hnilicka, Karl. Das Ende auf dem Balkan 1944/1945. Die militärische Räumung Jugoslaviens durch die deutsche Wehrmacht. Gottingen: Musterschmidt Verlag, 1970.

Höhne, Heinz. The Order of the Death's Head, The Story of Hitler's SS, tr. Richard Barry. New York: Coward-McCann, 1970.

Holborn, Hajo. "Origins and Political Character of Nazi Ideology," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LIX (1964), 542-554.

Hoptner, J. B. Yugoslavia in Crisis, 1934-1941. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962.

Horecky, Paul L. Southeastern Europe, A Guide to Basic Publications. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

Hory, Ladislaw and Martin Broszat. Der kroatische Ustascha-Staat, 1941-1945. No. VIII, Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 1964.

Irby, Pauline. "Bosnia and its Land Tenure," Contemporary Review, Vol. LVI (1889), 28-40.

Jászi, Oscar. The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

Jelavich, Charles. "The Croatian Problem in the Habsburg Empire in the Nineteenth Century," Austrian History Yearbook, Vol. III, Pt. 2 (1967), 83-115.

Jones, F. Elwin. The Attack from Within. London: Penquin Books, 1939.

Kahn, David. "Secrets of Nazi Archives," Atlantic Monthly, Vol. CCXXIII (May, 1969), 50-56.

Kann, R. A. The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848-1918. 2 vols., New York: Columbia University Press, 1950.

Kerner, R. J., ed. Yugoslavia. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949.

Kirk, Dudley. Europe's Population in the Interwar Years. Geneva: Economic, Financial and Transit Department of the League of Nations, 1946.

Kiszling, Rudolph. Die Kroaten; der Schicksalsweg eines Südslawenvolkes. Graz-Köln: Verlag Herman Böhlaus Nachf., 1956.

Koehl, R. L. RKFDV, German Resettlement and Population Policy, 1939-1945. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957.

Krausnick, Helmet, et al. Anatomy of the SS State, tr. Richard Barry, Marion Jackson, Dorothy Long. New York: Walker and Company, 1968.

Krueger, G. "Um den Reichsgedanken," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLXV (1942), 456-471.

Langer, Robert. The Austro-Yugoslav Problem. New York: Privately mimeographed report, 1951.

Langer, William L. "When German Dreams Come True," Yale Review, Vol. XXVII (1937;38), 678-698.

Lendl, Egon. "Die Stellung des Slawonien-deutschtums unter den südostdeutschen Volksinseln," Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), 202-207.

Lougee, Robert W. Paul de Lagarde (1927-1891), A Study of Radical Conservatism in Germany. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962.

Macartney, C. A. October Fifteenth: A History of Modern Hungary, 1929-1945. 2 volumes, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1956-1957.

_____. The Habsburg Empire, 1790-1918. New York: MacMillan, 1969.

Marrotte, Paul A. "Germany at the League of Nations Council: The Defense of German Minority Groups in Poland, Memel and Yugoslavia." (Unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1954).

Meyer, Henry Cord. Mitteleuropa in German Thought and Action, 1815-1945. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1955.

Moodie, A. E. "Slovenia - A Zone of Strain," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. III (1943), 65-80.

Moore, Wilbert E. Economic Demography of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Geneva: Economic, Financial and Transit Department of the League of Nations, 1945.

Mosley, Philip E. "Hitler and Southeastern Europe," Yale Review, Vol. XXVIII (1938), 249-272.

Mosse, George L. The Crisis of German Ideology. Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964.

Nagy-Talavera, Nicholas M. "The Second World War as Mirrored in the Hungarian Fascist Press," East European Quarterly, Vol. IV (1970), 179-208.

Naumann, Friedrich. Central Europe, tr. C. M. Meredith. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1917.

Orlow, Dietrich. The Nazis in the Balkans: A Case Study of Totalitarian Politics. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press, 1968.

Paikert, G. C. The Danube Swabians. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967.

Paris, Edmond. Genocide in Satellite Croatia 1941-1945. A Record of Racial and Religious Persecutions and Massacres, tr. Lois Perkins. Chicago: American Institute for Balkan Affairs, 1961.

Petersen, Carl, et al., eds. Handwörterbuch des Grenz und Auslanddeutschtums. 3 vols., Breslau: Verlag Ferdinand Hirt, 1933-1940.

Petrovich, Michael B. "The Rise of Modern Slovenian Historiography," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. XXII (1963), 440-467.

Pfitzner, Josef. "Die Grenz-und Auslandsdeutsche Bewegung des Jahres 1848," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLX (1939), 308-323.

Pirchegger, Hans, "Mein Freund Saria und Pettau," in Festschrift für Balduin Saria, Vol. XI, Buchreihe der Südostdeutschen Historischen Kommission. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1964, 3-7.

Pleyer, Kleo. "Ein Standbild aller Deutschen," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLVIII (1938), 541-549.

Pock, Friedrich. Grenzwacht im Südosten: Ein halbes Jahrhundert Südmark. Graz: Alpenland-Buchlandlung Südmark, 1940.

Réz, Heinrich. "Württemberger Protestanten in der Batschka," Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XIX (1936), 12-14.

Rohrbacher, Leopold. Ein Volk-ausgelöscht. Die Ausrottung des Donauschwabentums in Jugoslawien in den Jahren 1944-1948. Salzburg: Selbstverlag, 1949.

Ross, Ronald J. "Heinrich Ritter von Srbik and 'Gesamtdeutsch' History," Review of Politics, Vol. XXXI (Jan. 1969), 88-107.

Rothenburg, Gunther E. "The Croatian Military Border and the Rise of Yugoslav Nationalism," Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. XLIII (1964), 34-45.

Rüdiger, Hermann. "Deutschtum in Slawonien und Syrmien," Der Auslandsdeutsche, Vol. XX (1937), 198-201.

Schechtman, Joseph B. European Population Transfers, 1939-1945. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946.

_____. "The Elimination of German Minorities in Southeastern Europe," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. VI (1946), 152-166.

Scherer, Anton. Donauschwäbische Bibliographie 1935-1955. Munich: Verlag des Südostdeutschen Kulturwerks, 1966.

_____. Südosteuropa Dissertationen 1918-1960. Graz: Verlag Böhlau, 1968.

Schieder, Theodore. "Prinz Eugen und Friedrich der Grosse im gegenseitigen Bilde," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLVI (1937), 263-283.

Schmitt, Hans A. European Union: From Hitler to de Gaulle. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1969.

Schramm, Percy Ernst. Hitler: The Man and the Military Leader, tr. Donald S. Detwiler. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971.

Seton-Watson, Hugh. Eastern Europe Between the Wars, 1918-1941. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

_____. The East European Revolution. New York: Praeger, 1966.

Shoup, Paul. "Yugoslavia's National Minorities," Salvic Review, Vol. XXII (1963), 64-81.

Srbik, Heinrich Ritter von. "Zur gesamtdeutschen Geschichtsbetrachtung," Historische Zeitschrift, Vol. CLVI (1937), 229-262.

Stavrianos, L. S. The Balkans Since 1453. New York: Rinehard and Co., 1958.

Stehlin, Stewart A. "The Publication of the Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945," Central European Histor, Vol. I (1968), 193-199.

Stein, George H. The Waffen-SS. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966.

Steinacker, Harold. Austro-Hungarica: Ausgewählte Aufsätze und Vorträge zur Geschichte Ungarns und der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie. Vol. VIII, Buchreihe der Südostdeutschen Historischen Kommission. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1963.

Stojković, Ljubiša and Milos Martić. National Minorities in Yugoslavia. Belgrade: "Jugoslavija", 1952.

Strugar, Valdo. "Apercu Bibliographique sur la Yougoslavie," Revue d'histoire de la deuxième guerre mondiale, No. 87 (July, 1972), 53-62.

Sugar, Peter F. "Nature of Non-Germanic Societies under Habsburg Rule," Slavic Review, Vol. XXII (1963), 1-30.

_____, ed. Native Fascism in the Successor States 1918-1945. Santa Barbara: Clio Press, 1971.

Suval, Stanley. "Overcoming Kleindeutschland: The 'Politics' of Historical Mythmaking in the Weimar Republic," Central European History, Vol. II (1969), 312-330.

Sweet, Paul R. "Recent German Literature on Mitteleuropa," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. III (1943), 1-24.

_____. "Prince Eugene and Central Europe," American Historical Review, Vol. LVII (1951), 47-62.

Thompson, James W. "German Medieval Expansion and the Making of Austria," Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. II (1923/1924), 263-288.

Tomasevich, Jozo. Peasants, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955.

Tomasić, Dinko. "Struggle for Power in Jugoslavia," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. I (1941), 148-165.

Toynbee, Arnold and Veronica M. Toynbee, eds. Survey of International Affairs, 1939-1945. Vol. IV, Hitler's Europe. London: Oxford University Press, 1954.

Turczynski, Emanuel. "Deutsche Beiträge zur Geschichte und Landeskunde Südosteuropas," East European Quarterly, Vol. I (1968), 297-340.

United States Department of State. International Transfers of Territory in Europe. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1937.

United States National Archives. Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia. 66 vols. to date, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1958-

Valjavec, Fritz. "Das älteste Zeugnis für das völkische Erwachen des Donauschwabentums," Historische Zeitscrift, Vol. CLIX (1939), 315-325.

Vucinich, Wayne S. "Postwar Yugoslav Historiography," Journal of Modern History, Vol. XXIII (1951), 41-57.

_____. "The Serbs in Austria-Hungary," Austrian History Yearbook, Vol. III, Pt. 2 (1967), 3-47.

Wehler, Hans-Ulrich. "'Reichsfestung Belgrad': Nationalsozialistische 'Raumordnung' in Südosteuropa," Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Vol. II (1963), 72-84.

Weiland, Matthias Wolfgang. Zweihundert Jahre Donauschwaben. Augsburg: Verlag Johann Wilhelm Naumann, 1949.

White, Leigh. The Long Balkan Night. New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1944.

Wolff, R. L. The Balkans in Our Time. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956.

Wuescht, Johann. Beitrag zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Yugoslawien, 1934-1944. Kehl: Selbstverlag, 1966.

_____. Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich. Eine dokumentierte Geschichte der deutsch-jugoslawischen Beziehungen von 1933-1945. Stuttgart: Seewald, 1969.

Zangger, Fritz. Kunstlergäste. Ein Ausschnitt aus dem Kulturleben der deutschen Minderheit in Slowenien. Cilli-Celje: Vereinsbuchdruckerei "Celeja", 1933.

Zwitter, Fran, J. Šidak and V. Bogdanov. Les Problèmes nationaux dans la Monarchie des Habsbourgs. Belgrade: Comité National Yougoslave des Sciences Historique, 1960.

Zwitter, Fran. "The Slovenes and the Habsburg Monarchy," Austrian History Yearbook, Vol. III, Pt. 2 (1967), 159-188.

VITA

Helga Horiak Harriman

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: THE GERMAN MINORITY IN YUGOSLAVIA, 1941-1945

Major Field: History

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Mannheim, Germany, January 3, 1931, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. E. A. V. Horiak. Married Dr. Arthur E. Harriman on June 21, 1952. Two sons: Andrew Lawrence, born January 1, 1956, and Philip Winfield, born August 19, 1958.

Education: Graduated from Lehman High School, Canton, Ohio, in 1948. Received Bachelor of Arts degree with major in history-government from Wells College in Aurora, New York, in 1952. Studied for teaching certification at Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas; McMurray College, Abilene, Texas; and Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Received the Master of Arts degree from Oklahoma State University in 1969. Completed requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Oklahoma State University in December, 1973.

Professional Experience: History teacher in junior high school in San Antonio, Texas, 1953-54. History teacher in high school in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1954-55. Various positions in newspaper and public relations work, 1956-1966. Graduate teaching assistant, Department of History, Oklahoma State University, 1969-1971. Part-time instructor, School of Humanistic Studies, Oklahoma State University, 1973-present.

Honors: Graduated cum laude in 1952, with distinction in government and History Prize; Phi Beta Kappa; Phi Alpha Theta. Recipient of a Graduate Fellowship for Women from Danforth Foundation, 1971-1973.